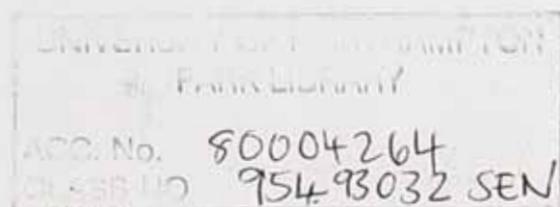


**Tamil Secessionist Insurrection and
Counterinsurgency in
Sri Lanka, 1977-1994:**

An Analysis of Government Policies

- Jagath P. Senaratne

A Dissertation submitted to
the School of Social Sciences,
University of Northampton
in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



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Declaration

I confirm that this Thesis is my own work and the use of all materials from other sources have been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Signed

Mr. Jagath P. Senaratne.

Date: 10th June 2014

Abstract

The mutually hostile historical and political ethno-nationalist projects of the Sinhalese and the Sri Lanka Tamils, and, the fierce competition for resources have combined to produce an intense ethno-nationalist conflict in Sri Lanka. By the mid-1950s the animosity between the two major ethnic groups had begun to manifest itself in ethnic violence. By the early 1970s the Tamil Secessionist insurrection began at a relatively low level of violence. The United National Party (UNP) won the general elections of July 1977 and became the governing party of the country. In July 1983 occurred a destructive anti-Tamil pogrom-riot. After that the Tamil insurrection escalated to a high level of intensity from which it did not reduce except for brief periods when ceasefires were in effect. Up to the year 1987 five Tamil guerilla groups were active. After July 1987 the secessionist insurrection was prosecuted only by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). As a consequence of the pogrom-riots Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government insisted on intervening in the Sri Lankan conflict. The Indian central government's stated policy was that it did not want a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka. However, Sri Lanka Tamils and others in Tamil Nadu lobbied for India to intervene and partition Sri Lanka.

During the 17 year period from 1977 to 1994, two UNP governments ruled Sri Lanka. The first under President Jayewardene, from 1977 to end-1988, and the second under President Premadasa from January 1989 onwards (Premadasa was assassinated by the LTTE in May 1993). A caretaker President governed till November 1994 when the UNP was voted out of office. Up till that time, this 17-year period was the longest single period that any political party or coalition had governed Sri Lanka.

These 17 years can be divided into three clear phases, each separated by very clear and dramatic breaks from the other. The first phase is from the UNP's election victory in 1977 to the pogrom-riots of July 1983. The second is from the pogrom-riots to the exit of the Indian army from Sri Lanka in March 1990. The third is from the re-ignition of the Secessionist insurrection by the LTTE (the main secessionist group) in June 1990 till November 1994 when the UNP lost both parliamentary and presidential elections and therefore ceased to be the counterinsurgent. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 deal with these three periods in chronological order.

The objective of this Thesis is to analyse the efforts by the UNP government of Sri Lanka to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection during these 17 years. The analytical framework utilised for this task is grounded in counterinsurgency doctrine which spans approximately 50 years from work pioneered in the 1960s to the most recent US and British Army doctrine. After obtaining insights from this literature seven research questions were identified by the present author. The counterinsurgency campaigns of the Sri Lanka government 1977-1994 are analysed using these seven research questions.

Our analytical work is deeply complicated, however, by the fact that in the second of the above two phases, i.e. the phase dealt-with in Chapter 4, the Indian central government was a central player in the process. Eventually, in July 1987, India used pressure on *both* the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil secessionists to arrive at an Agreement called the Indo-Lanka Accord. However, that could not be implemented and eventually the Indian forces left Sri Lanka in March 1990, and the secessionist insurrection resumed with the LTTE fighting the Sri Lanka government. In the other two phases too, i.e. Chapters 3 and 5, the picture is not straightforward as President Jayewardene made massive mistakes by tacitly facilitating the pogrom-riots and in the period after June 1990 President Premadasa is faced with enemies from within his government and also revealed that he was at a loss as to what strategy could defeat the LTTE.

Furthermore the three main counterinsurgents – President Jayewardene, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Premadasa – made serious errors of judgment (especially of the LTTE) and also on many occasions worked at cross purposes with one another. In the case of the errors on the LTTE, ex-Prime Minister Gandhi and President Premadasa paid for them with their lives. Working at cross purposes was, in a sense, inevitable when the Indian central government gave sanctuary and military training to Tamil insurgents. And also – as can be seen when the Indo-Lanka Accord, its Annexures and Letters are examined – India wanted to obtain geopolitical advantages over Sri Lanka. These matters had no direct connection whatsoever to the Tamil insurrection.

By 1994 it could be stated that neither the Sri Lanka government nor the LTTE had won conclusively. A situation akin to a stalemate existed but the advantage was with the LTTE, when compared to the situation in 1977: it controlled large swathes of land in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and at least 300,000+ Tamil civilians. The LTTE's increase in military capability in a period of ten years (1984-1994) is very clear when its main attack of 1983 (when it ambushed and killed 13 soldiers) is compared to 1993 (when it attacked a large Army-cum-Navy base in Pooneryn and killed at least 650 military personnel and stole truckloads of weapons and ammunition).

This being said, however, the Sri Lankan government doggedly hung on and refused to cave-in and allow the country to be partitioned. Something akin to a stalemate existed at the end of 1994 at which point the UNP was ejected from government by the voters.

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I am, of course, solely responsible for any and all errors and shortcomings in this Thesis.

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Abbreviations

CNC	Ceylon National Congress
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CP	Communist Party
CWC	Ceylon Workers Congress
DUNF	Democratic United National Front
EPRLF	Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front
EROS	Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
ITAK	<i>Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi</i> (Lanka Tamil State Party, also called the 'Federal Party')
JVP	<i>Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna</i> (Peoples Liberation Front)
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Pakshaya (Lanka Equal Society Party)
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MEP	Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (Peoples United Front)
O.I.C.	Officer-in-Charge (of a police station)
PLOTE	Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lanka Muslim Congress
STF	Special Task Force (commando-type trained unit within the Police)
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
UNP	United National Party

Chapter. Introduction

Introduction

The objective of this Thesis is to analyse and assess the efforts by the government of Sri Lanka to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection between the years 1977 to 1994. The analytical framework utilised for this task is grounded in counterinsurgency doctrine which spans approximately 50 years from the work pioneered by British, French and US scholars and counterinsurgents in the 1960s, to the most recent US Army (2006) and British Army (2009) doctrine.¹ After obtaining insights from this literature, seven research questions were identified by the present author. The counterinsurgency campaigns of the Sri Lanka government 1977-1994 are analysed using these seven research questions.

The Tamil secessionist insurrection was by far the most serious political-military threat to its security and territorial integrity that the postcolonial Sri Lankan State has faced. It was primarily an internal threat but during specific periods of time the regional hegemonic power, India, was also deeply involved. This included the presence in Sri Lanka of approximately 100,000 Indian armed forces, paramilitary and police personnel.² The destruction of government buildings, bridges, railway lines, trains, buses, private residences, private vehicles and such like during 1977-1983 is incalculable.

One reasonably accurate *indicator* of the seriousness of the threat can be inferred from the details of armed forces' and police casualties which have been collated by the government. See below the total armed forces' and police casualties of the Tamil insurrection (1977-1994) compared with the same indicators for the 1971 Insurrection which is the next most serious internal security challenge the Sri Lankan state has faced (see Tables 0.1 and 0.2 below).

¹ Thompson, Robert, 1966, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*; Galula, David 1964, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*; British Army, 1973, *Land Operations*, Vol.3, *Counter Revolutionary Operations*; US Army, 1990, *Field Manual FM 100-20, Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict*; US Army, 2006, *FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency*; British Army, 2009, *Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, 'Countering Insurgency'*.

² See Rikhye, Ravi, 1989: 606, 'How Many Troops in Sri Lanka?' and Singh, Pushpindar, 1990/91: 26, 'Peacekeepers in Sri Lanka'.

Table 0.1: Total Number of Sri Lanka Army, Navy, Air Force and Police personnel Killed or Wounded during the 1971 Insurrection (April, May and June 1971) (Source: Criminal Justice Commission (Judgement) 1976: 436, *Judgement of the Criminal Justice Commission (Insurgency) Inquiry no.1, Politbureau.*)

	Killed	Injured
Army	19	91
Navy	3	15
Air Force	4	5
Police	37	194
Total	63	305

In the case of the 1971 insurrection (which lasted approximately 3 months), the total government forces killed were 63 and 305 wounded. In contrast, during the Tamil insurrection for the period 1977-1994 (17 years), the total Sri Lankan government casualties killed was 6,796 and 2,757 wounded. Indian casualties were a further 1,155 killed and 3,153 wounded. It needs to be mentioned that many tens of thousands of civilians were also killed but verifiable figures are difficult to locate.

Table 0.2: Total Number of Sri Lanka Army, Navy, Air Force and Police personnel Killed or Wounded, 1977 to November 1994, the tenure of the UNP government under Review

	1972 to Feb.1977 ^(a)		Feb.1977 to July 1983 ^(b)		July 1983 to 29 July 1987 ^(c)		29 July 1987 to 11 June 1990 ^(d)		11 June 1990 to 16 Nov 1994 ^(f)	
	Included within the subject matter of Chapter.2		Included within the subject matter of Chapter.3		Included within the subject matter of Chapter.4				Included within the subject matter of Chapter.5	
	KIA	WIA	KIA	WIA	KIA	WIA	KIA ^(d)	WIA ^(d)	KIA	WIA
Army	0	0	22	0	562	89	433	312	4,230	2,121
Navy	0	0	0	0	39	6	1	2	228	55
Air Force	0	0	2	0	27	6	20	3	118	71
Police	0	0	29	0	262	30	109	12	714	50
Total	0	0	53	0	890	131	563	329	5,290	2,297

Total for Entire Period

Killed = 6,796

Wounded = 2,757

IPKF

1,155 ^(e)

3,153 ^(e)

Source for Sri Lankan forces and police: 'Official Roll of Honour - 1977 to 2003', 2005, *Sri Lanka Ranaviru Wansaya*. Source for IPKF: *The Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)*, 11 July 2010.

Notes: KIA = Killed in Action. WIA = Wounded in Action (WIA refers to those wounded to some degree of seriousness. There were many thousands of others wounded to lesser degrees, but data on these cases is unavailable). IPKF = Indian Peace Keeping Force.

^(a) 1972 is a milestone in the Tamil insurrection. Tamil secessionism further intensified after the enactment of the 1st Republican Constitution in 1972 and various other policies taken by the then government, and, autonomous political radicalisation within Tamil youth. The Tamil New Tigers (TNT) an embryonic Tamil insurrectionary group came into being in 1972. In May 1973 the Tamil United Front (TUF) began drafting a Constitution for a Separate Tamil state (discussed in Chapter.1). A great deal of political work conducted within the Tamil community but no armed actions against the armed forces or police. **During this phase, total Killed = 0; total Wounded = 0.**

- (b) From 1977 up to June-July 1983 the Tamil insurrection gradually increased (see analysis in Chapter.3). It was in February 1977 that the first policeman was killed – a Tamil, as were most of the policemen killed in those initial years. They knew the language and knew how to identify insurgent cadres. **During this phase, total Killed = 53; total Wounded = 0.** The pogrom-riots of July 1983 is a watershed in the Tamil insurrection and postcolonial Sri Lanka history. Reliable figures for Tamil insurgent casualties and Tamil and Sinhalese civilian deaths are unavailable.
- (c) The 4 years from the pogrom-riots of July 1983 to June-July 1987 was a period when the Tamil insurrection greatly escalated to the detriment of the Sri Lankan State. **During this phase, total Killed = 890; total Wounded = 131.** Reliable figures for Tamil insurgent casualties and Tamil and Sinhalese civilian deaths are unavailable. The pogrom-riot increased Tamil recruits to the insurgents by many thousands. It also paved the way for Tamil Nadu and the Indian government to get directly involved in promoting negotiations between the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil secessionist (discussed in Chapter.4). This process ended with India forcing the Indo-Lanka Accord on Sri Lanka and the arrival of the Indian government to Jaffna and the Eastern Province in July 1987.
- (d) From July 1987 onwards the Sri Lankan armed forces were limited to their bases and camps in terms of the Indo-Lanka Accord. Furthermore, the 2nd JVP Insurrection occurred from approx. July 1987 to November 1989, and it was the JVP which caused the majority of the Sri Lanka Armed Forces & Police casualties during these 2 ½ years. The rest were caused by the LTTE prior to its ceasefire with the SL Government in April 1989 (explained and discussed in Chapter.4). **During this phase, total Killed = 563; total Wounded = 329.** Reliable figures for LTTE casualties and Tamil and Sinhalese civilian deaths are unavailable.
- (e) Fighting between the IPKF and the LTTE began from October 1987 onwards. The last IPKF soldier left Sri Lanka in late-March 1990 (*The Guardian*, 26 March 1990, 'Bananarama serenades Delhi's departing troops'). The LTTE re-ignited the insurrection against the Sri Lankan government on 11 June 1990. The casualty figures for the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) are **Killed = 1,155** (including 51 Officers). **Wounded = 3,153** (including 163 Officers). Source: *The Sunday Observer (Sri Lanka)*, 11 July 2010. Reliable figures for LTTE casualties and Tamil and Sinhalese civilian deaths are unavailable.
- (f) This was the period when, after the IPKF left, the LTTE deliberately re-ignited the insurrection. During these 4 years from June 1990 to November 1994 occurred the most intense fighting between the Sri Lanka government forces and the LTTE during this entire period of 17 years. **During this phase, total Killed = 5,290; total Wounded = 2,297.** Reliable figures for LTTE casualties and Tamil and Sinhalese civilian deaths are unavailable.

It was due to the Tamil insurrection that the longest and most widespread use of military force by the Sri Lankan government occurred. The growth of the Sri Lankan armed forces and police, increases in defence expenditure, new weaponry, changes in the capabilities of the forces' at the strategic, operational and tactical levels are all directly related to the Tamil insurrection.³ From a political-military operational perspective the most important characteristic of the Tamil insurgents in general and the LTTE in particular was their ability to wage *protracted guerrilla warfare*. Consequently the Tamil insurrection proved enormously difficult to cope with and

³ For example, in 1978 the Sri Lanka Army's Regular Force strength was 481 Officers and 8,489 Other Ranks. The 'Volunteers' Force (i.e. the equivalent of the British Army's Territorial Army) were 59 Officers and 1,280 Other Ranks. This was total of 540 Officers and 9,769 Other Ranks. In 1994 Army's Regular Force strength was 3,104 Officers and 56,959 Other Ranks. The 'Volunteers' were 970 Officers and 29,539 Other Ranks. This was a total of 4,074 Officers and 86,498 Other Ranks, a 654% and 785% increase, respectively, when compared to 1978. See Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 906-907, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*. The figures for the navy, air force and police could not be located. (Note: all of Sri Lanka's armed forces are made of volunteer recruits. Conscription or compulsory national service have never been implemented in Sri Lanka. The use of the word 'Volunteer' is a hangover from British colonialism to refer to the Sri Lankan equivalent of the 'Territorial Army' (British Army) or the National Guard (US military). From 1881 to 1945 the British colonial government raised a number of army Regiments (mostly infantry) which were composed of British planters and other British civilians working in the colony as Officers and few selected wealthy Ceylonese as Officers. The Other Ranks were Ceylonese. They were called 'Volunteer' units to differentiate them from the Regular British Army units too which happened to be based in Ceylon at various times.

outlasted numerous political, diplomatic, and military developments and changes in both Sri Lanka and India during 1977-1994.⁴

1. The Tamil Secessionist Insurrection

Sri Lanka gained Independence (i.e. Dominion status within the British Commonwealth) in February 1948. The Sri Lanka Tamils were dissatisfied with the political system that was established in 1948 which had many characteristics of a Unitary State. In 1949 a new Sri Lanka Tamil political party, the *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi* (the correct translation of which is 'Lanka Tamil State Party')⁵ was formed by breakaways from then existing Tamil political parties and other Tamils. ITAK's main demand was the creation of a Federal state system in Sri Lanka.⁶ This demand was determinedly opposed by the majority Sinhala ethnic group and both main political parties – the UNP and SLFP. A Federal form of government was not established. The suspicion and opposition to Federalism from the Sinhala majority was so strong that the 1st Republican Constitution adopted in 1972 emphatically stated that Sri Lanka was a Unitary State.⁷ And so too did the 2nd Republican Constitution adopted in 1978 which remains the Constitution of the country to date.⁸

From the early 1950s onwards relations between the majority Sinhala ethnic group and the Sri Lanka Tamils, the second largest ethnic group – which, even then, were not the most cordial - gradually worsened due to their inability to agree to the constitutional order under which the island would be governed. These relations were aggravated by mutual suspicion of each

⁴ Examples of these are (1) President JR Jayewardene's many efforts at a negotiated solution; (2) the 'two-track' policy of both Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi; (3) numerous agitations and involvements by Tamil Nadu; (4) the arrival and departure of Indian armed forces in to Sri Lanka; (5) the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, President Premadasa, and other important political leaders; (6) the death of many thousands of Tamil civilians, lesser numbers of Sinhala and Muslim civilians; accurate numbers impossible at present to establish; (7) the death of 6,796 armed forces and police personnel and the wounding of 2,757; (8) many changes of political leaders in the Indian central government – Rajiv Gandhi defeated in the general elections of 1989; assassinated by the LTTE in 1991 - and Tamil Nadu state government levels – the death (through natural causes of 'MGR' Mr. M.G.Ramachandran, a staunch supporter of Sri Lanka Tamils; (9) the worsening of diplomatic relations between Sri Lanka and India which eventually led to the arrival of the Indian armed forces in to Sri Lanka; (10) the exit of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF); (11) the assassination of President Premadasa; (12) the defeat of the UNP in both parliamentary and presidential elections in 1994. **The Tamil insurrection outlasted all of the above.**

⁵ This political party is incorrectly and misleadingly called the 'Federal Party' in a great deal of literature on Sri Lanka. This error is significantly misleading. While it agitated for a Federal system in its initial days, it later evolved into a secessionist party. The *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi* should be called 'Lanka Tamil State Party' and not the 'Federal Party'. This error exists even in the title of the book in the footnote below.

⁶ Sivarajah, A., 2007, *The Federal Party of Sri Lanka: The Strategy of an Ethnic Minority Party in Government and Opposition, 1949-2002*.

⁷ Government of Sri Lanka, 1972: 3, *The Constitution of the Republic of Sri Lanka (Ceylon)*. Adopted and enacted by the Constituent Assembly of the People of Sri Lanka on the 22nd of May 1972.

⁸ Government of Sri Lanka, 1978:5, *The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka*.

others' political agendas. The situation was further worsened by two episodes of anti-Tamil rioting, one in 1956 and the other in 1958.

The Tamil insurgency's political origins began along with a civil disobedience campaign launched by ITAK in 1961. There is considerable evidence that at least by 1961-62 secessionist ideas were already being actively canvassed and discussed within the Sri Lanka Tamils.⁹ During 1961 some relatively minor but symbolically and politically significant armed actions against the Ceylon Army and the police were conducted by small Tamil groups or individual Tamils.¹⁰ There is evidence of a small organisation called *Pulip Padai* ('Army of Tigers') being formed in 1961 but it remained embryonic.¹¹ The Tamil insurgent groups originated within the womb of Tamil parliamentary political parties, primarily the ITAK (*Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi*, the correct translation of which is 'Lanka Tamil State Party'. This party is also mistakenly referred to as the 'Federal Party').¹²

The enactment of the 1st Republican Constitution in 1972 was strongly opposed and boycotted by Tamil parliamentary parties and the embryonic Tamil secessionist political factions which had begun to emerge by that time.¹³ In May 1973 a Tamil United Front (TUF)¹⁴ Action Committee presided by the ITAK's founder and leader, S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, decided on a range of actions, one of which was the drafting of a constitution for a Separate Tamil State.¹⁵ Discussions and plans on how to solve the economic problems of a future separate Tamil state composed of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the island also began in 1973 amongst

⁹ See discussion in Chapter-1.

¹⁰ See discussion in Chapter.1. See *Ceylon Daily Mirror*, 24 April 1961:1, 'Army Patrol fired on. Kopay M.P., five others detained'. *Ceylon Daily News*, 29 April 1961:1, 'Patrol parties shot at in Jaffna, Batticaloa'. Partial strikes on two Estates'. An organisation called *Pulip Padai* (which means 'Army of Tigers' in Tamil) is reported to have been created in 1961. This organisation seems to have remained largely inactive but is significant as an early sign of Tamil militancy. See Narayan Swamy 1994:24. *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas*.

¹¹ The use of the symbol of the Tiger is, however, politically and militarily significant because the Tiger was the primary emblem of the *Chola* empire of South India, one of the several South Indian empires which invaded and occupied large areas of the island for decades at a time between 300 B.C. and 1200 A.D.

¹² *Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi* is the actual Tamil name of this party. Its accurate English translation is 'Lanka Tamil State Party'. As mentioned earlier its main demand was the creation of a Federal State in Sri Lanka. As a consequence it began to be referred-to by English language newspapers as the 'Federal Party'. This was a convenient short-hand compared to 'Lanka Tamil State Party'. But later-on by the late 1950s onwards this inadvertently benefited the party because it served to camouflage the transformations which began taking place within the party. From the early 1960s onwards secessionist trends developed within this party. It formed the Tamil United Front (TUF) on 14 May 1972 which in turn evolved into the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) on 14 May 1976. See Hoole, Rajan. 2001: 17, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*. It was the TULF which in 1976 passed the Resolution to create a separate state.

¹³ See Tamil United Liberation Front, 1977: 322, *Election Manifesto of 1977* where the Tamils' opposition is strongly reiterated. See also De Silva, K.M., 1986: 240-241, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multiethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985* for an account of the role this 1972 Constitution played in deepening the fissure between the Sri Lanka Tamils and the government and the Sinhala people.

¹⁴ TUF (Tamil United Front) was an umbrella Front of several Tamil parties. It evolved in to the TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front) a few years later.

¹⁵ See Jupp, James 1978: 159, fn.9, *Sri Lanka - Third World Democracy*.

prominent Jaffna University academics.¹⁶ Although the majority of Sinhala voters may not have been aware of these political developments, the leaders of the major parties – the UNP and SLFP – would have. It was political developments such as these which solidified the conviction amongst Sinhala political leaders that ITAK's real agenda was to create a separate state in Sri Lanka, and that the demand for a Federal system was the initial phase of this project. And that this project had to be opposed. This in-turn resulted in both the SLFP and UNP resisting Tamil demands for 'devolution' of power to a territorial 'Unit' of devolution' larger than a District, and definitely not to a territorial 'Unit' comprising the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

In the meantime Tamil insurgents began armed actions at a very low intensity in the early-1970s. The initial insurgent actions were intimidation of their opponents *within* the Tamil community and not a single policeman or military person was attacked. The Tamil New Tigers (TNT) was formed in 1972.¹⁷ Pro-government Tamil politicians were intimidated and sometimes assassinated. The first such high profile assassination occurred in 1975 – the then Mayor of Jaffna – who was a very prominent Tamil supporter of the SLFP government.¹⁸

Most significant of all, during 1972-1976 a great deal of pro-secessionist political lobbying took place *within* the Sri Lanka Tamil population.¹⁹ Due to the lack of 'newsworthiness' of this clandestine political work these political developments were largely unknown to the majority Sinhala electorate. The police and the government knew that small embryonic guerrilla groups were in existence but they too did not pay too much attention to the movement because the violent actions against the government was nil. Furthermore, the then SLFP-led coalition-government was distracted by other far more immediate economic and fiscal problems. These

¹⁶ See Manogaran, Chelvadurai, 1987: 179-180, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka* and Shastri, Amita, 1990: 74, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'. Discussed in detail later in Chapter. 1 of this Thesis.

¹⁷ See Narayan Swamy, M R 1994:91, fn5, *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas*. The TNT was created by Vellupillai Prabhakaran. There is some debate regarding whether the TNT began in 1972 or 1974. See page 91 for the details of the debate. It was from the TNT that the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) were created on 5 May 1976, see Narayan Swamy, M.R., 1994:58.

¹⁸ This was the assassination of Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraiappah. See Hoole, Rajan, 2001: 17-19, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder* for a comprehensive account of the Tamil secessionist political background to this political assassination. This assassination was a huge controversy at that time.

¹⁹ Political mobilisation is crucially important at all stages of any insurrection (and any counter-insurrection); this will be discussed in Chapter.2. The vast majority of such mobilisation, however, takes place through conversations and small-scale meetings. These conversations don't get recorded in any text and it is only via conversations and discussions with Tamil colleagues that the present author can state that these conversations did occur during these years. That information too is a small fraction of the hundreds of thousands of conversations which would have taken place amongst the Tamil population during those years. A primary reason for such conversations to not get recorded is because they did not (and do not) have any 'newsworthiness' to justify allocation of column space in a newspaper or broadcast time on radio or TV. And also because most of them are clandestine and meant to be kept secret they *never* get revealed. However, in the case of an assassination such as Jaffna Mayor Duraiappah's (mentioned earlier), due to the fact that a person was killed and the political significance of the victim such events have newsworthiness and get printed in newspapers and published in books and thereby get recorded for posterity.

problems necessitated the drastic reduction of food imports.²⁰ These policies had immediate political consequences on the government. It was only in 1979, under a different government, that legislation specifically aimed at 'preventing terrorism' was passed.²¹

The pro-secessionist mobilisation amongst Tamils was clearly revealed at the TULF's annual Convention of 1976 held in Vaddukkodai, a town in the Jaffna peninsula. This Resolution called for the creation of a separate Tamil State. It asserted that the Northern and Eastern Provinces were the 'homeland' of the Tamils.²² This Resolution was a landmark in the country's politics. It was a manifestation of intense lobbying by militant secessionist youth of the TULF's youth wing, other radical youth groups and clandestine guerrilla groups which were actively agitating and mobilising public opinion within Tamil society at that time. This Resolution, in-turn, provided a substantial political boost to the secessionist tendency as it legitimised the call for a separate Tamil State. It set the foundation for further accelerated political agitation with the Tamil people. This Resolution can be assessed as the end of the precursory phase of the Tamil insurrection. After 1976 Tamil insurrectionary activities increased somewhat. The targeted killing of Tamil police personnel began in February 1977.²³ By 1982 five insurgent groups – i.e. LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), EROS (Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students), TELO (Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation), PLOTE (Peoples' Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam), and EPRLF (Eelam Peoples' Revolutionary Liberation Front) - were in existence.

The Land Area Claimed for the Proposed Separate State. The Tamil secessionist insurrection's²⁴ aim was to create a separate state called *Tamil Eelam* in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and Puttalam District of Sri Lanka (See Maps 0.1 and 0.2).²⁵

²⁰ K.A. Da Silva, 1973: 381, 'Mrs. Bandaranaike's government in trouble: Economic failures, diplomatic successes'. During 1973-1976 Sri Lanka was in serious economic difficulty. The government was compelled to curtail its import of vital foodstuff and there were serious food shortages in the country and food rationing. The SLFP led government became increasingly unpopular. These were among the reasons which led to its defeat to the UNP in the parliamentary elections of July 1977.

²¹ See Government of Sri Lanka, 1979, Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act, No. 48 of 1979. Colombo: Department of Government Printing. Amended in 1982 by Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) (Amendment) Act, No. 10 of 1982. Colombo: Department of Government Printing.

²² See De Silva, K.M., 1986: 406, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multiethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985*. See pp.403-406 for the complete text of the Resolution. This Resolution is often referred-to as the 'Vaddukkodai Resolution' in Sri Lankan history and social science publications.

²³ 'Official Roll of Honour - 1977 to 2003', 2005: 1660, '*Sri Lanka Ranaviru Wansaya*'.

²⁴ Tamil insurgents and their supporters and sympathisers used (and use) the following phrases for self-identification: 'Tamil Liberation movement'; 'Tamil Liberation struggle'; 'Tamil Freedom movement'; 'Tamil Freedom struggle' etc. Dead LTTE cadres were called 'martyrs for the motherland'; 'heroes for the motherland'. On the other hand the terms used by the government, military, police and the press in the Sinhala majority areas were 'Tamil terrorists and/or terrorism'; 'Separatist terrorists and/or terrorism. Or just the single words 'terrorists' or 'terrorism' when the Tamil insurrection was the only insurrection occurring in Sri Lanka (this is to flag to the reader that during the period July 1987 to November 1989 (2 ½ years) the 2nd JVP insurrection was also underway in the country). The present author has not yet been able to locate a single instance when the terms 'insurgency', 'insurgents' and 'counterinsurgency' ever used by the government or military. During

secessionist insurrection was to secede and create a separate state, not capture state power.²⁷ The population group from within which the insurrection arose was the Sri Lanka Tamil ethnic group which constituted 12.6% of Sri Lanka's population in 1981.²⁸

Map 0.2: The Proposed Separate State of Tamil Eelam (area in Dark Green)



(Source: tamilnation.org/tamileelam/boundaries/tamil_eelam_districts.htm)

The dark green coloured area in Map. 0.2 constitutes the area claimed for the Separate Tamil State. The outline given in Map 0.2 is the map which appears in all the literature, posters and pamphlets of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

²⁷ However, during the course of the insurrection Tamil secessionist insurgents carried out many attacks on government infrastructure in Colombo, its environs and in other Districts and killed many armed forces, police, government political leaders and Sinhala civilians living outside the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

²⁸ Prior to 1994, the 1981 all-island Census was the last Census that could be held in the country. In 2012 a comprehensive Census was done but the entire results have not yet been publicly released. In any event the 2012 Census data cannot be utilized in this Thesis which pertains to the period 1977 - 1994.

Escalation of Insurrection after Pogrom-Riots of July 1983. After the General Elections of July 1977 insurrectionary activities increased by another few notches. Subsequently, the insurrection slowly worsened until the pogrom-riots²⁹ of July 1983 which was a watershed event in the country's history. Up to July 1983 the total number of police and armed forces personnel killed was 53. The first army soldier was killed only in October 1981 with one more killed by the end of that year.³⁰ The first two air force airmen were killed only in June 1983. The first three navy seamen were killed in action in 1984, the first death occurring in July of that year.³¹

After July 1983 the casualties increased to unanticipated levels. Up to November 1994 the total casualties of the armed forces and police were 6,743 killed in action and 2,757 Wounded-in-Action.³² This increase was due to thousands of Tamil youth joining the different insurgent groups and the insurgency escalating to a very high level of guerrilla warfare which was qualitatively larger than anything before July 1983, and also due to military tactics which the Sri Lankan armed forces had never experienced before.³³ Civilian political leaders and government, and the armed forces and police had never experienced an insurrection of this magnitude. It took many years for Sri Lanka's governmental system, armed forces and police to learn and improve themselves.

During the years immediately after the 1983 pogrom-riots, 1984-1985, there was a marked increase in the number of Tamil guerrilla groups. One writer mentions 35 groups while another notes a total of 42 groups.³⁴ Numerous internal conflicts occurred within and between these guerrilla groups. In due course through internecine killings this plethora of guerrilla groups was reduced to the original five groups. In July 1987, along with the Indo-Lanka Accord, all the insurgent groups except the LTTE agreed to a political solution to Tamil grievances within an undivided Sri Lankan state. Although the LTTE also initially said that it too agreed with the Indo-Lanka Accord, it later reneged and re-ignited the insurgency. In October 1987 fighting began between the LTTE and the Indian forces. From October 1987 onwards the LTTE was the sole political-military expression of Tamil secessionism.³⁵

²⁹ The word 'Pogrom' is used intentionally to signpost the very high probability that influential sections of the UNP government played a role in organising and triggering off the anti-Tamil violence. The evidence is analysed in Chapter 3. 'Pogrom' means an organised massacre, especially of Russian Jews, and the word originated sometime in the 19th Century (See Chambers English Dictionary, 1990:1125).

³⁰ See 'Official Roll of Honour - 1977 to 2003', 2005: 873, *Sri Lanka Ranaviru Wansaya*.

³¹ See 'Official Roll of Honour - 1977 to 2003', 2005: 1646 and 1621 and , *Sri Lanka Ranaviru Wansaya*.

³² See Table 0.2 below for details.

³³ These events and underlying strategies are discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

³⁴ See Singer 1986:14, 'Report on the Pressures and Opportunities for a Peaceful Solution to the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka'. And Marks 1987:41, 'Counter-Insurgency in Sri Lanka: Asia's Dirty Little War'.

³⁵ See Senaratne, 1997:89-102 *Political Violence in Sri Lanka, 1977-1990: Riots, Insurrections*,

Capability to Conduct Protracted Guerrilla Warfare. From 1987 it was the LTTE alone which prosecuted the insurrection. The LTTE's number of trained cadres was a very closely guarded secret by the organisation for obvious reasons.³⁶ It had to have thousands of armed and combat experienced cadres to have carried out the military attacks described in this Thesis and these cadres would have had to be supported by many thousands of other personnel who gave logistic and other types of support.³⁷

The LTTE's ability to wage protracted warfare coupled with the support and assistance from fellow Tamils in Tamil Nadu and the Tamil 'Diaspora' elsewhere in the world gave the LTTE the ability to continue. That in-turn led to a range of consequences for the Sri Lanka State (discussed later in this Thesis). Such protracted guerrilla warfare – as discovered by many other governments throughout the world - proved extremely difficult for the Sri Lankan state to cope with.³⁸

By this it is not implied that the LTTE were experts in protracted guerrilla warfare from their inception in 1972-1976 and that they merely implemented a pre-designed master plan of protracted guerrilla warfare. On the contrary the initial actions of the LTTE (and the other Tamil militant groups as well) were amateurish and they committed many mistakes. However, as the pro-secessionist political mobilisation of the Tamil people continued at a gradual and steady pace, the Tamil insurgent groups had the advantage of *time* to gradually develop *some* of the characteristics of protracted guerrilla warfare.³⁹ During 1977-1994 different combinations of Strategic Defensive, Strategic Parity and Strategic Offensive can be discerned in the Northern Province, the Eastern Province and in Colombo.

While insurgent leaders would undoubtedly have had some plans for future political and military actions, such plans could not have foreseen the complex trajectory of the insurrection from the early-1970s onwards. What the insurgent leaders, especially the LTTE's leaders, were able to do was to manoeuvre and counter-manoeuve and *adapt* themselves to new conditions and challenges which they faced from time to time from the Sri Lankan government and the Indian

Counterinsurgencies, Foreign Intervention for a discussion of this period.

³⁶ Otherwise the government would be able to deduce the LTTE's capability to recruit, the support for the LTTE within ethnic Sri Lanka Tamils and popularity of the secessionist project.

³⁷ However, the present author cannot locate dependable data on numbers of cadres.

³⁸ This capability is in stark contrast with the two JVP insurrections (3 months in 1971 and 2½ years, July 1987-November 1989) and all the other Internal Security problems faced by the postcolonial Sri Lankan State such as the anti-Tamil riots of 1956 (about 1 week) and 1958 (about 1½ weeks).

³⁹ It is apposite to mention here that the LTTE developed only *some* of the characteristics of Maoist protracted guerilla warfare. Due to the need for brevity this is a subject which cannot be discussed in depth in this Thesis.

government. Concurrently they made use of whatever support came forth from the Tamil people living on the island and financial support from the Tamil Diaspora.⁴⁰

2. Research Questions

Counterinsurgency is a complex and specific sub-category of warfare. Most of the time-tested Doctrines and military manuals are from Britain and the USA which are the two countries which have done the greatest amount of work in this area. In the Universities and military institutions of these two countries counterinsurgency is a subject which is given serious consideration.⁴¹ Sri Lanka army officers are aware of this literature and all middle-rank and senior officers who have completed training courses abroad and in Sri Lanka have also been exposed to this literature. Sri Lanka's political leaders, however, have no systematic instruction in this literature other than through their own initiatives.⁴² Henceforth in this Thesis when phrases such as 'counterinsurgency doctrine' and 'counterinsurgency theory' are used, they refer to British and/or US literature.

The analytical framework utilised in this Thesis is grounded in counterinsurgency doctrine which spans approximately 50 years from the work pioneered by Robert Thompson in 1966 to the most recent US Army (2006) and British Army (2009) publications. These have been adapted to the Sri Lankan context by the present author. The process through which the following 7 research questions were identified is explained in Chapter 2. The following questions pertain to the Sri Lanka government of 1977-1994.

- 1. Did the Sri Lanka government have Political Purposes?**
- 2. Did the Sri Lanka government give security to the Tamil population?**

⁴⁰ A clear example of this strategic and tactical adaptability was the LTTE's ceasefire with President Premadasa's government in June 1989. The LTTE wanted the IPKF to leave Sri Lanka as soon as possible as the LTTE had realised that it could not keep fighting the IPKF indefinitely. The Indian government had the personnel and military resources to keep the IPKF in the Northern and Eastern Provinces indefinitely, if it wanted to. President Premadasa too wanted the IPKF to leave take away the main demand of the JVP's 2nd insurgency which was underway at that time and thousands of Sinhalese from the UNP, SLFP, JVP and a variety of other political parties had already been killed and soldiers and policemen also killed. In June 1989 the LTTE agreed to a ceasefire with the Sri Lanka government. Immediately the reason for the IPKF's presence in Sri Lanka disappeared. President Premadasa made this point and asked the IPKF to leave. After initially baulking the Indian government withdrew the IPKF by March 1990. On 11 June 1990 the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection against the Sri Lanka government (see discussion in Chapters 3 and 4 of this clever tactical ploy by the LTTE).

⁴¹ See Chapter 2 for a literature survey of counterinsurgency and discussion and critique of the literature within the context of Sri Lanka. A certain amount of literature from France has been accessed by the present author via translations to English. There may be equivalent counterinsurgency literature in Chinese and Russian academic and military institutions. But due to the present authors inability to read these languages or locate English translations it has not been possible to peruse such literature. These matters are explained further in Chapter 2.

⁴² Explained and discussed further in Chapter 2.

3. Did the Sri Lanka government neutralize the Tamil insurgents?
4. Did the Sri Lanka government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?
5. Did the Sri Lanka government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base?
6. What were the relationships the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?
7. Did the Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the secessionist insurrection?

The Time Period Dealt-With in this Thesis. The year 1977 is a suitable start-date for this research study as it was the beginning of the new UNP government's tenure. The Tamil insurgency was also still (relatively) low in intensity. However, the approximately 16-year 'precursory phase' of the Tamil secessionist insurrection from the early-1960s to 1976 is crucial for understanding the insurrection. This is discussed in Chapter.1. The end date of the Thesis, November-December 1994, was chosen because it was then that the UNP lost power both in parliament and in the presidency. Incidentally this period of 1977-1994, a period of 17 years, was, in 1994, the longest period that any political party had continuously governed Sri Lanka after Independence in 1948. In 1994 the UNP was defeated in both parliamentary and presidential elections and a new SLFP-led coalition government came to power. This new government adopted an entirely different set of policies towards the Tamil insurrection. Accordingly, 1994 was determined as a suitable end-date for this Thesis.

3. The State Security System – the NSC, Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Armed Forces and Police

The agencies of the Sri Lankan government and state which were constitutionally, politically, militarily and operationally responsible for dealing with external and internal threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country can be collectively referred to as Sri Lanka's 'State Security system'. The army, navy, air force and police were the four main departments of this system. The apex body of the State Security system was the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC was the most important policymaking body of the State Security system and consequently had a great impact on all matters pertaining to security policy. The President – who is the Head of State, Head of Government and the Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces – was the chairperson of the NSC. Traditionally, he or she was also the Minister of Defence. The other members of the NSC were the Deputy Minister

for Defence (at times when such a post existed in a particular government); the Secretary to the President, the Secretary to the Deputy Minister for Defence, the Secretary to the MoD and the commanders of the army, navy, air force and police.

The commanders of the army, navy, air force and police were the principal advisors to the NSC on matters pertaining to their departments. Their advice may or may not be accepted in full or in part by the President and the NSC. Or their advice may be modified through the general discussion in the NSC. The director(s) of various intelligence agencies could be instructed to be present at an NSC meeting as and when required.⁴³ In addition, the President had the option of co-opting for NSC meetings other Ministers, military officers, civilian bureaucrats and advisors as the need arose. Depending on the security situation the NSC requested the armed forces to submit draft operational plans which were then discussed and modified as seen fit by the NSC. On other occasions the President and/or the Deputy Minister along with their advisors conceived plans which were then discussed at the NSC and the opinions sought from the commanders of the armed forces. When requested by the NSC or MoD to do so, the Operations Branches of the respective armed forces prepared detailed military appreciations and assessments. Ultimately the President, by virtue of all his/her constitutional responsibilities had to bear the final responsibility for all NSC decisions.

One tier down from the NSC is the Ministry of Defence (MoD). The MoD was in overall day-to-day control of the army, navy, air force and the police. The MoD was responsible for all armed forces and police promotions, appointments, budgetary allocations and procurements. The army, navy, air force and police were organised below the MoD as separate departments with their respective commanders being the chief executive officer of each institution. The order of precedence in State ceremonies and official publications was: army, navy, air force and police, in that order. The army was the 'senior' service.

After overall policy and strategy were decided at the NSC then the MoD ordered the armed forces and police to implement such policies and operations. Each armed force was responsible for implementing the missions which fell within its purview. Any operation which required the coordinated effort of more than one armed force was conducted as a 'joint operation'. The army was the dominant organisation in the Sri Lankan state security system when armed insurrection was underway. The army was responsible for preparing the

⁴³ Up to 1994/95 the primary state intelligence agency was the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), which was part of the Police. The police also has the CID (Criminal Investigations Department) and TID (Terrorist Investigations Division). The Army's Military Intelligence Corps (MIC) was created in 1990 and is operational to date. The navy and air force too have created intelligence sections of their own. All relevant information from these organizations can be made available to the NSC.

Operational Plans and Operation Orders for ground operations. These plans excluded the details of close air support or logistics operations which happened to be the responsibility of the navy and/or the air force, as the case arose. The navy and the air force prepared such plans and these were then incorporated into the overall plan.

For large military operations Army headquarters (AHQ) in Colombo prepared the overall plans and Operation Orders, and the Divisions deployed in the North and East were then ordered to implement these. In the case of strategies which were to be implemented over a period of time in a specific area – such as, for example, contesting the LTTE's free movement in a specific jungle area in the North or East - AHQ would issue an 'operational directive' which indicated the result sought by the government. The Division commander of that particular area, along with his staff, then prepared 'Operation Orders' to implement the directives received from AHQ. These operations were implemented through the Brigades and battalions that happened to be placed under their command at that time. In conclusion, as can be seen, in Sri Lanka the use of military force by the armed forces extends downwards from the President and the NSC, the MoD, the army commander, the Divisional commanders, the Brigade commanders and downwards. Equivalent chains of command operated for the navy and air force as well.

4. Geographic and Demographic Factors Relevant to the Tamil Secessionist Insurrection, and, Government Counter Actions

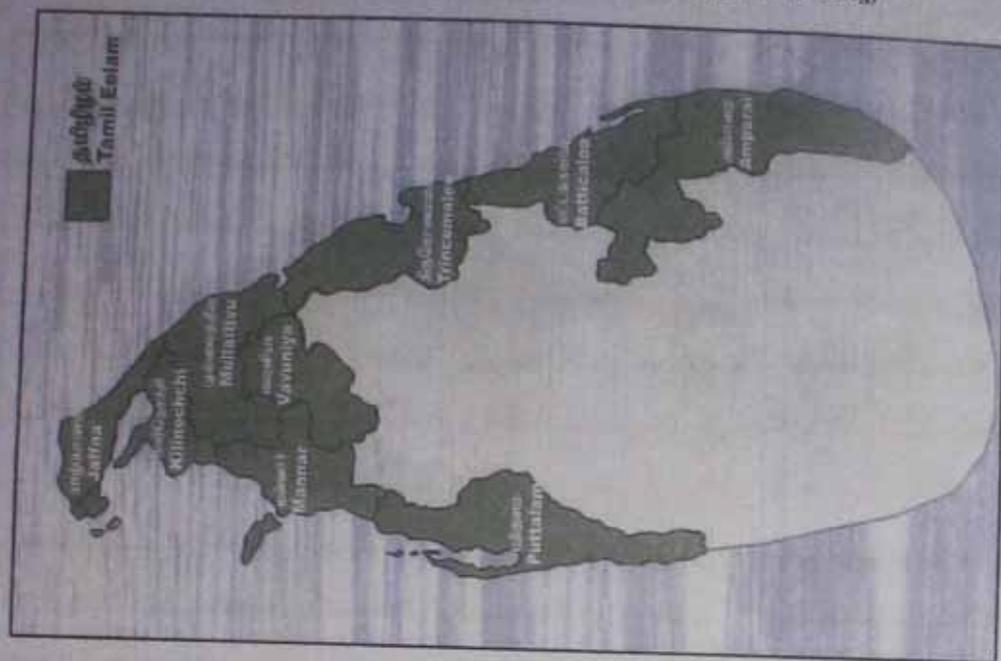
Geographical, demographical and forest cover are factors which were highly relevant to understand how and why the Tamil insurgency developed 1977-1994.⁴⁴ Concurrently, these factors were equally relevant to counterinsurgency military and police operations as well. In this section we will examine some of the relevant factors. One of the most important aspects of this section is to compare and contrast Map 0.2 and Map 0.3.

The **Northern Province** is composed of the Districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaittivu, Mannar, and Vavuniya. These are the Districts in which the heaviest fighting occurred. The Jaffna District consists of the Jaffna Peninsula and the islands which lie off the North-Western coast of the peninsula. The peninsula proper is densely populated – predominantly by ethnic Tamil people - and experienced repeated bouts of very heavy fighting and population

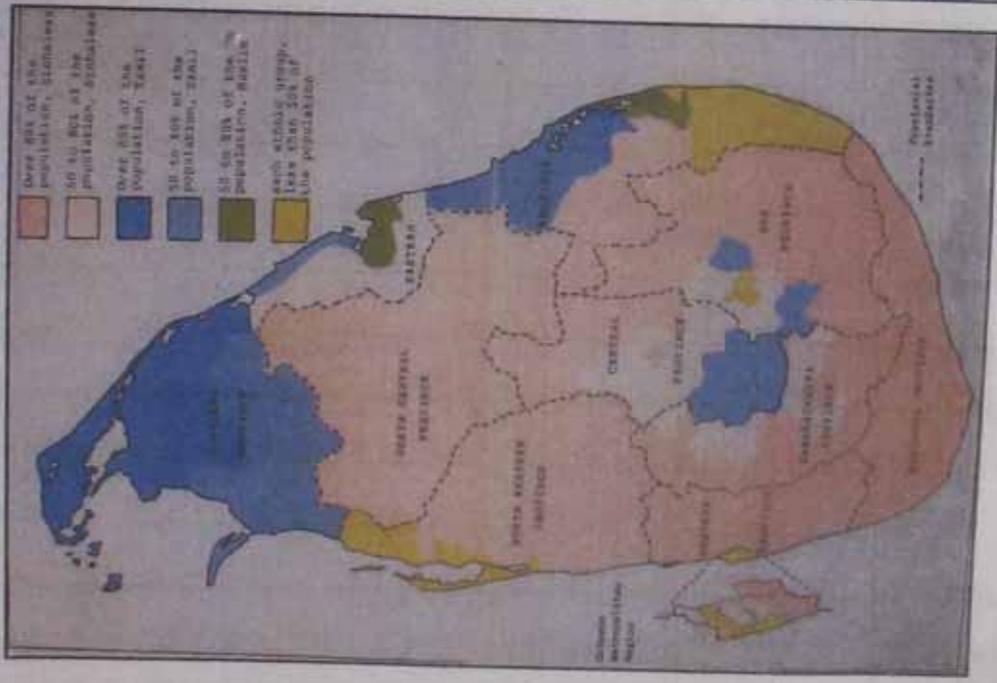
⁴⁴ Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean situated approximately 22 miles off the southern coast of India. It has a land area of 65,610 Sq.Km. In 2007 it had an estimated population of 20.01 million (thee last census was conducted in 1981. The 1991 and 2001 censuses could not be conducted over the entire island due to the Tamil insurgency. Population estimates are projections based on the 1981 figures). The country is divided into 9 Provinces within which are encompassed 25 Districts.

displacement. The Districts of Kilinochchi, Mullaittivu, Mannar and Vavuniya are the remaining four Districts of the Northern Province. Collectively, these four Districts are referred to as the 'Vanni'.

Map 0.2: The Proposed Separate State of Tamil Eelam



Map 0.3: Geographic Concentration of Sri Lanka's Major Ethnic Groups



These Districts are very much less densely populated than the Jaffna Peninsula. However, among the four of them, too, there are demographic differences. From 1987 to 1994 large areas of these four Districts were under the dominance of the LTTE.

The **Eastern Province** consists of the Districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Ampara. These three Districts have a demographic composition widely different from the Northern Province. Significant numbers of Muslims and Sinhala people are settled in these three districts. During the period 1983-2001 different parts of these three Districts came under the dominance or control of the LTTE. Although this dominance was never as strong as it was in the Northern Province, it did mean that for many years at a stretch the writ of the government did not hold sway over large tracts of land and many thousands of Tamil people. It is from the above 8 Districts, along with Puttalam District (see below) that the secessionist movement aimed to create the separate state of *Tamil Eelam*. These were the 8 Districts where the fiercest fighting of the secessionist insurrection occurred.

The **North Western Province** is composed of the Districts of Puttalam and Kurunegala. Of these two Districts the secessionist made a claim for Puttalam District which had some Tamils settled within it. Kurunegala District which is to the east of Puttalam District is a predominantly and densely populated by Sinhalese. During the insurgency there were a number of (relatively) small attacks in Puttalam District. But there were no attacks or military operations of the magnitude, for example, as discussed in Chapters 5 (i.e. the 1990-1994 period) because the Tamil insurgents could not have base camps so far into the south of the island. The main reason for this was the substantial numbers of Muslims and Sinhalese civilians who lived in this District. Any movement of large numbers of LTTE cadres would be noticed and information given to the government. However, individual LTTE cadres on their way to and from Colombo and small groups of cadres which carried out ambushes did survive in the Puttalam District. But not large numbers of LTTE cadres as in the case of areas north of the Mannar-Vavuniya-Weliyoa line.

North Central Province consists of the Districts of Anuradhapura and Pollonnaruwa. The predominant population of these Districts are Sinhalese. These Districts border the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The LTTE had bases and supply routes which sometimes ran along the borders of these Districts. Sinhala villages along the borders of these Districts were frequently attacked by the LTTE to induce out-migration from these areas. Both the army and the LTTE patrolled and ambushed each other in these border areas.

The **Uva Province** is composed of the Districts of Badulla and Monaragala. The LTTE had bases in the thick jungles which straddled Monaragala and Ampara Districts and attacked villages in both districts to induce out-migration, dissuade civilians from going into jungle areas and also to intimidate the civilians into non-cooperation with the government.

The remaining four provinces were only rarely affected by the insurgency. These were the **Central Province**: composed of Matale, Kandy, and Nuwara Eliya Districts; **Western Province**: composed of Colombo, Gampaha, and Kalutara Districts; **Sabaragamuwa Province**: composed of Kegalle and Ratnapura Districts; **Southern Province**: composed of Galle, Matara, and Hambantota Districts. Of the above, it was only Colombo District – along with a few rare attacks in Kandy and in Hambantota Districts – that was affected by the insurgency. Colombo city was the target for many bomb attacks from 1984 onwards.

A comparison of Maps 0.2, 0.3 and 0.4 gives a clear idea of the **demographic** and **forest cover** reasons for the **secessionist movement's overall strategy**. When Map 0.2 is set side-by-side with Map 0.3 the correlation between the settlement pattern of ethnic groups and the Tamil secessionist demand for the Eastern Province becomes apparent.

As is evident from Map 0.3, the Sinhalese majority are concentrated in the south and western parts of the island. But many also live in the Eastern province. The Northern Province is predominantly populated by the Tamil ethnic group. The Northern Province is also the province where secessionist ideas were the strongest. The Northern Province was also the area in which the fiercest fighting occurred. The Trincomalee District has all three ethnic groups within it, while the Batticaloa District has a large percentage of Tamils, some Muslims and a very few Sinhalese. The yellow areas denote areas where all three ethnic groups have less than 50% of the population. The yellow coloured areas are in Puttalam and Ampara Districts. This demographic character is the most important reason why Tamil insurgents were not able to make much impact in both the Puttalam and Ampara Districts. The blue areas in the centre of the island denote Upcountry Tamil settlements in and around the Tea Plantations of that area. These areas were largely unaffected by the insurrection.

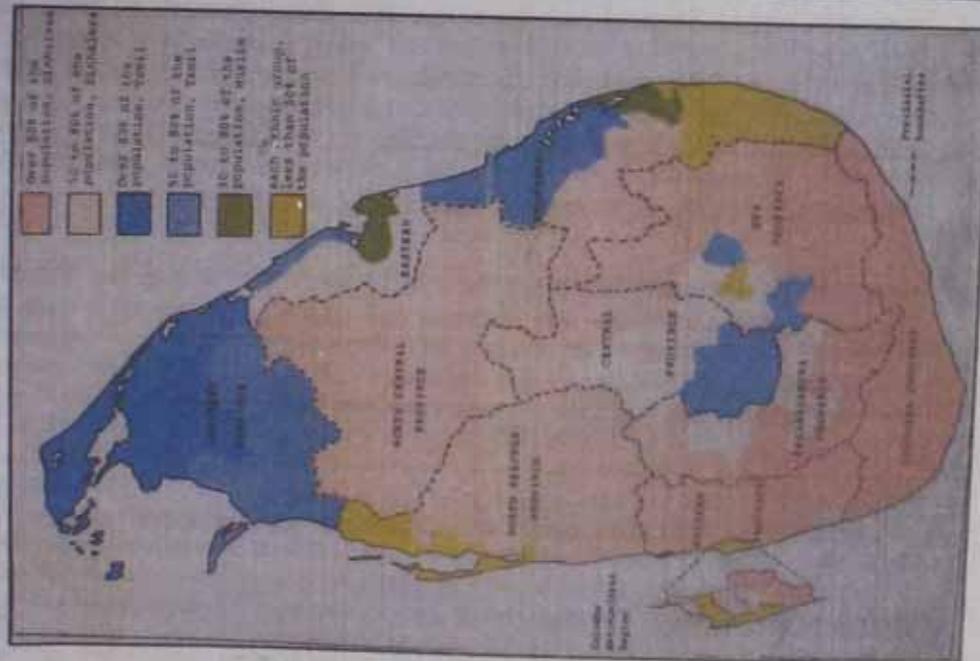
A comparison of Map.0.3 and Map 0.4 illustrates the **link** between the **secessionist insurrection** and the **Forest Cover** of the island.

Map 0.4: District Forest Cover of Sri Lanka 1991-1992 and 1999-2001



(Source: Ratnayake, Abeykoon & Chenu, 2003)

Map 0.3: Geographic Concentration of Sri Lanka's Major Ethnic Groups.



(Source: Richardson, 2005: 25. This Map is a colour version given to the author by Prof. Richardson.)

As can be seen a great area of the Northern Province and considerable areas of the Eastern Province are under forest cover. The LTTE was greatly assisted by these forests within which it established numerous camps. However, it needed access to Tamil populated towns and villages for essential supplies such as food and medical supplies. The LTTE had supply

sources from the sea through which weapons, ammunition, medicines in bulk and other non-perishable items could be brought. But perishable food was obtained via numerous methods from within the country itself. These jungle bases offered sanctuary to the LTTE to rest, train, maintain supply dumps and carry out attacks. Valuable political and military insights can be gained by comparing Maps 0.2, 0.3 and 0.4 with each other.

5. Structure of the Thesis

This Thesis is composed of the Introduction and six Chapters. Chapter.1 deals with the history of Ethnic Competition and Violence in Sri Lanka, and, the politically and militarily salient features of the Tamil secessionist mobilisation from the 1950s to 1976. It is useful to discuss these matters before discussing insurgency and counterinsurgency and the 7 Research Question, as is done in Chapter.2. This is because Chapter.1's subjects set the specific historical, political, regional political and military context to discuss counterinsurgency doctrine in general and also the specific problems posed by the Sri Lankan case.

Chapter.2 is devoted to a discussion of counterinsurgency theory, including published academic books and military manuals of the defence establishments of the USA and Britain, and, the development of the 7 Research Questions. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 deal, in chronological order, with the three main phases the 1977-1994 period can be divided into. Each phase is separated from the other by qualitative changes in the insurrection.⁴⁵ Each of these Chapters incorporates *empirical* information assembled from a wide range of sources. The Chapters are in chronological order as each period has within it the antecedents and consequences of insurgent and counterinsurgent military strategies, tactics, military set-backs, military victories and attempts at political discussions and negotiations which preceded them. The strategies and set-backs of each period impacted upon the period that followed it.

Chapter.3 analyses the first seven years of President J.R. Jayewardene's government from 1977 to the 1983 pogrom-riots. These riots were a watershed in the entire insurrectionary process, and the escalation of the Tamil insurgency was a distinct break from the previous period. Chapter.4 deals with the period from the pogrom-riots of July 1983 to the exit of the Indian forces (March 1990) and the re-ignition of the insurrection by the LTTE in June 1990. From July 1983 the Tamil insurgency underwent a massive increase in intensity. During the

⁴⁵ Chapter-3 begins with 1977 and ends with the pogrom-riots of July 1983. This pogrom-riot is the catalyst for an immense escalation of the insurrection and is therefore the beginning of an entirely new phase of the insurrection and therefore the beginning of Chapter-4. Chapter-5 begins with the exit of the Indian forces and the re-ignition of the insurrection by the LTTE, again, qualitative changes in the political-military situation. Chapter. 5 ends with the total electoral defeat of the UNP government.

initial four years (late 1983-early 1987) Tamil insurgents unleashed a wide range of classic guerrilla style attacks on the Sri Lankan armed forces and police. The government found it very difficult to deal with these mobile, dispersed rural guerrilla type attacks, which were coupled with attacks in the primary urban centre, Colombo. From late-1983 onwards the Indian central government implemented a 'two-track' policy where on the one hand it was deeply involved in putting diplomatic pressure on the Sri Lanka government to give concessions and negotiated a settlement with the Tamils. On the other hand the Indian government allowed Tamil insurgents safe sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and set-up training camps in India for Tamil insurgents. In July 1987 the Sri Lanka government was compelled by Indian government pressure to sign the Indo-Lanka Accord and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) arrived in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the island. The following 33 month period - from July 1987 to March 1990 - was an anomalous period when the Sri Lanka government and armed forces were not involved in military operations in the North and East and hence a detailed discussion of this period is excluded from this Thesis.

After the Indians left in March 1990 the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection in June 1990. Chapter.5 describes and assesses the government's attempts to cope with the LTTE's insurrection during the 4½ years from June 1990 to November 1994. By 1994 the UNP had been in power for 17 years and had become highly unpopular amongst the majority Sinhala electorate. The LTTE's secessionist insurrection had also escalated to alarming levels, and this was a primary factor in UNP government's unpopularity. In August and November 1994 the UNP completely lost governing power, first when it lost the Parliamentary elections (in August) and then it lost the Presidential elections in (November 1994). Chapter.6 is devoted to the overall Conclusions. The Annexures are all at the end of the Thesis.

6. Research Methodology

Data and information regarding the 7 Research Questions were located from diverse sources. A great deal of empirical information regarding these 7 Research Questions are available in the public realm but are scattered throughout newspapers, parliamentary Hansards, published books, Regimental Souvenirs and journal articles. However, information regarding military strategies, military operations, battlefield set-backs and defeats and accurate information on military casualties proved difficult to assemble. Sri Lanka does not have a Freedom of Information on military aspects of government policy had to be collected, over many years, from a diverse range of sources and carefully cross-checked. Other than maps specifically sourced to other publications, all the other maps in this Thesis were drawn by the author using this empirical data.

Every attempt was made to corroborate information on the 7 Research Questions gleaned from one source with information from one or more other sources. There was no one single 'complete' data set accessible to academic research. Each category of information had its strengths and weaknesses. It is the combined force of all the information from all the following diverse sources which enabled the construction of the empirical foundation of this Thesis. Special mention needs to be made of the 'Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003' published in 2005 by the then government which proved to be an invaluable empirical source.

6.1: Interviews with some retired officers of the armed forces. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with some retired army officers whose names are mentioned in footnotes.

6.2: Proceedings of the Sri Lanka Parliament. The proceedings of the Sri Lanka parliament are published as the 'Hansards'. During important debates such as the monthly debate on the extension of the 'State of Emergency' – which existed during the entirety of the period relevant to this Thesis – matters related to military strategy, military offensives, set-backs and such like were debated. The Opposition would gather information from its own sources and challenge the government in these debates.

6.3: Sri Lankan and British Newspapers from the 1950s to December 1994. Newspapers were an invaluable source of information as they record with considerable accuracy the date (and approximate extent) of incidents. They were contemporaneous accounts largely devoid of second thoughts. Often there are inaccuracies in details such as the number of casualties, wounded, extent of damage, and amount of weapons lost or gained etc. However, a remarkably accurate contemporaneous record of military operations can be obtained via newspapers. When carefully read over a significant period of time, newspapers enabled the present author to deduce government military strategies, their success or failure, and strategies of the Tamil insurgents. It was also possible to deduce changes in government strategies during different periods of their tenure. Such matters would be considered highly secret and hardly ever reached the public realm. The method adopted by the author was to read the newspapers at various archives in Colombo, make (provisional) deductions and subsequently have detailed interviews and discussions with retired military officers regarding the trends and strategies identified from newspapers.

British newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Times* (London), and *The Observer* (London) were extremely useful as, first, they provided coverage devoid of the prejudices and biases

specific to Sri Lankan newspapers. Second, they had correspondents in Delhi and Colombo who had very good sources in both governments. Third, they managed to go into insurgent dominated areas in Sri Lanka and report from those areas whereas reporters from Sri Lankan newspapers were not tolerated by Tamil insurgents. The newspaper information was also cross-referred to the Casualty data in the 'Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003'.

There are, of course, some disadvantages in newspapers. Deliberate misinformation can be spread through newspapers. There was also official censorship and self-censorship via the journalists or the newspaper company's political and ethnic prejudices and biases. However, on balance, newspapers are an invaluable resource of contemporaneous information provided they are carefully used. They can provide empirical detail for obtaining insight into government and insurgent military strategies.

6.4: Regimental souvenirs, books and other publications by the armed forces and police.

The armed forces and the police publish souvenirs at various occasions commemorating anniversaries or past events of significance. Some of these are termed as 'Journals' published by various infantry, artillery and other regiments of the army. Newsletters are also published. The author has perused as many of these as were possible to locate. Although they do not discuss strategies or anything remotely relevant to contemporary operations, some of them have accounts of past military operations and other events in the life of the respective regiment which is of historical significance. Information in these souvenirs was useful when collated with information from other sources.

6.5: Detailed Utilisation of the 'Official Roll of Honour, 1977-2003'. The 'Official Roll of Honour' is a large 860-page Book published by the then government in 2005. It is not available for purchase but kept, with very restricted access, in some Archives in Sri Lanka. It records the names, service numbers, date and location of the event which led to the death or injury of all army, navy, air force and police personnel from 1977 to 2003. For the purpose of this Thesis, only the data from 1977 to 16 November 1994 was utilised.

The 'Official Roll of Honour' enabled the present author to make an independent assessment of the true personnel losses suffered on a day, a week or over months and years. It also enabled an independent corroboration of data and information obtained from newspapers and interviews. While newspapers were generally accurate in reporting the date and place a military event occurred, some other details were often vague and government casualty figures

were often under-reported and (alleged) LTTE casualties⁴⁶ were over-reported. Often the army's only source of LTTE casualties was (alleged) LTTE radio broadcasts as the LTTE generally made it a practice to take away the bodies of their dead cadres. Often several different sets of figures were released by the government. On occasion, the LTTE also released government casualty figures and these were exaggerated in the converse direction.

The date and location where each soldier, airman, seaman or policeman died or were injured proved very useful. Although in a large number of cases this identification proved difficult to establish, in any event this information was finally established and correlated with information from newspapers, interviews and data and information extracted from Regimental souvenirs. This enabled the reconstruction of an accurate and comprehensive account of the military operations conducted during these years.

The Tables of military casualties needs to be assessed correctly as they depict only the casualties of State personnel. As the State was concerned that was the data important to it and also because it just so happened that this data could be easily collected and preserved by routine State bureaucratic processes. These Tables do not give any indication of the most important acts of the insurrectionary process, i.e. the subversive processes underway *within* Tamil society, which were mostly verbal processes. During these years many hundreds of thousands of acts of subversion would have been carried out by the secessionist insurgents and their supporters *within* the Tamil population. These would have comprised of numerous acts of *persuasion* – i.e. many tens of thousands of political discussions conducted in secrecy by Tamil secessionists at work places, gathering of friends and in homes. And acts of *coercion* – i.e. numerous acts of intimidation, threats, beatings, serious injury and murder by Tamil secessionists against fellow Tamils who did not agree with them. In the vast majority of cases – i.e. except murder, and that too mostly in the case of prominent individuals - these acts of subversion were completely 'invisible' to the State and the population at large because these incidents did not get mentioned in the press as they were not public acts and also because they were not newsworthy. This is a dimension of any insurrection which researchers need to constantly kept in the forefront of their minds because: first, these 'invisible' processes are essential for the growth and progress of the insurrection. Second, the number and nature of these very important processes can never be known by researchers as the insurgents who conducted these discussions and their audiences cannot, many years later, be located. And even if located they will be reluctant to admit these discussion. Furthermore, due

⁴⁶ 'Alleged' because information of LTTE deaths were released to the press by the MoD or the army. Second, the army was able to locate only a certain number of the bodies of LTTE dead cadres. Third, the army often quoted LTTE radio intercepts as its source. All these were open to errors or deliberate misinformation.

to the long-drawn-out nature of many insurgencies – including the Sri Lankan case – individuals die of natural causes, get killed, move abroad as refugees or leave political activism altogether and refuse to discuss these earlier events in their lives. This is why recording of actual *acts* of insurrection – i.e. attacks of varying severity, ambushes, casualties of armed forces and police personnel and such like – are highly significant because they give an *indication* of the severity of the insurrection and the processes of subversion which underlie such acts.

6.6: Empirical information and data on the Sri Lankan conflict extracted from published literature. Data and information scattered in different Books and Journal Articles have been utilised in this Thesis.

6.7: Cartographical Sources. Information from many maps from various sources have been utilised in this Thesis. The sources of all published Maps are noted below each map. All the other maps without a specific source mentioned in this Thesis were prepared by the present author.

7. Scope and Limitations of this Thesis

This Thesis analyses and assesses the counterinsurgency policies of Sri Lankan governments from 1977 to 1994. To the knowledge of the author there is, at present, no other comparable study on this subject. It is therefore substantially original. However, the following limitations of this Thesis must be acknowledged. First, this Thesis ends in November 1994. But the insurgency was militarily defeated on Sri Lankan soil only in May 2009, 15 years later. The demand to secede has been pursued by Tamil secessionists in the ‘Tamil Diaspora’ up to the present day. There are still numerous internationally active Tamil front organisations including those in Tamil Nadu which call for the creation of a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka. The 1977-1994 period represents a discreet period in the insurgency when the country was governed by one political party, the United National Party (UNP).

A second limitation is the need to research and understand the inherent problems and difficulties governments face when implementing counterinsurgency campaigns in ethnically deeply divided societies like Sri Lanka. The persistent difficulties faced by postcolonial Sri Lanka, as discussed to some degree in this Thesis, is a good example of this. This is a vast and complicated subject which require many case studies and volumes in their own right and could not, due to the need for brevity, be included in this Thesis.

A third limitation of this Thesis is that it does not deal with the guerrilla operations of the Tamil secessionist insurrection but focuses primarily on the actions of the Sri Lankan government. The operations of the Tamil secessionist insurrection are assessed only insofar as they shed light on this topic. While it would be desirable to consider their activities in depth, the complexity of the Tamil secessionist insurrection are such that this would necessitate a separate volume of its own.

A fourth limitation is that humanitarian concerns and the human rights violations of the Tamil insurgents, and those committed by the Sri Lanka government and IPKF could not be touched upon. Again the need for brevity was the main factor, because to adequately describe and evaluate these violations requires an entire thesis-length study by itself. A fifth limitation of this Thesis emerged from the fieldwork, i.e. why is it that Sri Lanka army officers who have received extensive training and exposure to British and US counterinsurgency doctrine did not use the language and concepts of 'counterinsurgency' in the Sri Lankan context? An in-depth exploration of this question, however, cannot be done in this Thesis as it requires more time for detailed interviews with many officers – both retired and presently serving – more resources, and also works against the need for brevity of this Thesis.

Chapter.1

Ethnic Competition and Conflict, and, the Origins of Tamil Secessionism, 1950s-1976

This Chapter is devoted to an exploration of the competition and tensions between the two main ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, the Sinhalese and the Sri Lanka Tamils. And, the inception of Tamil secessionist mobilisation. Part. I will deal with the former and Part. II the latter.¹

Part. I gives an overview of the historical roots of Sinhala-Buddhist identity and how it was forged in the midst of persistent invasions from South India and the prodigious efforts to keep alive a hydraulic civilization built-up over many centuries. We will also deal with Sri Lanka's ethnic composition, ethnic competition and conflict, emergence and political mobilisation of the Sinhala, Sri Lanka Tamil and other ethnic groups. Special emphasis will be on Sinhala-Tamil ethnic competition in the postcolonial period. Part II will deal specifically with the emergence of Tamil secessionism in the 1950s and a chronological account of the main milestones which led to the call, in 1976, by the main Tamil parliamentarian party – with intense behind-the- scene lobbying and intimidation by nascent Tamil guerrilla groups which had already secretly formed – for a separate Tamil State.

The subject matter of this Chapter is very relevant and needs to be kept firmly in focus when, in Chapter.2, we discuss counterinsurgency warfare and develop an analytical framework suitable to assessing the Sri Lanka government's efforts at countering the Tamil insurrection 1977 to 1994. This is the main reason why this Chapter precedes Chapter.2.

¹ The subject matter of Part I and II are very large in scope. There is a great deal of published secondary material on this subject and there are many debates and areas of contestation. Entire books and theses have been written on these subjects and will surely be done so in the future as well. However, such issues can be discussed only to the level essential for this thesis due to the specific research questions and the need for brevity. This Chapter, therefore gives an overview essential to provide the broad historical and political context within which the Tamil secessionist insurrection emerged.

I

1.1: Ethnic Composition of Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan society is composed of four major ethnic groups - the Sinhalese, Sri Lanka Tamils (many of whom self-identify themselves as 'Ceylon Tamils'²), upcountry Tamils, and the Muslims.³ The percentages of these ethnic groups in the total population are: Sinhalese-74%, Sri Lanka Tamils - 12.6%, Upcountry Tamils - 5.6%, Muslims - 7.1% and other very small ethnic groups which are 0.7% of the total.⁴ Sri Lanka Tamils are descendants of Tamils who migrated or came as soldiers, administrators or camp-followers of various invading armies from India. They have settled and lived on the island for many hundreds of years. 'Upcountry Tamils' are labourers brought to Sri Lanka by the British during the 19th century as labour for their Tea and Rubber plantations. In terms of religious composition, Buddhists - 69.3%, Hindus - 15.5%, Muslims - 7.6%, Christians - 7.5%, and other religions - 0.1% of the total.⁵ The vernacular languages spoken in the country are Sinhala and Tamil. Sinhala is the language of the Sinhalese ethnic group and is widely spoken only in Sri Lanka.⁶ Tamil is the language of both sets of Tamil people and of most of the Muslims as well.⁷

Religion and language - either singly or combined - are the primary markers of ethnic identity. The majority Sinhala ethnic group speak Sinhala⁸ and are Buddhists. Accordingly

² Whether to use 'Sri Lanka Tamil' or 'Ceylon Tamil' is itself linked to Sinhala-Tamil ethnic tensions. 'Ceylon Tamils' was the term used during the British colonial period. After independence in 1948 too this term continued to be used. When Ceylon became a Republic in 1972 its formal name was changed to 'Sri Lanka'. The vast majority of government and State institutions and corporations replaced 'Ceylon' - if it happened to be included in their name - with 'Sri Lanka'. Most Tamils rejected the 1972 Constitution. They insisted that they continue to be called 'Ceylon Tamils'. But within Sri Lanka in government documents such as the Department of Census and Statistics the phrase used is 'Sri Lanka Tamil'. Most Tamils who migrated abroad and their descendants call themselves 'Ceylon Tamils', or just 'Tamils' or 'Eelam Tamils'.

³ In addition there are about another half-dozen or so numerically very small ethnic groups, see Vijayalakshmi, E (ed), *Cultural Minorities of Sri Lanka*. These are the Bohras, Sindhis, Malayalees, Dutch and Portuguese Burghers, Malays, and Colombo Chettis. Most of these groups are descendants of various migratory trading groups who arrived on the island during the colonial period. These small ethnic groups are not collectively politically mobilised and are not discussed in this Thesis.

⁴ Government of Sri Lanka 1982:32, *Statistical Abstract of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - 1982*.

⁵ Government of Sri Lanka 1982:34, *Statistical Abstract of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka - 1982*.

⁶ Except amongst Sinhala economic migrants who have settled in Europe, the USA and Australia who choose to remain proficient in their language and who choose to teach their children the Sinhala language.

⁷ Tamil is also the language of about 80 million other Tamils living around the globe, most of whom live in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. English is understood and spoken by a minority of all ethnic groups depending on their social class and their families' access to elite English speaking schools during the colonial period and after 1948.

⁸ Most Sinhalese have some knowledge of English. But their proficiency is dependent on their social class

their identity is termed 'Sinhala-Buddhist'. Sinhala-Buddhist Nationalism is a powerful nationalist ideology which combines the Sinhala language, Buddhist religion and the territory of the entire island into a complex entity. This worldview is the lived ideology which infuses the majority of the Sinhala-Buddhist people who live on the island.⁹ Sinhala-Buddhists are by far the single largest group in the country and assert that the island is a 'Sinhala-Buddhist country' (*Sinhala-Baudhha Ratak*) and 'belongs' to them. They assert that Sri Lanka is the country of the Sinhalese-Buddhist people.¹⁰ The history of postcolonial Sri Lanka has witnessed the Sinhala-Buddhists, through their electoral dominance, gradually occupying all the important institutions of government including president, prime minister, parliament, the judiciary, the civil service, police and the armed forces. A significant minority of Sinhalese are Christians, a majority of whom are Roman Catholics and the rest are protestants.

In the case of Sri Lanka (or 'Ceylon') Tamils the ethnic markers are primarily the Tamil language. While a majority of Tamils are Hindus a significant proportion are Roman Catholics and a smaller proportion are Protestant Christians. Tamil ethnic identity and Tamil Nationalism is the second most powerful political force in Sri Lankan society. The Sri Lanka Tamils were, even before Independence in 1948, apprehensive of the political dominance of the Sinhalese.¹¹ In the post-colonial years Sri Lanka Tamils have become increasingly politically alienated from the Sinhalese and also from the (Sinhala dominated) Sri Lankan State. This was partly as a reaction to the mobilisation of the Sinhala-Buddhists and partly due to autonomous processes of ethnic identity formation, the influence from Tamil Nadu and the vision of a separate Tamil State.¹² Insecurity bred by anti-Tamil riots have also alienated Tamils. The Tamil

backgrounds. Middle class and above are proficient in English. But in rural areas the teaching of English is inadequate due to the lack of teachers. A few Sinhalese – most of whom are involved in trade and fishing and who live or do business in areas where there are significant numbers of Tamils – can speak and understand Tamil.

⁹ The Sinhala-Buddhists were not, and are not, a politically homogenous entity. On the contrary the Sinhalese are deeply divided in terms of social class and also caste. Intense class struggles have taken place within the Sinhalese. These conflicts are the bases of the intra-Sinhala conflicts and violence which have occurred in the postcolonial years. Relevant especially in this context are the two JVP-led insurrections which arose from within the Sinhalese majority, one in 1971 and the other in 1987-1989. Nonetheless, there is a generally accepted understanding among most Sinhalese on the 'natural' primacy that should be given to Buddhism and the Sinhala language, and therefore the Sinhala-Buddhist ethnic group.

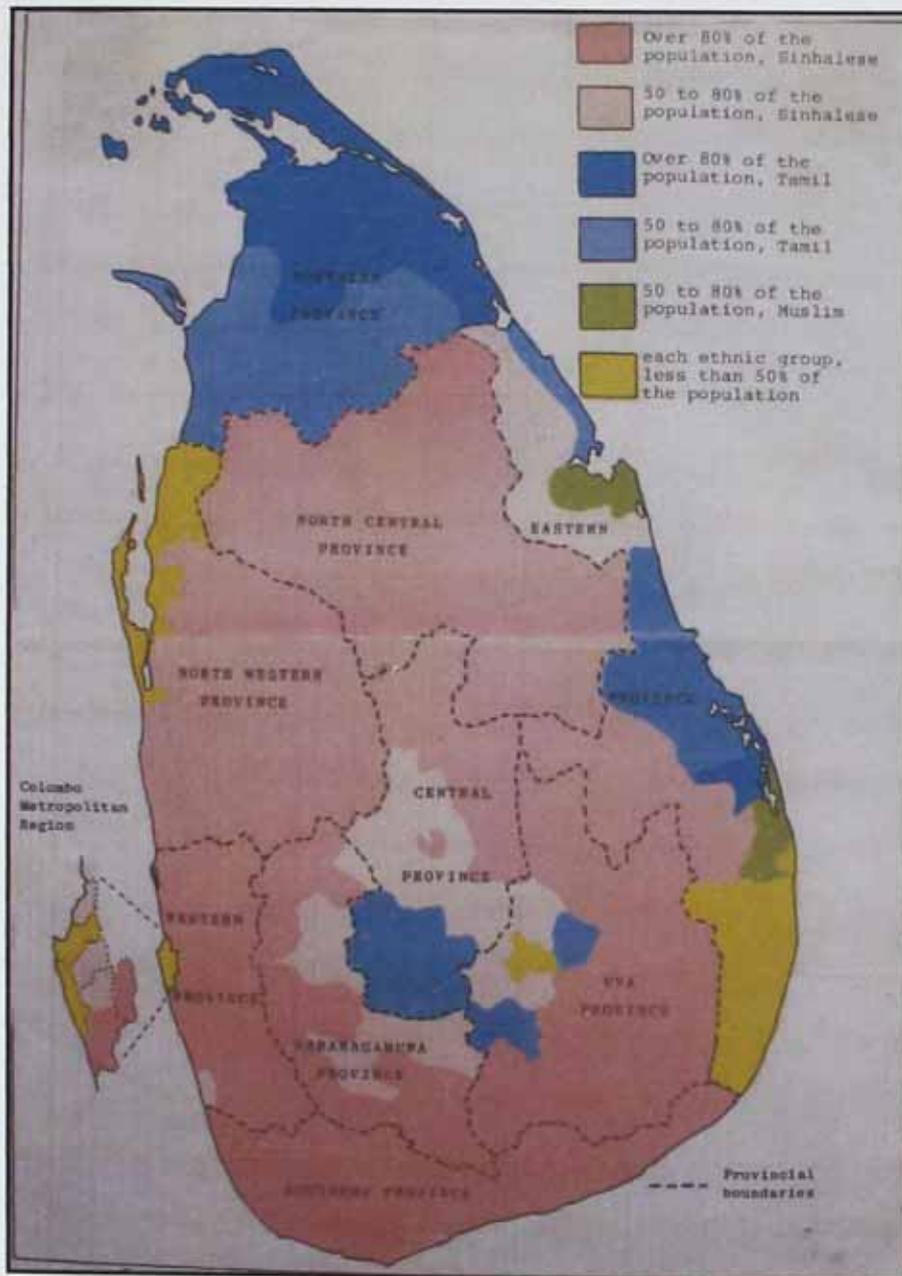
¹⁰ See Obeyesekere, Gananath, 1979: 279-290, 'The Vicissitudes of the Sinhala-Buddhist Identity through Time and Change' one of the paradigmatic analyses of this set of beliefs and practices.

¹¹ See the entirety of Russell, Jane, 1982, *Communal Politics Under the Donoughmore Constitution 1931-1947*, and especially pp. 195-217.

¹² For a selection of Articles and books see Hellmann-Rajanayagam, D 1986, 'The Tamil 'Tigers' in Northern Sri Lanka: Origins, Factions, Programmes'; Jeyaraj, D.B.S., 1987, *The Composition, Ideology and International Dimension of the Tamil Secessionist Movement of Sri Lanka: An Overview*; Kearney, Robert N., 1985, 'Ethnic Conflict and the Tamil Separatist Movement in Sri Lanka'; Wilson, A. Jeyaratnam 1988, *The Break-Up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict*; Wilson, A. Jeyaratnam, 2000, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*.

secessionist insurrection originates from within the Sri Lanka Tamils. A small number of Tamils can speak all three languages. Sri Lanka Tamils and the Sinhala-Buddhist both have deep cultures – different languages, different alphabets, different religions,

Map 0.3: Geographic Concentration of Sri Lanka's Major Ethnic Groups



(Source: Richardson, 2005: 25. This Map is a colour version given to the author by Prof. Richardson.)

Map 0.3 shows the geographic concentration of the various ethnic groups. As can be seen, the Northern Province is primarily composed of Sri Lanka Tamils. They are also a significant proportion of the East too, but with considerable numbers of Muslims and Sinhalese living in the Province as well. These demographic factors and jungle cover contributed in important ways to the manner in which the Tamil insurrection was conducted.

Upcountry Tamils are the descendants of South Indians brought as plantation labour by the

British from mid-19th to the early 20th century. Most of them were brought from the so-called depressed (i.e. "scheduled") castes in South India. The Tamil language and Hinduism are their ethnic markers.¹³ Economically they are very underprivileged although some among them have been able to leave the plantations and find employment and housing outside the Estates.¹⁴ This ethnic group is referred to by a range of names such as 'Indian Tamils', 'Plantation Tamils', 'Tamils of recent Indian origin', or 'estate Tamils'. They are concentrated in the tea plantations of the central highlands in Sri Lanka.

Although there is some disagreement amongst social scientists regarding the matter, it is the present author's understanding that the estate Tamils are a distinct ethnic group and should not be conflated with the Sri Lanka Tamils. However, because the Tamil language and Hinduism are common to both there is a special 'affinity' between the Sri Lanka Tamils and upcountry Tamils which does not exist between any two other ethnic groups on the island. On the other hand, because of the relatively recent origins and their so-called low caste status, the Sri Lanka Tamils consider themselves far superior to the Upcountry Tamils and there is very little inter-marriage between them. At the same time, however, fully realising the strategic significance of the central hills and the plantations, several Tamil secessionist guerrilla groups have attempted to incorporate the Upcountry Tamils into the secessionist project. When in their plantations areas Upcountry Tamils have not associated with the secessionist insurgency but some of those who moved or were displaced to areas of the Northern and Eastern provinces did join secessionist groups.

For Muslims the primary identity marker is Islam.¹⁵ All Muslims speak Tamil while most also speak Sinhala. A significant number, especially in urban centres such as Colombo and Kandy speak English as well. The Muslims are of heterogeneous origin. Some are descendants of early Arab traders - known as 'Moors' - who arrived on the island in precolonial times. Some are Muslim migrants from India known as Indian Moors or Coast Moors. Others are of Malay origin. The sole cohesive factor within this community is their religion, Islam. Muslims speak Sinhalese when living in districts where the majority of people are Sinhala-speaking, and speak Tamil when living in districts where the majority are Tamil-speaking. The language spoken in many Muslim households is Tamil.

¹³ Samarasinghe, S.W.R. de A., 1988: 157, 'The Indian Tamil Plantations Workers in Sri Lanka: Welfare and Integration'. See also Wesumperuma, D., 1986, *Indian Immigrant Plantation Workers in Sri Lanka: A Historical Perspective 1880-1910* for a comprehensive account of the origins and problems faced by this ethnic group.

¹⁴ Samarasinghe, S.W.R. de A., 1988: 159-161, 'The Indian Tamil Plantations Workers in Sri Lanka: Welfare and Integration'.

¹⁵ De Silva, K.M., 1988(b): 202, 'Sri Lanka's Muslim Minority'.

1.2: The Historical Background to the Crises Faced by Sinhala-Buddhist Civilization, and, the Invasions from South India

The relationship between the postcolonial state and the Sinhalese-Buddhist people is the core of a great deal of political disagreement and controversy in Sri Lanka. What should be the relationship between the Sinhala-Buddhist citizens and the state? What should be the relationship between non-Sinhala-Buddhist citizens and the state? What should be the relationship between the Buddha Sasana¹⁶ and the state? What should be the relationship of the other religions – which are in Sri Lanka consequent to invasions from south India and European imperialism – and the postcolonial State? How should Sinhala-Buddhist people assess the conversion of Buddhists to Christianity or Islam and thereby their gradual numerical reduction? *Unresolved, these questions reside in the tumultuous core of the postcolonial Sri Lankan state and society.* They are the fount from which myriad violent political tensions and conflicts originate. These processes generate and continue to reproduce the nexus between Buddhism, the Sinhala-Buddhist people, non-Sinhala-Buddhists, and political violence in postcolonial Sri Lanka. Buddhism *per se* (i.e. Buddhism of the Canonical texts, the *Tripitaka*¹⁷) is not material to political violence in Sri Lanka. However, mediated through Sinhala-Buddhist ethnic political mobilisation and the growing affinity between the Buddha Sasana and the state, 'actually existing Buddhism' (i.e. the total of Buddhist institutions, beliefs, practices, and adherents) is intricately entwined with political violence in Sri Lanka.

Sinhala beliefs in their origin on the island are rooted in the *Mahavamsa*, (the 'Great Chronicle') of the Sinhalese, written around 400-500 A.D.¹⁸ It says that the Buddha (allegedly) bequeathed the island to the Sinhalese. In the first chapter of the *Mahavamsa* are recorded accounts of three visits by the Buddha to Sri Lanka - one each in the north, east and south of the island - during which he is said to have visited sixteen locations. These sixteen places consecrated by the Buddha are known as the *Solosmasthanas* ('The Sixteen Places of Veneration') and continue to be visited by hundreds of thousands of Sinhala-Buddhist pilgrims – along with Buddhists from other countries - during various holy days of the year up to the present day. Prince Vijaya, a

¹⁶ Bechert, 1973: 89, 'Sangha, State, Society, 'Nation': Persistence of Traditions in 'Post-Traditional' Buddhist Societies'. *Daedalus*, vol.102, no.1. The 'Buddha Sasana' is the Buddhist religion and its Institutions. It includes the Buddha, the Dhamma (the Teaching of the Buddha), the Sangha (the monkhood) and ecclesiastical property. It is virtually analogous to 'Church'.

¹⁷ See Gombrich, 1971: 41, *Precept and practice: traditional Buddhism in the rural highlands of Ceylon*. The Buddhist Canon is called the *Tripitaka* in Pali as it consists of three (i.e. 'Tri') Pitakas. They are the Vinaya Pitaka (monastic rules which are intended to discipline the conduct of the Sangha), Sutta Pitaka (sermons and miscellaneous texts, most in verse), and the Abhidhamma Pitaka (systematic philosophy).

¹⁸ Geiger, Wilhelm (trans.), 1912, *The Mahavamsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*.

north Indian Prince and his followers who are the mythical ancestors of the Sinhalese are said to have arrived on the island's shores on the very day the Buddha died. On his death bed the Buddha is supposed to have declared that it was in Sri Lanka that his *Dhamma* ('Teaching') would flourish, and the *Mahavamsa* says the Buddha bequeathed the island to Prince Vijaya and his followers. They, along with the Buddha's *Dhamma*, were to prosper and flourish on the island.¹⁹ This is the origin of two very powerful formulations of Sinhala-Buddhist identity, the concept of *Dhammadipa* ('Island-of-the-Teaching') and *Sinhadipa* ('Island-of-the-Sinhalese'; 'Sinha' means Lion in the Sinhalese language. Thus, the Sinhalese are 'The-People-of-the-Lion'). This, very briefly, is the charter-myth of the Sinhalese. This story is well-known to all Sinhala-Buddhists to this day and is a very powerful element in the identity of the Sinhalese.

The *Mahavamsa* goes on to narrate (with improbable embellishments) numerous epic events centred around the fate of Sinhala Kings, their efforts to keep the island a unified polity under one Buddhist monarch, the resistance against invaders from South India, the furtherance and protection of the Buddha *Sasana*, and wars of unification. The *Mahavamsa* is not a modern history book and should not be judged as such. The fundamental message of the *Mahavamsa* is to advocate the indissoluble unity that *should* exist between the *Sinhala people*, the *Buddha Sasana*, and the *entire territory of the island*. The land, the people, and the religious system are seen as fused into one entity.²⁰ The need to unify the entire island under one Kingdom, i.e. one State, was an important component of this set of exhortations. This same message is found in Sinhala literary works and songs sung within the rich ritual practices of the Sinhalese,²¹ and, as Kemper usefully draws our attention to, within a wide range of other secondarily significant texts such as poetry, Ayurvedic medicine volumes, astrological treatises, monastic rules, and stories of the Buddha.²² These cultural and literary practices and rituals were embedded within Sinhala-Buddhist kingship which persisted - with periodic declines²³ and resurgences - for approximately 22 centuries from about 300 B.C. to 1815 when the entire island was captured by the British.

It is especially important to note the periods of decline and decay. The history of Sinhala-Buddhist civilisation is a story of long periods of struggle against invaders from South India

¹⁹ Geiger, Wilhelm (trans.), 1912, *The Mahavamsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*.

²⁰ "In Sri Lanka, these elements were further elaborated into the ideology that the identity of Sinhalese society was a Buddhist identity, its national consciousness indissolubly linked with Buddhism, and that it was a special task entrusted to the Sinhalese to defend the religion against its enemies." Tambiah, 1976: 520, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand against a Historical Background*.

²¹ Obeyesekere, 1979: 280. 'The Vicissitudes of the Sinhala-Buddhist Identity through Time and Change'.

²² Kemper, 1990: 187. 'J.R. Jayewardene, righteousness and realpolitik'.

²³ It is specially important to note the periods of decline and decay. Except for the European invaders which began with the Portuguese in 1505, all the previous invasions and threats to Sinhala civilization came from South India. It is these periods of decline that under-gird the existential anxiety of the Sinhalese up to the present day and consequently politically and culturally nourishes Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism.

interspersed with periods of peace when the (relatively) small kingdoms built-upon the previous achievements of their hydraulic civilisation and managed to progress some distance.²⁴ They would then be invaded again from South India and have to expend scarce blood and treasure to beat back the invaders. Except for the European invaders which began with the Portuguese in 1505, all the previous invasions and threats to Sinhala civilisation came from India.²⁵ It is these periods of decline that under-gird the existential anxiety of the Sinhalese up to the present day and consequently, is one of the primary political and cultural founts which nourishes Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism.

A case can be made that a type of Sinhala-Buddhist (proto) nationalism had developed in the precolonial period. Even if not as old as when the *Mahavamsa* (i.e. the Great Chronicle) was written, i.e. 400-500 A.D., a number of scholars consider that by the 10th century A.D. an identifiable Sinhalese-Buddhist ethnic consciousness had formed.²⁶ This fact itself is significant because, up to the 21st Century that is a period of approximately 10 centuries.

The ideology of nationalism among the Sinhalese derives substance, strength and historical legitimacy from the Chronicles. The *Mahavamsa* asserts that a unified state encompassing the entire island is the ideal which should be achieved and preserved. The act of compilation of the Chronicles themselves was an act of political significance:

[...] the Ceylon chronicles gave political lessons from the past applicable only to the particular situation of the Sinhalese nation. In this way, *a form of nationalism originated in ancient Ceylon which was rather close to modern nationalism with its conception of a united nation with common linguistic, cultural and religious traditions*. The chronicles served as educational works to cultivate this consciousness of national identity [emphasis added].²⁷

It should be noted that Bechert talks of a *form* of nationalism. He assesses that the fact that Sinhala-Buddhist ideologues (the Buddhist monks who compiled the Chronicles) wrote these texts in 400-500 A.D. is, by itself, a profoundly significant issue. 400-500 A.D. is approximately a 1,000 years before the development of capitalism in western Europe and the imperial expansion which, according to conventional wisdom, is the supposed origin of all contemporary

²⁴ See De Silva, K.M., 1981: 28-32 *A History of Sri Lanka*. for descriptions of Sinhalese kingdoms which managed to build upon the hydraulic system of the North-Central region of the island; see pp.81-84 and also Liyanagamage, A, 1993: 59-64, *The Indian Factor in the Security Perspectives of Sri Lanka*. for accounts of the devastation caused by the most damaging of invasions from South India.

²⁵ For example see De Silva, K.M., 1981, *A History of Sri Lanka*; De Silva, Chandra Richard, 1987, *Sri Lanka: A History*; Liyanagamage, A, 1993, *The Indian Factor in the Security Perspectives of Sri Lanka*.

²⁶ See Tambiah, 1991: 129-137, *Buddhism betrayed?: Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka*, for a good overview of the debate.

²⁷ Bechert, 1978: 8, 'The Beginnings of Buddhist Historiography: *Mahavamsa* and Political Thinking'.

third world nationalist movements.²⁸ While it is correct that it was European imperialism which brought constitutionalism, the Roman-Dutch legal system, Christianity, representative democracy, the political party system, the plantation economy, the Court system, 'print capitalism', and the modern road and railway system to the island, pre-colonial (i.e. pre-1505) Sinhalese-Buddhist beliefs related to the 'sacred' association between the Sinhala people, the Buddha *Sasana* and entire territory of the island Lanka also continued to exist, side-by-side with the 'transplanted institutions'²⁹ that the Europeans introduced. These pre-colonial set of ideals and concepts continuously inspired Sinhala-Buddhist activists, writers, Buddhist monk-cum-scholars, Sinhala-Buddhist politicians and the general public: "certain institutional arrangements in Sri Lanka, from very early times, gave further expression to the idea of a Sinhala-Buddhist nation".³⁰

Bechert argues that the writing of the *Mahavamsa* Chronicles was a part of intentional political activity of a (proto) nationalist kind. The Chronicles are among the few tangible objects which have been preserved up to the present day.³¹ These Chronicles themselves are unique in south Asia and have no counterparts on the Indian mainland.³² Bechert's judgment that the Chronicles are a manifestation of the development of a Sinhala-Buddhist (proto-national) identity needs to be given thoughtful consideration:

The origination of a historical literature in Ceylon in the existing form was an intentional act of political relevance. Its object was the propagation of a concept of national identity closely connected with a religious tradition, i.e. the identity of the Sinhala Buddhists. This idea has shaped the history of Ceylon from the days of the earliest chroniclers to the present day in its particular way. *Without the impact of this idea, the remarkable continuity of the cultural as well as of the political traditions in spite of the vicissitudes in the history of the island would have been impossible* [emphases added].³³

The last sentence in the above passage deserves very close reading and reflection. It is precisely this idea that under girds the claims by present-day Sinhalese.

²⁸ Anderson, 1983 *Imagined Communities*.

²⁹ See Jupp, James, 1978: 219-257, entirety of Chapter.8 'Transplanted Institutions' in *Sri Lanka - Third World Democracy*.

³⁰ See Obeyesekere, Gananath, 1979: 286, 'The Vicissitudes of the Sinhala-Buddhist Identity through Time and Change'.

³¹ The human organisational manifestations of this nationalist project - the organisation of the writing of the Chronicles, the reproduction and safeguarding of the texts, the oral recalling of past events, the Courts assistance for the writing project, etc., are all lost to us. All these would have been embedded in the numerous 'non-textual' political and military events over these long centuries.

³² Bechert, 1978: 1, 'The Beginnings of Buddhist Historiography: Mahavamsa and Political Thinking'.

³³ Bechert, 1978: 7, 'The Beginnings of Buddhist Historiography: Mahavamsa and Political Thinking'.

The Impact of the Invasions from South India, circa 300 B.C. to 1200 A.D. In addition to the above, the many invasions of the island by South Indian regional Empires and Kings added to the creation of the Sinhala-Buddhists' worldview. The invasions were sometimes successfully resisted but on numerous occasions South Indian invaders managed to control large areas of the island and stayed for considerable periods of time. In any event these invasions were a frequent occurrence from at least 200 B.C. onwards. In 177 B.C. two South Indians captured power at Anuradhapura and ruled for 22 years. A decade later this was followed by another named *Elara* who ruled for 44 years.³⁴ Elara was defeated by a strong Sinhalese King, King Dutugemunu, who is honoured with high praise in the *Mahavamsa* and venerated to this day by Sinhala-Buddhists. During the subsequent centuries strong and capable Sinhala kings arose at various times and managed to unify the entire island. Simultaneously they expanded the Hydraulic civilisation of the Sinhalese. They expanded and repaired the irrigation system of reservoirs and canals which sustained rice cultivation. The main function of these reservoirs was the storing and managing of rain water, managing rivers and canals and the cultivation of rice. This irrigation system won high praise from British colonial archaeologists and irrigation scientists, one of whom wrote in 1859 that:

It is possible that in no other part of the world are there to be found within the same space, the remains of so many works for irrigation, which at the same time, of such great antiquity and of such vast magnitude as in Ceylon.³⁵

The invasion and occupation of large parts of the island by South Indians continued at periodic intervals and less capable Sinhala Kings succumbed to these invasions.³⁶ However, as Liyanagamage opines "these *spells of agonising turmoil* accompanying the invasions, also seem to have cemented a growing historical tradition in the *core* of which was ingrained a *deep seated yearning for the preservation of Sri Lanka's territorial integrity and independence* [emphases added]."³⁷ In the eleventh century the *Chola* empire of South India invaded. They occupied the region where the rice-growing hydraulic system flourished, the Anuradhapura-Pollonnaruwa region in the north centre of the island, while the Sinhalese were forced to retreat to the south of the island.³⁸

After the *Chola* Empire declined there occurred an invasion from South Indian in 1215 A.D.

³⁴ De Silva, K.M., 1981: 12, *A History of Sri Lanka*.

³⁵ Bailey, *Report on Irrigation in Uva*, (1859), quoted in De Silva, K.M., 1981: 27, *A History of Sri Lanka*.

³⁶ See De Silva, K.M., 1981: 3-78, *A History of Sri Lanka*; De Silva, Chandra Richard, 1987: 15-88, *Sri Lanka: A History*; Liyanagamage, A, 1993: 5-70, *The Indian Factor in the Security Perspectives of Sri Lanka* for comprehensive over views of these invasions.

³⁷ Liyanagamage, A, 1993: 10, *The Indian Factor in the Security Perspectives of Sri Lanka*.

³⁸ See De Silva, K.M., 1981: 25-26, *A History of Sri Lanka* and Spencer, and George W., 1976, 'The Politics of Plunder: The *Cholas* in Eleventh-Century Ceylon'.

which dealt a death-blow to the Hydraulic civilization of the Sinhalese of the north-central region of the island. This was the invasion by *Magha of Kalinga* who ruled till 1236 A.D.³⁹ His rule was especially destructive as he deliberately destroyed large sections of the hydraulic system built-up over centuries – the reservoir, the canals, the diversion of river tributaries and the rice fields. Thereby he permanently and grievously damaged the hydraulic civilization the Sinhalese had painstakingly constructed from at least 500 B.C.⁴⁰ From *Magha's* invasion onwards the Sinhala Kings and their 'Kingdoms' were compelled to abandon the hydraulic system and gradually moved southwards on the island, away from the direction from which the invaders from India always came. Therefore it is a historical fact that for approximately 1,500 years (300 B.C. to 1200 A.D.) the Sinhalese civilization was subject to invasions from South India at periodic intervals. The 'memory' of these invasions and their consequences on the Sinhala people were handed down from generation to generation of Sinhalese through folktales, poetry works, narratives by Buddhist monks and the texts such as the *Mahavamsa*. In the 14th and 15th Centuries too there were smaller incursions from South India. It was with the arrival of the first European invaders, the Portuguese in 1505 that the incursions from South India finally stopped.⁴¹

The modern Sri Lankan state system, political party system, administrative system, mass media, Sinhala-Buddhist pressure groups, Sinhala ethnic entrepreneurs are all modern, post-19th Century phenomena. As Jupp insightfully says, they are 'transplanted institutions'.⁴² And from at least the late 19th Century onwards Sinhala-Buddhist's have been inventing ethno-specific narratives and practices and these have been grafted onto the older traditions and this process continues up to present day Sri Lanka. Novels, poetry, newspapers, cinema, radio, and television all play a part in the contemporary situation. However, these modern technologies and inventions do not exclude *some* level of cultural continuity with the pre-1505 past.

It can be argued that contemporary Sinhala-Buddhist ethnic identity is a complex form of nationalism which has distinct threads of continuity reaching back into the pre-1505 past along with attributes and innovations of 19th and 20th century vintage. There is continuity amidst the change: the inventions and innovations of the 19th and 20th centuries bear the mark of the colonial impact *and* the precolonial past. Both strands of Sinhala-Buddhist ethnic identity -

³⁹ Liyanagamage, A, 1993: 60, *The Indian Factor in the Security Perspectives of Sri Lanka*. De Silva, K.M., 1981: 568, *A History of Sri Lanka*.

⁴⁰ Liyanagamage, A, 1993: 60-63, *The Indian Factor in the Security Perspectives of Sri Lanka*; De Silva, K.M., 1981: 81-82; *A History of Sri Lanka*; De Silva, Chandra Richard, 1987: 76, 89-92, *Sri Lanka: A History*.

⁴¹ See De Silva, K.M., 1981: 81-99; *A History of Sri Lanka*; De Silva, Chandra Richard, 1987: 89-106, *Sri Lanka: A History*.

⁴² See Jupp, James 1978: 219-257, Chapter.8, 'Transplanted Institutions', in *Sri Lanka – Third World Democracy*.

continuity as well as change - have to be focussed on synchronously if contemporary Sinhala-Buddhist ethnic identity, and ethnic political mobilisation in Sri Lanka is to be comprehensively understood

1.3: The Continuation of Colonial Attitudes and Structures after 1948: the bases of Sinhala-Buddhists' Grievances

When Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 the dominant political party was the United National Party (UNP) and it had already won the general elections held in 1947.⁴³ It was to a UNP government that the British government peacefully transferred power in 1948. The SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) came into existence only in 1951. In 1948 the SLFP's leaders were members of the UNP. There were hardly any outward signs of the ethnic conflict which were to engulf the polity barely within a decade. The transition from a colony to an independent state was a peaceful and smooth process which slipstreamed behind India's freedom struggle and the British Empire's exhaustion at the end of World War II.

But lodged within the polity was an incongruity: the UNP which inherited power was dominated by highly westernised, English-speaking, disproportionately Christian, middle and upper class Sinhalese. The UNP also had a considerable amount of wealthy upper class Tamils, Muslims and Burghers (descendants of Dutch-Sinhalese, Dutch-Tamil, mixed parentage) within it.⁴⁴ Christian influence was considerable in the ruling circles in 1948, and the English language and English culture dominated social intercourse. Those Sinhalese amongst this group who were still Buddhists had also invariably gone to the same elite, Christian dominated, English-language Colombo schools. They had Christian relatives and friends and had imbibed British values of democracy, liberalism and the separation of Church and state. They also looked with disdain at the Sinhala-educated and Buddhist middle and lower classes.

On the other hand the majority of the mass electorate was composed of Sinhalese who had been born into Buddhist families, had attended Sinhala-language schools and were imbued with the culture of the villages and small provincial towns in which the vast majority of Sinhalese lived, learnt, and worked. They were greatly aggrieved at the lack of recognition given to the Sinhala language and the Buddhist religion during the colonial period.⁴⁵ They wanted this to change after 1948. From 1948 onwards this congealed into resentment against and

⁴³ See De Silva, K.M., 1981: 489-493, *A History of Sri Lanka*.

⁴⁴ See Jupp, James, 1978: 57-62, *Sri Lanka - Third World Democracy*, for an overview of the origins of the UNP and its elite composition.

⁴⁵ See De Silva, K.M., 1988(a): 68-70, 'Nationalism and the State in Sri Lanka'.

opposition to the UNP government and also against Christians who still had influence similar to the colonial years.⁴⁶

Electoral Dominance and the Acquisition of Political Power by the Sinhala Majority. After 1948 this large discrepancy between the rulers and the ruled was too volatile and unsustainable to continue, the pivotal factor being the Government-Voter-Legitimacy relationship. To explain briefly: under colonialism the relationship between the rulers and the ruled was one of non-representative domination. The colonial government derived its authority from the British parliament in London and was not sustained by legitimate authority derived from votes of the Sri Lankan people it ruled.⁴⁷ After 1948 governments of Independent Sri Lanka were faced with an entirely separate political dynamic: they *had* to obtain votes and be sustained by the support of a majority of the people they governed. They *had* to win elections and thereby gain the *legitimacy* to govern the people from the people who lived on the island. An overwhelming majority of voters were, of course, ethnic Sinhala-Buddhists. And they collectively organised themselves into political movements and parties. Leading up to and immediately after decolonisation, ethnic Sinhala-Buddhists demanded the restoration of the pre-colonial status of their religion (Buddhism) and their language (Sinhala).

After 1948 electoral majorities determined governmental power and consequently political power flowed rapidly into the hands of the Sinhala-Buddhists. From 1948 to 1956 the UNP – which had a considerable number of Tamils, Muslims and Christians within it, in addition to the majority who were Sinhala-Buddhists, managed to retain governing power.⁴⁸ But the Sinhala-Buddhists politically mobilised and supported the SLFP. An SLFP-led coalition won the General Elections of 1956, a watershed in postcolonial Sri Lanka. It can be argued that the Sinhala-Buddhists ‘captured state power’ in 1956.⁴⁹ Once political power flowed into their hands the Sinhalese politicians set-about ‘rectifying’ their grievances: Buddhism and the Sinhala language were given prominence and public sector employment became dominated by Sinhalese. This ‘rectification’ inevitably impacted upon all the other ethnic groups living on the island. The

⁴⁶ See Dharmadasa, K.N.O., 1988: 116-121, ‘Buddhist Resurgence and Christian Privilege in Sri Lanka, C. 1940-1965’.

⁴⁷ The colonial government’s political authority, mediated through the colonial office, was derived from the British parliament. The representative institutions which the British grudgingly permitted to evolve in the face of the growing clamour for self-rule by Sri Lankans had narrowly defined spheres of influence. All the vital functions were kept firmly under British control. If necessary the colonial government could dispense with the support of all of the people it governed.

⁴⁸ See Jupp, James, 1978: 57-58, *Sri Lanka – Third World Democracy*.

⁴⁹ See De Silva, K.M., 1981: 510, *A History of Sri Lanka*. De Silva says that this Election “marked a watershed in Sri Lanka’s history in the rejection of so much that had come to be accepted as part of the normal order of things in post-colonial Sri Lanka”.

legitimacy of *any* Sri Lankan government began to be measured in relation to how effectively a government promoted the Sinhala-Buddhist ethnic project. If a substantial number of Sinhala voters came to the conclusion that a government was not 'sufficiently' promoting their interests, then a shift of the votes of even a modest number of Sinhala voters was sufficient to defeat a governing party at a parliamentary election.

This was the precise fate which befell the UNP at the watershed general elections of 1956 (a mere 8 years after decolonisation) when the SLFP's pro Sinhala-Buddhist electoral campaign defeated the UNP. The UNP could not remain unaffected by the SLFP's success with Sinhala-Buddhist voters. The UNP too quickly learnt the lesson of its 1956 Electoral defeat. From this time onwards it took measures to align itself with the Sinhala-Buddhist electoral bloc.

The rise of the SLFP as a competitor to the UNP in the 1950s went hand in hand with appeals to Sinhalese ethnic sentiment. After the resounding victory of an SLFP-coalition in 1956, "Sinhala Only" legislation was passed, making the Sinhala language the only official language, and Tamil civil servants were discriminated against on linguistic grounds. Rebuffed at the polls, the UNP responded by becoming as ethnically exclusive as the SLFP was.⁵⁰

Over the following turbulent decade the UNP gradually lost its multi-ethnic orientation due to the competition posed by, and the need to emulate, the more overtly Sinhala-oriented SLFP (a process one could be termed as 'the SLFP-isation of the UNP').

Buddhism Given Prominence by the Government and the Sinhala People. An important part of Sinhala-Buddhist mobilisation was for Buddhism to be given the 'foremost' place in Sri Lanka. Organisations of Buddhist monks and Buddhist lay organisations lobbied for this. From the early-1950s onwards political mobilisation by Sinhala-Buddhists in tandem with, and sometimes on behalf of, the *Buddha Sasana* was a continuous process. Among the important milestones was the creation of the Buddhist Affairs Investigation Commission by the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress (ACBC) in 1953. This was the unofficial equivalent of the official inquiry which was requested from the UNP government in 1948 but which was denied by the then UNP government. The Commission held meetings throughout the island (except Jaffna and some of the other Districts of the Northern Province) from June 1954 to May 1955 and published its Report in 1956.⁵¹ It pointed out a wide range of grievances of the Buddhists. The victory of the SLFP at the general elections of April 1956 was a great fillip to the re-assertion of Buddhism. The new SLFP-led government led a year-long series of celebrations

⁵⁰ Horowitz, Donald L. 1989: 6, *Incentives and Behaviour in the Ethnic Politics of Sri Lanka and Malaysia*.

⁵¹ Buddhist Affairs Investigation Commission Report, 1956: 5, *Bauddha Thorathuru Pareekshaka Sabhavye Vaarthawa*.

and observances of the *Buddha Jayanti* (the 2,500th anniversary celebration of the passing away of the Buddha) in 1956. The new government appointed an official Buddha Sasana Commission in 1957.⁵² This trend set by the SLFP had to be emulated by the UNP if it were to retain any capacity to win Sinhala votes.

The UNP has learned a lot since 1956, and it was anxious to establish its fundamental Sinhalese Buddhist identity. Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake therefore pledged to restore Buddhism to its ancient glory and strengthen the Sangha.⁵³

When Sri Lanka became a Republic and adopted the 1st Republican Constitution Buddhism was accorded 'foremost' position (while formally acknowledging religious freedom of all other religions). This happened when a SLFP-led government was in power. In 1978, under a UNP-led government, the 2nd Republican Constitution was enacted. That too affirmed the 'foremost' position to Buddhism. In 1977 a Department of Buddhist affairs was formed.⁵⁴ This was upgraded to a full-fledged Ministry of *Buddha Sasana* in 1988, with President Premadasa himself as the Minister.⁵⁵

During the last forty years the state has restored and preserved many ancient Buddhist ruins, renovated places of Buddhist worship, built Buddhist temples, financially assisted temple building projects, given government owned land to monks to begin temples, and built or financially helped in the construction of numerous religious-school buildings within temple premises. The massive programme of state assistance to the *Buddha Sasana* in commemoration of the *Mihindu Jayanti*⁵⁶ which took place during 1992-1993 is a case in point: it was government policy to restore or repair 2,300 temples all over the island, induct 2300 novice monks into the Order and conduct numerous other activities. These are examples of the hundreds of thousands of constitutional, organisational, and ceremonial events through which the *Buddha Sasana* and the postcolonial state have associated with each other, especially from 1956 onwards. It needs to be said that Hindu, Christian and Muslim places of worship too were given some government resources but not similar to that given to Buddhist places of worship.

⁵² See Smith 1966a, 'The Sinhalese Buddhist Revolution' and Smith 1966b 'The Political Monks and Monastic Reform', for detailed discussions of the occurrences during this period.

⁵³ Smith, 1974: 117, 'The Dialectic of Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka'.

⁵⁴ Kemper, 1990: 194, 'J.R. Jayewardene, righteousness and *realpolitik*'.

⁵⁵ See Premadasa 1990, *Inaugural Address of His Excellency R.Premadasa, President of Sri Lanka, at the Conference on the Role and Functions of the Ministry of Buddha Sasana*, and Ministry of Buddha Sasana, Govt of Sri Lanka.

⁵⁶ The 'Mihindu Jayanthi' is the date on which Emperor Ashoka's Emissary Mahinda is recorded as having brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka. It is celebrated by Sinhala-Buddhists every year. He is said to have arrived on a *Poson Poya* day (note: a *Poya* day is a day of the Full-Moon). In 1992 this fell on 14 June. 1992 was given special recognition by the government because it was the 2,300th anniversary of this event. Year-long celebrations were conducted by the government from *Poson Poya* day 1992 to *Poson Poya* day 1993.

1.4: Grievances of the Tamils – a fundamental cause of the secessionist insurrection

As the postcolonial Sri Lankan government and the State gradually developed a close 'affinity' with the majority Sinhala ethnic group, the gap between the government and the Sri Lanka Tamils grew larger. The close relationship between the Sinhala-Buddhists majority and the postcolonial government and State is central to the grievances of the Sri Lanka Tamils.⁵⁷

Up to the present day Sri Lanka has functioned under three different Constitutions. First was the 'Soulbury Constitution' of 1946 which conferred Dominion status to the island. From 1948 onwards a significant number of Tamils wanted the creation of a Federal system. This was opposed by the Sinhalese and was not established. The second Constitution was the 1st Republican Constitution of 1972. And the third was the 2nd Republican Constitution of 1978.⁵⁸ From 1972 onwards the Sri Lanka Tamils have vehemently disagreed with both these republican constitutions.⁵⁹ Therefore it would be accurate to say that a significant proportion of Tamils have never agreed with the constitutional set-up of postcolonial Sri Lanka from 1948 onwards. And as inter-ethnic competition for resources, especially for land, and secessionism gained momentum within the Sri Lanka Tamils, more Tamils joined that segment. Another Tamil grievance is in relation to the use of the Tamil Language in government administration. A third grievance is State-aided settlement of Sinhala people in the Eastern Province. A fourth grievance is employment of Tamils in government jobs.⁶⁰ These disagreements have been going-on from the early-1950s and it has not been possible to arrive at any resolution.

Sri Lanka is a relatively small island with an estimated population of 20.01 million in 2007.⁶¹ It has a relatively underdeveloped economy with agriculture being the main occupation of a majority of the people. A significant reason underlying the grievances between the Sinhalese and the Tamils is the fierce competition for *most types of resources* in Sri Lanka. – e.g. access to university education, employment in the government sector, and land for all manner of purposes.

⁵⁷ See Russell, Jane, 1982, *Communal Politics Under the Donoughmore Constitution 1931-1947*: 194-267 which discusses the political mobilisations of the Tamils and the Sinhalese in great detail.

⁵⁸ Wilson, A. Jeyaratnam 1980, *The Gaullist System in Asia: The Constitution of Sri Lanka*.

⁵⁹ See Tamil United Liberation Front, 1977: 322 and 327-328, *Election Manifesto of 1977* for the TULF's criticisms of the 1972 Constitution.

⁶⁰ All these grievances are explained in great detail in Tamil United Liberation Front, 1977: 324-328, *Election Manifesto of 1977*.

⁶¹ In 2007 the estimated population was 20.01 million. The last census was conducted in 1981. The 1991 and 2001 censuses could not be conducted over the entire island due to the Tamil insurgency. Population estimates are projections based on the 1981 figures.

primarily for small-holding subsistence family-farms. This competition is *systemic* and was underway from even before Independence in 1948. A considerable amount of scholars have worked on each of these areas. The competition for university education has been and continues to be intense.⁶²

Out of all of them land is the most volatile and has the closest connection to the Tamil insurrection. There are very large economic issues at stake in the Eastern Province where there is a great deal of arable land and water has been made available via government-funded irrigation schemes.⁶³ However, the Northern and Eastern Provinces are claimed by Tamil secessionists as their 'homeland'.⁶⁴ This claim is not accepted by the Sinhalese or the government due to the non-existence of any credible historical evidence for such a claim. Furthermore it is assessed as being considerably unfair because a relatively small percentage of Sri Lankan Tamils are claiming sole access to a disproportionately large amount of land:

The Northern and Eastern Provinces which constitute about 29% of the total area of Sri Lanka are inhabited by 72.6% of the Sri Lankan Tamil population. *This latter is equivalent to approximately 9% of the total population of the country.* In a densely peopled country like Sri Lanka, where the prevailing pressure of population on land is intense, *9% of its population claiming exclusive rights over 29% of its territory is itself somewhat unfair* [emphases added].⁶⁵

Migration took place within the island from the 1950s onwards and aggravated Tamil-Sinhala relations. As Kearney and Miller wrote in 1987:

There is little doubt that internal migration over recent *decades* has *exacerbated ethnic tensions* in Sri Lanka. The movement of population within the nation has *been the subject of impassioned political contention for at least three decades*, sharpened and dramatized by the growth over the past dozen years of a demand for a separate state on the island for the Sri Lankan Tamil minority [emphases added].⁶⁶

In any event there was no agreement between Sri Lanka Tamil politicians and parties and the Sinhalese and their political parties on these contestations for resources. In all negotiations with the Sri Lanka government – all of which were brokered by the Indian central government (see

⁶² See the following for balanced analyses of the issues: De Silva, Chandra Richard, 1984, 'Sinhala-Tamil Relations and Education in Sri Lanka: The University Admissions Issue - The First Phase, 1971-7', in R.B. Goldman and A.J. Wilson (eds) *From Independence to Statehood: Managing Ethnic Conflict in Five African and Asian States*. De Silva, K.M., 1984, 'University Admissions and Ethnic Tensions in Sri Lanka, 1977-82', in R.B. Goldman and A.J. Wilson (eds), *From Independence to Statehood: Managing Ethnic Conflict in Five African and Asian States*. De Silva, Chandra Richard, and Daya de Silva, 1986, *Education in Sri Lanka, 1948-1985: An Analysis of the Structure and a Critical Survey of the Literature*.

⁶³ See De Silva, K.M., 1981: 505 and 562, *A History of Sri Lanka* for the Gal Oya Scheme (1950s) and the accelerated Mahaweli Development Programme (late 1970s onwards).

⁶⁴ Tamil United Liberation Front, 1977: 323, *Election Manifesto of 1977*.

⁶⁵ Peiris, G.H., 1991: 34, 'An Appraisal of the Concept of a Traditional Tamil Homeland in Sri Lanka'. Professor G.H. Peiris was the Professor of Geography, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

⁶⁶ Kearney, Robert N and Barbara Diane Miller, 1987: 91, *Internal Migration in Sri Lanka and its Social Consequences*.

discussion in Chapter 4) - the Tamils' inflexibly demanded that the Northern and Eastern Provinces be joined together.

II

The early Political and Military Origins of the Tamil Secessionist Insurrection: *From the Demand for a Federal State, 1949 to the Resolution calling for a Separate Tamil State, 1976*

Part II of this Chapter deals with the most important political and military conditions and developments which under girded the origin of the Tamil secessionist insurrection from the early-1960s up to 1976. A chronological approach facilitates the comprehension of the complex sequence of events. This also assists in understanding how each act of discrimination increased the alienation and disaffection felt by Tamils. The increasing sense of alienation gave impetus to Tamil political mobilisation and agitation and the parallel increase in the tendency towards secession. All insurrections are articulated, *verbally*, years before the first violent act occurs. While Tamil political mobilisation of the 1960s was not violent, this precursory period must be given due recognition as it laid the foundation for the subsequent phases of the insurrection.

The core of an insurgency always begins with the *political* disenchantment and alienation of a significant section of the citizenry (be it ethnic group, religious group or social-class) against the prevailing government. This is a *political* phenomenon and is initially non-violent and a great deal of talking and discussion precedes armed actions. This disenchantment, if not properly addressed, initially leads to the political mobilisation of a small 'vanguard' section of the people against the government and state. Such mobilisation could, if faced with more acts of discrimination from the government, lead to more people of the disaffected group becoming alienated and hostile towards the government and State. This can lead to the development of an insurrectionary movement. *It needs to be immediately pointed out here that a government may not be able to concede – for very valid reasons – all (or even most) of what is demanded of it.*

In Sri Lanka from at least the early-1960s onwards this was what happened within a significant minority of the Tamil people. While the secessionist political mobilisation of this period was by and large non-violent, this precursory phase is very important and must be given due recognition when analysing the Tamil secessionist insurrection. It was this precursory phase which laid the foundation for the subsequent phases of the insurrection. There was no direct violence against the

state, but Tamil secessionists intimidated Tamils who held moderate views. One can also see some of the early signs of Maoist-style protracted guerrilla warfare in the actions of these rudimentary secessionist groups.

This being said, however, it is *not* implied that the subsequent complex political and military trajectory of the Tamil secessionist insurrection from the early-1960s was consciously planned from the early-1960s onwards. The secessionist insurrection developed in a complex dialectical relationship with the acts of commission and omission of the governments of Sri Lanka during these years.

The Tamils Demand a Federal System in 1949 and the Sinhalese Oppose that Demand. The formation of the ITAK (*Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi* a.k.a. Federal Party) in 1949 began the active mobilisation of Sri Lanka Tamils' for a Federal form of government. But this movement was actively opposed by the Sinhalese. Most Sinhala politicians and voters were convinced that the ITAK/Federal Party's ultimate goal was a separate State, "The Sinhalese viewed the Tamils' demand for a federal constitution as nothing less than the thin edge of the wedge of a separatist movement."⁶⁷ There is a considerable amount of evidence which corroborates this assessment.

The ITAK/Federal Party continued with its political mobilization and gradually increased its support within the Tamil electorate. The apprehensions of the Sinhalese were increased by the increasing secessionist radicalisation that was active within ITAK. For example the following was said by the ITAK President at its Annual Convention in 1961:

*We are a nation by all standards. We inhabit a geographically compact and well-defined territory; we speak a common language; we are proud inheritors of a common heritage and culture as ancient as man himself; and above all we are bound together by that feeling of oneness which is a necessary ingredient for nationhood, that consciousness which you and I and all of us share whatever the part of the country we may live in [emphases added].*⁶⁸

The message which was clearly implied in this text was that the Tamils were a Nation and therefore it followed that they should have a State of their own (and this was precisely the trajectory Tamil politics took in the subsequent decades). Such views inevitably impacted upon and alarmed Sinhalese politicians and voters.

⁶⁷ De Silva, K.M., 1981: 513-514, *A History of Sri Lanka*.

⁶⁸ *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi*, 1961: 2, Presidential Address at the 7th Annual Convention of the *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi* [Lanka Tamil State Party, a.k.a. Federal Party].

From 1956 to 1961: Watershed Elections, Anti-Tamil Riots and Tamil Civil Disobedience Campaign. In the meantime, the Sinhalese ethnic group too was politically mobilizing itself along the lines of more power and recognition for the Sinhala language and Buddhism. The general elections of April 1956 are widely recognised as a watershed in the politics of Sri Lanka and has been extensively researched.⁶⁹ At this election the UNP which had governed the country from 1948 onwards was defeated by a coalition led by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).⁷⁰ The SLFP was a strong advocate of Sinhala nationalist ideas and was successful in rallying a significant percentage of Sinhala voters to itself.⁷¹ It is the assessment of the present author that in these elections the Sinhalese majority 'captured state power'. The SLFP-led coalition was unequivocal in its commitment to 'restore' the Sinhala language and Buddhism to their positions of pre-eminence lost to them as a result of colonialism.

Two especially volatile political issues lay at the centre of political agitation at this time – what was to be the 'official language' and discontent regarding the inadequate recognition of Buddhism in the postcolonial order. There was a great deal of disagreement and debate about these issues. In any event, two months after coming to power the new SLFP-led coalition government enacted the 'Sinhala Only' Bill on 5 June 1956.⁷² Outside the Parliament building Tamil parliamentarians were involved in a peaceful *Satyagraha* (i.e. civil-disobedience) demonstration in opposition to the Bill.

These Tamil parliamentarians were assaulted by supporters of the government. That evening itself anti-Tamil riots began in Colombo and in the ensuing days the riots spread to areas of the Eastern Province. Six days after the rioting began in Colombo, rioting began in the Gal Oya Valley area of Ampara District in the Eastern Province. These riots were deeply shocking to the Tamil people.⁷³ A 'State of Emergency' was declared by government and the regular army plus mobilised reserves were deployed to help the police quell the rioting and disorder. Sinhalese

⁶⁹ See Wriggins, W. Howard, 1960, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation*; Jupp, James, 1978: 7-11 and 64-66, *Sri Lanka – Third World Democracy*; De Silva, K.M., 1981: 510-524, *A History of Sri Lanka*; Manor, James, 1990: 238-240, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon*. In addition there are many other books and Journal Articles which substantiate the crucial character of this election.

⁷⁰ The SLFP was led by S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike who had, in 1951, broken away from the UNP and formed the SLFP. The SLFP and its allied Buddhist monks' organisation the *Eksath Bhikku Peramuna* (EBP, 'United Bhikku Front') were able to mobilise a large segment of the Sinhala-Buddhist voters against the incumbent UNP.

⁷¹ See Manor, James, 1990: 247-253, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon* for a comprehensive account of this political mobilisation.

⁷² Its correct title is *Official Language Act no.33 of 1956*.

⁷³ Wickramasinghe, Nira 2006: 272, *Sri Lanka in the modern age: a history of contested identities*. "The June 1956 riots were the first serious occurrence of violence between communities since the Sinhala-Muslim riots of 1915. They broke out in the wake of a protest staged on the Galle Face Green by Tamil parliamentarians and some 200 supporters against the legislation on language policy which gave Sinhala a privileged position. Mobs disrupted the protest and soon anti-Tamil violence spread throughout Colombo; 150 people died."

mobs were the aggressors in a vast majority of cases. The army and the police acted impartially to quell the disturbances. Vittachi says that around 150 people were killed during these disturbances.⁷⁴

While the 1956 riots soon subsided, the underlying ethnic tension continued to persist. In 1957 Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and the Federal Party Leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam had negotiations. On 26 July 1957 they arrived at an Agreement which is known as the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact' (also referred to as the 'B-C Pact'). The Pact reached tentative agreement on a range of issues including the setting up of regional councils and devolving some powers to Tamils living in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, provisions for the use of the Tamil language, and land settlement.⁷⁵ But Sinhala political parties and Sinhala pressure groups opposed the 'B-C pact'. The UNP played the most prominent role. Excessively inflammatory language was used: the UNP leader Dudley Senanayake said that it was "an act of treachery" which would lead to the "partition of Ceylon". J.R. Jayewardene characterised it as a "betrayal of the Sinhalese".⁷⁶ The government was opposed by a long and relentless campaign which culminated with a non-stop demonstration by Buddhist monks outside the Prime Minister's residence in Colombo. Finally Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike surrendered to the campaign and unilaterally abrogated the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact in April 1958.

Two months later the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic tensions which had built up with the 'B-C Pact' controversy and the Sinhala mobilisation against it exploded in violent rioting against Tamils in late-May and June 1958. These riots were much more widespread and serious than those of 1956. This time throughout the island at least 400 Tamils were killed and tens of thousands were displaced.⁷⁷ Organised groups were seen to be active. A state of Emergency was again declared and troops deployed alongside police to quell the rioting and disorder.

These riots encouraged the emergence of Tamil secessionist tendencies. These riots had a corrosive effect on the sensibilities of Tamils, created a high sense of insecurity amongst them and also poisoned whatever remained of Sinhala-Tamil relations.

Anti-Government Civil-Disobedience (Satyagraha) Campaign, January to

⁷⁴ Vittachi, Tarzie, 1958:20, *Emergency '58: The Story of the Ceylon Race Riots*.

⁷⁵ See De Silva, KM, 1986:398-400, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multiethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985* for the complete text of the 'Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact'.

⁷⁶ See Manor, James, 1990: 270, *The Expedient Utopian: Bandaranaike and Ceylon*.

⁷⁷ See Vittachi 1958, *Emergency '58* for the only book length treatment of the subject. In addition there are newspaper articles.

April, 1961. On 1 January 1961 the ITAK/Federal Party began a *Satayagraha* (civil disobedience campaign) in Jaffna. There is an element of irony here because this was the re-activation of the *Satayagraha* campaign which had been planned consequent to the 1956 'Sinhala Only' Act and intended to be launched in August 1957. It was shelved by ITAK in July 1957 with the signing of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact. But the Pact was abrogated in April 1958 and anti-Tamil riots occurred in May 1958. This further alienated Tamils and enhanced their political mobilisation and by 1961 ITAK reactivated its agitation campaign.

The *Satyagraha* began on 1 January 1961 in Jaffna and soon spread to all the towns in the East such as Trincomalee, Vavuniya and Batticaloa. Pamphlets were distributed and demonstrations, meetings and marches were held. One of the objectives was to bring the government's administrative system to a halt and this objective was achieved. The government could not normalise the situation for 3½ months. On 17 April 1961 government declared a State of Emergency and deployed the army in Jaffna and the Eastern Province.⁷⁸ Throughout the rest of April and over the following months the army continued to be in control of Jaffna peninsula and other towns in the North and East. Due to the *Satyagraha* campaign and the government's counter-actions, radical secessionist tendencies within Tamil youth witnessed a further heightening.⁷⁹

The cumulative effect of the 1956 elections, the 'Sinhala Only' Act, the abandonment of the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayakam Pact, the anti-Tamil riots of 1956 and 1958, and the *Satyagraha* campaign of 1960/61 was to deepen the fissure between the Tamils and the Sinhalese people and the government. These were the years when the secessionist radicalisation of Tamils was born and increased. Tamil youth organisations were in the forefront of political agitation.⁸⁰ It was in these organisations that one can discern the roots of the Tamil guerrilla groups which emerged to the fore in the 1980s. The demonstration effect of the JVP's insurrection of 1971 against the Sri Lanka government and the secession of East Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh both added momentum to the nascent insurrectionary tendency within Tamil politics.⁸¹ Research done in

⁷⁸ The following army officers were placed in command of the respective districts: Lt.Colonel. A.R. Udugama (Jaffna), Lt.Colonel L.M. Wickremasooriya (Trincomalee), Lt.Colonel P.D. Ramanayake (Batticaloa), Major T.S.B. Sally (Mannar), and Major C.F. Fernando (Vavuniya). See *Ceylon Daily News*, 19 April 1961:1, 'Armed Forces in North, East'; Sri Lankan Light Infantry 1975:179.

⁷⁹ *Ceylon Daily News* of 11 April 1961, 'TAMIL EELAM in 1962'.

⁸⁰ Organisations such as the Federal Party's youth wing *Tamil Ilainar Iyakkam* (Tamil Youth Movement) and another called the *Tamil Manavar Peravai* (Tamil Students' Union) served to effect the political mobilisation of Tamil youth. Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1986:65, 'The Tamil 'Tigers' in Northern Sri Lanka: Origins, Factions, Programmes'.

⁸¹ Jeyaraj, D.B.S., 1985:17, 'How Strong are 'The Boys'?', *Frontline*, 23 March-5 April, 1985.

subsequent years revealed that an organisation called *Pulip Padai* (which means 'Army of Tigers' in Tamil) was created in 1961. This organisation withered away in a few years but was an interesting forewarning of developments to come.⁸²

By the early 1960s even irredentist ideas of joining the North and East of Sri Lanka to Tamil Nadu had also emerged within Tamil politics. Professor Myron Weiner's *Political Change in South Asia* published in 1963 mentions that Tamils wanted their language to be on par with Sinhala and Federal state of their own. This was, of course, the ITAK's demand. Significantly some Tamils "threatened to separate Tamil areas from Ceylon and join them with the Tamil areas of South India."⁸³ This is a contemporaneous observation made by a scholar and incontrovertible evidence of the existence of irredentist sentiments amongst some Sri Lanka Tamils by 1962/1963.

Tamil Secessionist begin planning for a Separate State, 1972-1973. In the Parliamentary Elections of 27 May 1970, the UNP-led coalition was defeated and a SLFP-led Coalition, the United Left Front (ULF) came to power.⁸⁴ Some policies of the new government served to further aggravate Tamil sentiments. Foremost amongst these was a new Republican Constitution enacted on 22 May 1972. Called the 1st Republication Constitution in publications on Sri Lanka⁸⁵ This Constitution gave Buddhism the 'foremost' position while saying that all other religions had the right to be practiced. The Sinhala language was enshrined as the official language.⁸⁶ The passage of the new Constitution was boycotted by Tamil parliamentarians and this Constitution definitely played a significant role in increasing secessionist tendencies within Tamils.⁸⁷ In 1972 a significant number of Tamil parliamentarians decided to set-aside their political differences and formed the Tamil United Front (TUF).⁸⁸ It was composed of the ITAK/'Federal Party', some member of the All-Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC), the CWC (Ceylon Workers Congress) and individual Tami secessionists.

In May 1973 a TUF Action Committee was tasked with drafting *a Constitution for a Separate Tamil State* [emphasis added].⁸⁹ This was a premonition of what was to come. This was 3

⁸² Narayan Swamy 1994:24. *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas*.

⁸³ Weiner 1963:62, *Political Change in South Asia*.

⁸⁴ Abeynaike, H.B.W. 1987: 354, 'Parliament of Sri Lanka'. The ULF was composed of the SLFP, the Communist Party, and the LSSP (*Lanka Sama Samaja Pakshaya*, 'Lanka Equal Society Party' a Trotskyite left-wing party).

⁸⁵ This enables it to be differentiated from the 2nd Republican Constitution which was enacted in September 1978, which remains the Constitution of the Country to date.

⁸⁶ Wickramasinghe, Nira 2006: 183, Sri Lanka in the modern age: a history of contested identities.

⁸⁷ See bitter critique of the 1st Republican Constitution, Tamil United Liberation Front, 1977: 322, *Election Manifesto of 1977*.

⁸⁸ See Jupp, James, 1978: 20, Sri Lanka – Third World Democracy.

⁸⁹ See Jupp, James 1978: 159, fn.9, *Sri Lanka – Third World Democracy*. This Action Committee was chaired by

years before the Vaddukkoddai Resolution (discussed below) when the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) passed a Resolution calling for the creation of a separate state of Tamil Eelam. As briefly noted in the Introductory Chapter, planning for the economic basis for a future separate Tamil state had also begun by 1973.⁹⁰ This needs to be analysed at greater depth at this juncture and is done so below.

Tamil Plans for the creation of a Separate State, circa 1973. By 1973 influential sections of Tamil parliamentarians and academics had begun to discuss and plan for the creation of a separate Tamil State. They paid special attention as to how to make such a state economically viable. Manogaran and Shastri are two sources which give useful details about these developments. Shastri had learned through her research that leading academics from Jaffna University had begun developing ideas from 1973 on how to make a separate state composed of the Northern and Eastern Provinces economically viable.⁹¹ To the best of her knowledge she writes that this had not been publicly revealed - except the aspects dealt by Manogaran in 1986⁹² - until she published in 1990.⁹³

Shastri writes that in August 1981 the TULF's leader Mr. Amirthalingam explained to her in great detail how the Northern and Eastern Provinces combined into one 'entity' would be economically viable. He had said that rice, fish production and subsidiary food crops were sufficient for consumption and that there would be a surplus available for trade. Trincomalee was to be developed as an industrial processing zone and once that happened the "lack of modern industry in the north and east was *no longer* an insuperable hurdle to *modern statehood* [emphases added]."⁹⁴

Foreign capital, foreign technology, and expatriate capital from the *substantial Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in the advanced industrial countries* would help to set up not only the industries in the processing zone but also the *advanced infrastructure* like telecommunications and airports that were *required to run a modern state*. Most important, the new government would be free to mobilize revenue and direct expenditure for the benefit of the local region and its population. Equally important, it would be *free to negotiate with and procure funding from foreign sources as an independent state* [emphases added].⁹⁵

Shastri wrote that she was also able to corroborate this information from other sources as

S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, the leader of the ITAK. Already mentioned in the Introductory Chapter.

⁹⁰ See Shastri, Amita, 1990: 74, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'.

⁹¹ See Shastri, Amita, 1990: 74, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'.

⁹² Manogaran, Chelvadurai, 1987: 179-180, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

⁹³ See Shastri, Amita, 1990: 74, fn.6, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'.

⁹⁴ Shastri, Amita, 1990: 73, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'.

⁹⁵ Shastri, Amita, 1990: 74, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'.

well. She says that these ideas had already emerged by the 1976 'Vaddukkoddai Resolution'. Shastri reports that she also had extensive discussions with politically active Jaffna Tamil students and expatriates in the USA and came to realise that they were well aware of these concepts and plans.⁹⁶ It is pertinent to note here that it is not a surprise that these ideas had begun to be discussed as early as 1973 because, as mentioned earlier, a Tamil United Front (TUF) action committee had begun drafting a Constitution for a Separate Tamil State in May 1973.⁹⁷ Manogaran explains the need to join the Northern and Eastern Provinces. He points out that the Northern Province is unable, by itself, to agriculturally sustain the population of even the North. This is due to the scarcity of water to expand agricultural production. He argues that it is from the land and water resources of the Eastern Province that food could be produced to feed the people in both Provinces.⁹⁸

The reader needs to keep in mind that these published research texts are just a small fraction of the total amount of conversations, small-group meetings and secret documents and 'think pieces' that would have been prepared during those years. Of these the conversations and meetings are very important but have left no tangible evidence of ever having taken place unless some of the participants reveal this to a researcher. Shastri was fortunate enough to gain access to some of these conversations via the Tamil expatriates she was able to interview.⁹⁹

The Underlying Strategic Reasons for Tamil Demands that the Northern and Eastern Provinces be merged. TULF parliamentarians and Tamil insurgents who agitated for greater devolution of power from 1977 consistently and inflexibly insisted that they wanted the Northern and Eastern Provinces joined together into one 'Unit of Devolution'.¹⁰⁰ The economic, agricultural and food security factors discussed above in Manogaran and Shastri give an insight into the underlying reasons for this consistent demand. When the UNP government offered the District Development Councils (DDCs) during 1979- 1980 the TULF very reluctantly agreed to give them a chance to work but the Tamil insurgent movements completely rejected the DDCs (discussed in Chapter 3).

⁹⁶ Shastri, Amita, 1990: 74, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'.

⁹⁷ See Jupp, James 1978: 159, fn.9, *Sri Lanka - Third World Democracy*. This was one of the decisions taken by a Tamil United Front (TUF) action committee presided by the Federal Party leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam in May 1973.

⁹⁸ Manogaran, Chelvadurai, 1987: 179, *Ethnic Conflict and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

⁹⁹ See Shastri, Amita, 1990: 74, fn.6, 'The Material Basis for Separatism: The Tamil Eelam Movement in Sri Lanka'.

¹⁰⁰ See Map 0.1. The Northern Province is the pink area in the North of the island, and the Eastern Province is the light blue area on the Eastern border of the island. See discussion in Chapter 4.

The Sri Lanka government was not agreeable to merging the Northern and Eastern Provinces. In the government's state security assessments such a merger and devolution of power to a 'Unit' comprising of the Northern and Eastern Provinces was seen as being highly dangerous to the territorial security of the State. Especially as this was the area being claimed as a Tamil 'homeland' by Tamil secessionists. The government's offer was to devolve power to the District level. This was rejected by Tamils.¹⁰¹

We can gain useful insights if, for a moment, we go forward 10 years to 1987. During the crucial period July 1983 to July 1987 when the Indian government was involved in trying to facilitate a negotiated solution (see Chapter.4), the Tamils were inflexible in their demand that the Northern and Eastern Provinces must be merged. This was *the* main factor why numerous attempts at negotiations broke-down. Eventually, in July 1987, via the enormous pressure exerted on Sri Lanka by India (the Indo-Lanka Accord) the Northern and Eastern Provinces were merged.¹⁰² *The Tamils obtained their main demand.*¹⁰³ We will stop here and renew investigation of this issue in Chapter 4. What needs to be flagged here is that the joining together of the Northern and Eastern Provinces is an issue of the highest priority to the secessionist project.

1.5: The TULF Resolution Calling for the Creation of a Separate Tamil State, 1976 and its Electoral Utilisation in July 1977

In May 1976 the TULF adopted a Resolution demanding a separate Tamil State. This Resolution explicitly endorsed armed struggle.¹⁰⁴ It was couched in exceedingly radical and provocative language and sent a clear message to the Tamil people and Tamil youth in particular that the Tamils must embark upon an armed rebellion against the (Sinhala dominated) government and state. The Vaddukkoddai Resolution was a fateful turning point in Tamil politics. With this Resolution the established Tamil parliamentary parties threw in their lot with the militant secessionist movements. Although the wording of the Resolution suggested that the TULF was the Leader and it was calling upon the Tamil youth to come and fight under its banner, the reality

¹⁰¹ The Northern and Eastern Provinces constitute a total of 8 Districts when both Provinces are taken into account. For further Maps and details see the Introductory Chapter.

¹⁰² See 'Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka', Clause 2.2. But even this merging did not satisfy the LTTE which began fighting the Indian armed forces from October 1987. See discussion in Chapter 4.

¹⁰³ However, even this was not sufficient for the LTTE. It wanted nothing less than a separate state and re-ignited the insurrection.

¹⁰⁴ See K.M. De Silva 1986:403-406, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multiethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985*. for a complete reproduction of this Resolution

was that it was the TULF which was being led by militant secessionist groups.¹⁰⁵

The Resolution served to further politically mobilise the Tamil people in general and Tamil youth in particular. It raised high the political expectations of Tamil youth that a separate Tamil state could be near at hand. There is no documentary evidence that the danger of this rhetoric to the established political party leaders, the Tamil youth and to the Tamil people in general was understood at that juncture.¹⁰⁶ While some analysts periodise the beginning of the Tamil insurrection with the 'Vaddukkoddai Resolution' the present author's assessment is that the Tamil secessionist insurrection actually began in 1972 and the Resolution *itself* was a manifestation of the gradual ascendancy of militant Tamil secessionism *within* mainstream Tamil politics. The Vaddukkoddai Resolution was clearly a significant watershed in a 30 year long process which began with the formation of the ITAK/ 'Federal Party' in 1949. Following the Resolution political agitation by Tamils and selected armed attacks - such as killing of Tamil policemen which began in February 1977. While the armed actions got the larger share of publicity, the political agitation and promotion of secession was equally important.¹⁰⁷

The TULF uses the Parliamentary Elections of 1977 as a 'Referendum' for a 'Mandate' for a Separate State. In July 1977, seven years after the previous elections in 1970, elections to Sri Lanka's parliament were held. During the electoral campaign the TULF deliberately placed only one issue on its platform - a demand for 'mandate' from Tamil voters to establish a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka. There was nothing on greater educational facilities for Tamils; nothing on better health, public transport, government sector employment, or establishment of employment generating enterprises in the North and East. The TULF did not make a single request from the new incoming government - which every

¹⁰⁵ This has never been admitted in any TULF or any insurgent movement's document. But at discussions and seminars over the years this has been asserted by analysts and writers, both Tamils and Sinhalese. The present author is researching this issue. Interviewing elderly Tamil politicians and ex-insurgents is one way evidence can be found.

¹⁰⁶ Many Tamil political leaders met their death at the hands of Tamil insurgents who accused them of 'betraying' the cause to create a separate State. Tens of thousands of Tamil youth died in the fighting (while they in turn killed thousands of Sinhala soldiers and civilians). Thousands of Tamil civilians lost their lives and the destruction of houses and private property is incalculable.

¹⁰⁷ The following are just three examples which happened to get recorded for posterity. In May 1976 three Tamil MPs were arrested for subversion by Mrs Bandaranaike's government (see *The Times (London)*, 24 May 1976, 'Sri Lanka arrests'). Three Tamil MPs were arrested and flown to Colombo for contravention of the Sri Lanka Emergency (Prevention of Subversion) Regulations). By mid-1976 Twenty three Tamil youth leaders were under arrest - one from February 1973 onwards. In 1976, just before the Non-Aligned Conference to be held in Colombo - a very important International Conference for Mrs Bandaranaike's government - they threatened to go on a hunger strike. The government released 13 of them but kept the others in custody. The remainder launched their hunger strike. Due to the seriousness of their condition some were force-fed in the prison hospital (see *The Times (London)*, 27 Sep 1976, 'Prisoners of Conscience: Mr Ponnathurai Sathiyaseelan'). In mid-November 1976, the entire parliamentary opposition staged a walkout of parliament in protest against the shooting to death by the Police of a Tamil student during the previous week (see *The Times (London)*, 24 May 1976, 'Sri Lanka walkout').

voter in Sri Lanka knew would be a coalition or single party government of the SLFP or UNP. The TULF addressed itself only to the Tamil people. In effect, the TULF 'transformed' the 1977 parliamentary elections into an (unofficial) Referendum on the creation of a separate Tamil state. This demand for a separate state was opposed by all major Sinhala political parties including the UNP and the SLFP, served to agitate and inflame the apprehensions and emotions of the mass Sinhala electorate, and was a very dangerous political stratagem. The danger was primarily to the Tamils themselves but also to the Sinhalese too, as both ethnic groups eventually lost many tens of thousands of lives.

This action of the TULF was a deliberate political tactic as it was widely known that as the main Tamil parliamentary party hundreds of thousands of Sri Lanka Tamils would vote for it. *Therefore whatever the TULF's platform, the majority of Sri Lanka Tamils would vote for the TULF.* By placing this single issue in front of the Tamil electorate the TULF's pre-planned strategy was to be able to claim that it had obtained a 'mandate' from the Tamils for the creation of a separate state. Which, after winning the majority of the Tamil vote, was precisely what the TULF did in speeches in parliament, public meetings and press conferences. The TULF won 18 of the 23 seats it contested. It obtained 421,488 votes and won 18 seats. On the other hand the SLFP received 1,855,331 votes but obtained only 8 seats.¹⁰⁸ Because of the then prevailing 'first past the post' electoral system it was the TULF which won the second largest number of seats. Thereby the TULF leader also became the Leader of the Opposition in parliament. This was a sore point with the majority Sinhala electorate and served to further inflame Sinhala antagonism towards Tamils.

Concluding comments

The mutually hostile ethno-nationalist projects of the Sinhalese and the Sri Lanka Tamils, and, the intense and growing competition for resources have combined to produce an intense ethno-nationalist conflict within the island. All the ethnic groups in society are politically mobilized along ethno-nationalist lines. There is no common Sri Lankan identity. The Sinhalese ethnic group has firm control over the Executive, the Legislature, the entire State apparatus of the armed forces, police, and the government officials. The vast majority of the Judges are Sinhalese although there still remains some degree of the independence of the judiciary.

¹⁰⁸ Abeynaike, 1987: 355, *Parliament of Sri Lanka*.

Chapter.2

Counterinsurgency: *Concepts, Problems, Issues* and Their Contextual Application to Sri Lanka

Introduction

There are two aims to this Chapter: first, to analyse the doctrines, theories and problems of counterinsurgency warfare as it evolved over the last 50+ years. Second, to develop a framework of Research Questions with which we will analyse the counterinsurgency campaigns of the Sri Lanka government, 1977-1994. These are the seven Research Questions which were briefly introduced in the Introductory Chapter. The best and clearest way to proceed with the subject matter of this Chapter is to divide the material into two Parts. In Part I we will discuss and analyse counterinsurgency theory in general, from the writings of Robert Thompson to the most recent US Army and British Army doctrine. The emphasis of the discussion is on counterinsurgency but insurgency too will be touched upon as and when needed.

In Part II we will apply the insights gained in Part I to the specific problems of the Sri Lankan context and develop a set of Research Questions. Our analysis of Sri Lanka's ethnic competition, Sinhala-Buddhist identity, the history of invasions from South India, the inception of the Tamil insurgency, and the problems created by the close presence of Tamil Nadu and India *preceded* this Chapter. This was done so that our discussion of counterinsurgency in the present Chapter could be located within the political, historical and South Indian regional tensions *within* which the Sri Lanka government had to try and cope with the Tamil insurrection.

Part II will also reveal how some sections of general counterinsurgency theory do not apply to the Sri Lankan case. One example is the large sections that British and US army doctrine devotes to the Host Nation (HN).¹ In Sri Lanka's context these issues have no relevance because in Sri Lanka the counterinsurgent *is* the Sri Lankan government and its armed forces and police.

¹ Coordinating with the HN, becoming familiar with the culture of the HN, problems of joint operations with the armed forces of the HN, etc.

I

Counterinsurgency: *Concepts, Problems, Issues*

The contemporary historical juncture is a very significant period for counterinsurgency theory, practice and doctrine. This is a result of the on-going conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Mali, Nigeria and in many other countries in the Middle-East and North Africa. The attacks in New York on 11 September 2001 by *Al Qaeda*, the US-led coalition's invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the on-going internal conflicts in both countries and the emergence of numerous Islamic fundamentalist organisations around the world inspired by *Al Qaeda* provide the primary policy impetus for such interest. These government policy requirements have triggered-off parallel interests in academia, professional military academies and intelligence agencies.

In the immediate years after the September 2001 attacks the USA's approach against Islamic fundamentalist groups was a pure counter-terrorist approach. This was conducted under the rubric 'Global War on Terror' (GWOT). GWOT was – and is – primarily using conventional warfare weapons and tactics to hunt down insurgents. However, seven years after GWOT began, influential US strategic analysis organisations have come to the conclusion that a more nuanced counterinsurgency approach would have been, and is, superior to GWOT. This was one of the main conclusions of the RAND Corporation's very large and exhaustive 2008 research project *War by Other Means: Building Complete and Balanced Capabilities for Counterinsurgency*. RAND concluded that "As a guiding principal, COIN [counterinsurgency] is superior to GWOT because it calls our attention to the underlying contest and the capabilities needed to win".² Two years before RAND's final counterinsurgency report the US Army's new counterinsurgency Manual FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* was published in 2006. It, too, is a reflection of the new interest in counterinsurgency in the USA's defence establishment. And it too advocates a nuanced counterinsurgency approach when dealing with insurgents versus a conventional warfare approach.³ Parallel developments have been underway in Britain as well.⁴ A large section of the US Defence Establishment's understanding is that Islamic fundamentalist *jihadism* is a global insurgency and consequently it needs a counterinsurgency programme that that is

² RAND, *War by Other Means*, 2008: xxv.

³ See FM 3-24, US Army, 2006, *Counterinsurgency*.

⁴ For example see British Army, 2005, *Army Doctrine Publication Land Operations*, and British Army, 2009, *Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, 'Countering Insurgency'*.

global in scope.⁵ This is the first time in world history that it has been argued that an insurgency could exist on a *global* scale. And, likewise that a *global* counterinsurgency campaign has to be fought. The current international interest in counterinsurgency studies is under girded by these concerns.

However, it is the present author's understanding that 'global insurgency' did *not* apply to the Tamil Secessionist Insurrection of Sri Lanka (and therefore the Sri Lankan State did not have to fight a 'global counterinsurgency'). The LTTE's fund raising capabilities in about 20 to 30 countries does not lead to the conclusion that the Tamil insurrection is a global insurgency - it merely indicates how Tamils (from Tamil Nadu, Malaysia, Africa, Sri Lanka and other countries) have migrated to affluent western countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, Britain, Norway, Sweden and a total of about 30 different countries and the efficiency with which the LTTE was able to organise fund-raising from within them. The Tamil secessionist insurrection was a 'traditional' insurrection of the type which was common in the 1950s-1970s.

First, the LTTE was not a communist insurgent group but a secessionist movement. And it adopted *some* of the main principles of Maoist protracted guerrilla warfare. In the LTTE's military and political conduct we can see evidence of many of the strategies and tactics of a Maoist-type protracted rural guerrilla warfare; with, in addition, suicide cadres who operated on land, sea and in the air. Second, the insurrection's goal was the creation of a separate territorial State in a very specific area constituted of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. There was no 'global' dimensions to the LTTE's objective. Third, none of the Tamil secessionist insurgency groups, including the LTTE, had any intention of capturing state power in Sri Lanka.⁶

Fourth, the LTTE's military actions were primarily conducted on Sri Lankan soil. Except for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and the killing of some leaders and members of competing Tamil militant groups, the LTTE fought in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and also in Colombo. Some LTTE members lived and worked for the LTTE abroad and they were a part of the movement's international fund generation network. This network played an important part in the propaganda mobilisation of the insurrection but it was did not carry-out any armed actions against the Sri Lankan government abroad, such as attacks on Sri Lanka embassies, or

⁵ RAND, *War by Other Means*, 2008:14-15.

⁶ That was attempted by the two JVP insurrections of 1971 and 1987-1989. The JVP insurrections had a great deal of 'social revolutionary' content inter-mixed with Sinhala nationalism. The vast majority of the JVP were of ethnic Sinhala origin.

diplomatic personnel.⁷ A large proportion of the Tamil Diaspora supported the LTTE with funds but that factor too does not make the LTTE's insurrection a global insurrection. Fifth, the LTTE was very hierarchically organised and centralised in a standard, recognisable fashion. The supreme leader was Velupillai Prabhakaran who had a group of 'senior leaders' of approximately 20+ persons assisting him in running the organisation. These individuals were the *de facto* 'central committee' of the LTTE. Unlike a communist guerrilla movement there is no evidence that the LTTE had a formal Politburo or Central Committee or any similar internal political structures but was hierarchically arranged under its leader Prabhakaran.

The LTTE's organisational structure did not have any resemblance to, for example, the 'flat' organisational form of *Al Qaeda* with its many independent strands. In the LTTE all the major and medium level decisions were taken by its leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran or had to be taken with his approval or knowledge. Minor level tactical operations were left to the various 'commanders' responsible for different areas of the North and East of Sri Lanka. While the LTTE did have suicide cadres – i.e. special cadres who were ready to commit suicide in accomplishing an attack - the mere existence of such suicide cadres does not place the LTTE in the same company as *Al Qaeda* or *Taliban*. The LTTE's suicide cadres were components of a *secular* 'weapon system' and there was no attempt to link such suicide actions with Hinduism or Christianity – the two religions of the Sri Lanka Tamils. However, there was a great deal of motivational audio-visual material and printed texts such as songs, poems, video films, booklets, and news sheets which glorified these cadres as having sacrificed their lives for the land of Tamil Eelam. That was the LTTE's approach.

Consequently, current debates on 'global insurgency' and 'global counterinsurgency' have only little relevance to the LTTE's insurrectionary project and the counterinsurgency campaigns of the Sri Lanka governments analysed in this Thesis. Therefore these need not be discussed in detail in this Thesis. It is the counterinsurgency literature and doctrine which originated in the 1960s-1970s and contemporary theoretical manuals of the US and British military such as FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* (US Army, 2006) and Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency* (British Army, 2009) which are relevant to the Sri Lankan case. While some sections of these manuals too touch on global counterinsurgency, even

⁷ This was probably a combination of (a) the LTTE developing a policy where it realised that such attacks had very little bearing on the strategic situation in Sri Lanka and would merely jeopardise its fund raising activities, and (b) the western countries warning the LTTE that political criminal actions such as assassinations and bombings of Sri Lankan targets would not be tolerated.

those sections and theoretical approaches are built-upon the literature and experiences of the earlier period.

Insurgency: a brief survey

Insurgency is a form of warfare generally perpetrated by non-State actors. These non-State actors are very much weaker than the States that they are fighting against. But, although they are weak when they begin the insurrection, a significant number of insurgent movements have been able to achieve their goals. Bard O'Neill suggests that insurgencies can have diverse objectives. He suggests nine types of insurgencies.⁸ The category relevant to this Thesis is secessionist insurrection.

Insurgency is a seemingly simple and straightforward phenomenon. Some incorrectly equate insurgency to guerrilla warfare, or consider guerrilla warfare as a synonym of insurgency. This is erroneous. While guerrilla warfare can be, and often is, a very important *component* in an insurgency, the political objectives of an insurgency are much larger in scope than guerrilla warfare. Furthermore, guerrilla warfare can exist without any specific insurrectionary objective and be a part of a larger inter-State conventional conflict. Numerous instances in World War II are good cases in point.⁹

We will now examine some definitions of insurgency. In the analyses of insurgency and counterinsurgency the approach adopted in the present text is to examine academic literature and military manuals of the US and British armed forces. The military manuals are significant as they are documents meant to guide the military operations of tens of thousands of actual military practitioners of counterinsurgency warfare. These manuals have been discussed and developed through the collective efforts of hundreds of military professionals who have a direct professional interest in the subject. Therefore they have a policy orientation which may sometimes be lacking in pure academic publications. Furthermore, UK and US manuals are widely available in the Sri Lanka army.

O'Neill's defines insurgency as:

⁸ The nine types are Anarchist, Egalitarian, Traditionalist, Apocalyptic-Utopian, Pluralist, Secessionist, Reformist, Preservationist and Commercialist. O'Neill, Bard, 2005: 19-29, *Insurgency and Terrorism*.

⁹ French guerrillas fought against the occupying German forces. Russian guerrillas fought behind German lines against the invading German forces. These French and Russian guerrillas played important roles in weakening the invading German forces, but it is important to note that they worked in a supporting role to large conventional armed forces – in the case of the French it was the alliance of Britain, USA and Free French forces. In the case of Russia it was in support of the Red Army. It was not the guerrilla forces which defeated the Germans but the conventional armed forces of Britain, USA and the Soviet Union.

Insurgency may be defined as a struggle between a non-ruling group and the ruling authorities in which the non-ruling group consciously employs *political resources* (e.g., organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics¹⁰

This formulation has considerable merit and enables the incorporation of the subtleties which exist in many insurrectionary situations. The British army's *Land Operations* 2005 definition of insurgency is:

An insurgency is defined as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict. It is an armed political struggle the goals of which may be diverse. Some insurgencies aim to seize power through revolution. Others attempt to break away from state control and establish an autonomous state within ethnic or religious boundaries.¹¹

This definition is useful for our purposes. It alludes to two types of insurgencies, one which aim at capturing governmental power and the other which are secessionist in nature. In Sri Lanka both types of insurrection have been experienced.¹² The first sentence of the above definition is identical to the US army's definition given below. However there are some crucial differences between the British army's formulation and the US army's formulation, as discussed below. The US army's 2006, FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency's* definition of insurgency is:

Joint doctrine defines an insurgency as an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict (JP 1-02). Stated another way, an insurgency is an organized, protracted politico-military struggle designed to weaken the control and legitimacy of an established government, occupying power, or other political authority while increasing insurgent control.¹³

Although the above quote says "stated in another way", the meaning of the second sentence in the above quote is *not* equivalent to the meaning of the first sentence. The second sentence includes "occupying power" and "other political authority" whereas the first sentence does not. According to the present author's assessment the above US definition is fundamentally flawed when it places an "established government" on par with an "occupying force".

An "occupying power" could mean the forces of any invading State or an alliance of invading States. What does "other political authority" mean? It clearly means any political force (invariably with military power), internal, external force, or an alliance of internal and external forces, which is able to enforce its will on the people of a country.

¹⁰ O'Neill, Bard, 2005: 15, *Insurgency and Terrorism*.

¹¹ British Army, *Land Operations*, 2005:17

¹² The two JVP insurrections (1971, and 1987-1989) were attempts to capture state power. The Tamil insurrection's objective was to secede and create a separate state.

¹³ US Army, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, 2006:1-1

In the present author's assessment this formulation in FM 3-24 is the result of the US Army's need to accommodate the USA's and its allies' invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. In FM 3-24 the phrases "occupying power" and "other political authority" enables the justification of an invading power (legal or otherwise) enforced upon a country. FM 3-24 was drafted and written during the crucial years from 2003-2005 and published in 2006. These are years when the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan occurred and when the US and its allied forces found themselves under attack. While FM 3-24 gives 'Legitimacy'¹⁴ the primary status in its 'Principals of Counterinsurgency', and by uses the phrases "occupying power" and "other political authority" to try and claim some element of Legitimacy, in the assessment of the present writer this effort is not convincing.

On this crucial issue of invading forces British counterinsurgency doctrine differs in one very significant aspect from the US. The British too define an insurgency as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict" (the wording of this sentence is identical to FM 2-34's mentioned above).¹⁵ However, crucially, a few sentences later the British manual states:

Campaigns of national resistance differ from insurgencies in that they *aim to liberate a country from government by an invader*, or overthrow a government imposed by an invader. The French Resistance of the Second World War is an example [emphases added].¹⁶

The mention of the French Resistance is of great significance. In the military history of the Second World War the French Resistance is not categorised as an 'insurrection' and the neither is the Nazi regime's actions categorised as 'counterinsurgency'. The FM 3-24 makes a fundamental conceptual error when it conflates indigenously generated insurrections (which derive their origin from social-class grievances and/or ethnic grievances) with rebellions which fight against invading armies (whatever the reason for the invasion and however justified that cause may be in the eyes of the invading country or alliance of countries). Three recent examples of indigenously generated insurrections are the Maoist insurrection in Nepal which led to the demise of the monarchy in that country.¹⁷ Second, the current on-going Maoist-style rural insurgency in large areas of North-Eastern and other eastern regions of India.¹⁸ Third, the Tamil secessionist insurrection in Sri Lanka. In all three insurgencies it is the indigenous armed forces of the respective states that fought the insurgents: in Nepal the

¹⁴ See US Army, FM 3-24, 2006: 1-21, *Counterinsurgency*.

¹⁵ British Army, 2005:17, *Land Operations*.

¹⁶ British Army, 2005:17, *Land Operations*.

¹⁷ Kerttunen, 2011: 92-98, 'A transformed insurgency: The strategy of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) in the light of communist insurgency theories an a modified Beaufrean exterior/interior framework'.

¹⁸ Baruah, Sanjib, ed, 2009, *Beyond Counter-Insurgency: Braking the Impasse in Northeast India*

insurgents won a partial victory (in the sense that the monarchy was toppled but a socialist system was not established). In Sri Lanka the secessionist insurgents were militarily defeated in May 2009 but internationally the campaign still goes on. In India there is on-going fighting in typical protracted Maoist fashion.

The British Army's *Countering Insurgency*, 2009 defines insurgency as "An organised, violent subversion used to effect or prevent political control, as a challenge to established authority."¹⁹ The RAND Corporation's *War by Other Means* final Report in 2008 says:

Insurgencies are movements in which opponents of established governing authorities use violence and other means to wrest the support of the population away from those authorities.²⁰

Significantly, in the above definition there is no mention of, or attempt to justify "occupying forces" as in FM 3-24. But even the RAND definition avoids the issue of democratically elected (and therefore politically legitimate) governments. In the case of Sri Lanka there was a democratically elected government during 1977-1994. Briefly, to just illustrate the difference, let us, as a 'conceptual exercise', modify RAND's definition to fit democratically elected governments and see the result:

Insurgencies are movements in which opponents of **democratically elected** and established governments use violence and other means to wrest the support of the population away from such **governments**.

Clearly, it is not possible to apply such a definition to post-October 2001 Afghanistan or post-March 2003 Iraq (the months when each country was invaded). RAND, FM 3-24 and British definitions have to be able to incorporate these examples. But it *is* possible to apply such a definition to the Maoist insurrection underway in India, the Philippines faced with Islamic secessionists and Sri Lanka faced with Tamil secession.²¹

All the above definitions are useful for us to understand various aspects of the phenomenon of insurgency in general, and the Tamil secessionist insurgency in particular. This is sufficient for the purposes of this Thesis. A great deal more remains to be debated and analysed on the subject of insurgency; entire theses have been written and more will be in the future. The focus of this Thesis is on counterinsurgency and therefore we will not anymore debate the relative merits of various definitions of insurgency.

¹⁹ British Army, 2009: 1-10, Field Manual, Volume.1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

²⁰ RAND, 2008: iii-iv, *War by Other Means*.

²¹ Of course the insurgents and their supporters in each of these countries will question the level and quality of the democracy that exists in these countries. Some of the criticisms will be valid as none of these are perfect democracies. But the fact that competitive multi-party systems exist, elections are regularly held and governments have been changed peacefully are significant plus points which need to be taken into account.

2.1: Overview of Counterinsurgency Warfare doctrine

Counterinsurgency is central to this Thesis. Concepts and strategies of counterinsurgency warfare have developed in symbiotic relationship, so to speak, with the development of insurgency and guerrilla warfare. As noted by Beckett:

In response to guerrilla warfare, insurgency and terrorism, armed forces have developed counter-measures to defeat such challenges and prevent their resurgence. In many respects the development of counter-guerrilla warfare and counterinsurgency has mirrored the development of guerrilla warfare and insurgency. Thus modern counterinsurgency encompasses those military, political, socio-economic and psychological activities employed by the authorities and their armed forces to defeat the threat in question.²²

The approach adopted in this Thesis is, in Part I, to analyse a range of texts from the pioneers of the field such as Robert Thompson to the most recent doctrinal literature of counterinsurgency *practitioners* such as the USA and Britain, namely the US's FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (2006) and Britain's Field Manual, '*Countering Insurgency*' (2009). Constrained by the need for the brevity, this literature has to be dealt with as concisely as possible in this Thesis. It needs to be flagged here that all this US and British literature is premised upon counterinsurgencies being conducted in a friendly Host Nation (HN). Such recommendations are irrelevant to this Thesis as the Sri Lankan government and state *is* counterinsurgent that we are assessing. From the insights we gain from our investigations in Part I we will move to Part II where we develop a framework for assessing the counterinsurgency efforts of the Sri Lankan government, 1977 to 1994.

We will begin with the literature of the pioneers of counterinsurgency doctrine so as to place in context current US and British Doctrine. Accordingly, we will analyse, to the degree practicable, the writings of key authorities on counterinsurgency such as Sir Robert Thompson, Lt.Colonel David Galula, General Frank Kitson, the British Army's *Land Operations* Vol.3 manual, the US Army's *Low-Intensity Conflict* (FM 100-20).

However, before beginning our discussion it would be useful to reflect on two matters. First the official inhibition to the use of the word 'counterinsurgency' from the 1970s to around 2004/2005.²³ In any event, by 2006 and 2009 the US and British military establishments have

²² Beckett, 2001: viii, *Modern Insurgencies and Counter-Insurgencies: Guerrillas and their opponents since 1750*.

²³ This seems to have happened after the US's disastrous intervention in Vietnam. After the defeat in Vietnam there seems to have arisen a reaction against the word itself within the United States. Quite independently American

reverted back to the use of 'counterinsurgency' and 'countering insurgency' in their manuals.²⁴ Second, we need to keep in mind the bloody and messy reality of counterinsurgency warfare versus counterinsurgency theory in exactly the same way actual conventional war differs from theoretical and analytical examinations of conventional war. Counterinsurgency is a form of warfare – as is insurgency – which is inherently messy, prone to human rights violations, extra-judicial killings, torture, mistakes which result in the death of own troops and civilians, confusion, fear, physical exhaustion and all the frictions of war described by Clausewitz.²⁵ All warfare can be messy and chaotic and in this sense counterinsurgency warfare is no different from conventional warfare.²⁶

Robert Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*, first published in 1966, is considered to be among the primary foundations on which modern postcolonial British Counterinsurgency doctrine is built and is officially accepted as such by the British army.²⁷ Thompson's writings have also influenced the development of US counterinsurgency theory and practice as well.

This is acknowledged by the US team²⁸ which wrote FM 3-24. And the British team that wrote *Countering Insurgency* says: "The origins of these principles can be traced back directly to those published by Sir Robert Thompson in 1966 in his book *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*."²⁹

scholar Blaufarb too had noticed this trend in the late-1970s but his analysis of the underlying reasons are somewhat different to the one advanced by the present author. See Blaufarb, 1977: 1, *The Counterinsurgency Era*. But both our views are compatible and are not mutually exclusive. From the 1970s onwards the US defence establishment came up with a series of phrases such as: 'Internal Defence and Development' (IDAD); 'Pacification'; 'Stability Operations'; and 'Low Intensity Conflicts (LIC)' as can be seen in publications such US Army, 1990, Field Manual FM 100-20/Air Force Pamphlet AFP 3-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* and US Army, 2003, FM 3-07 (FM 100-20), *Stability Operations and Support Operations*. The substance of all these manuals was counterinsurgency but that word was excluded. Terms such as IDAD and LIC are synonyms seem to have been chosen – whether consciously or unconsciously – to soften the harsh reality of counterinsurgency. This plethora of terms was (and is) not useful and could lead to confusion and frustration developing in the minds of Officers – both young and old – who found these new terms and phrases being used in manuals which arrived on their desks at irregular intervals. In the course of conversations and interviews with many senior and middle ranking Sri Lankan army officers from 1998 onwards the present author is personally aware of this occurring in the Sri Lanka army where US and British manuals are formal and informal parts of the teaching syllabi.

²⁴ See US Army, 2006, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* and British Army, 2009, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, 'Countering Insurgency'.

²⁵ Clausewitz, 1989, *On War*.

²⁶ Due to the need for brevity the discussions in this Thesis have to be pitched at levels of abstraction where these frictions cannot be incorporated. However, the present author and the reader need to be aware of these frictions when recommendations for 'coherent counterinsurgency', 'appropriate military operations', 'separating the insurgents from their support base' and such like are recommended and discussed in this Thesis.

²⁷ See British Army, 2005: 168, *Army Doctrine Publication Land Operations* and British Army, 2009: 3-1, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, 'Countering Insurgency'.

²⁸ See US Army, FM 3-24, 2006: viii, *Counterinsurgency*.

²⁹ See British Army, 2009: 3-1, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, 'Countering Insurgency'.

Thompson wrote of five principles of counterinsurgency.³⁰ First, that the government implementing the counterinsurgency must have clear political objectives. Although Thompson didn't explicitly say so, it is clearly implied in his book that the government identifying its political aim(s) is *the* primary principle. Counterinsurgency operations must be directed at achieving those political aim(s).

The first [principle] is that there must be *a very clear political aim* - that is you [i.e. the counterinsurgent] must *know what political end you seek*. [...] the key thing is that all actions and all operations must contribute to the political aim. If they do not, then they are at best wasted and at worst counter-productive [emphases added].³¹

The above formulation is in complete harmony with Clausewitz's recommendation that military force and operations should be used for the furtherance of a government's overall political goals:

If we keep in mind that war springs from some political purpose, it is natural that the prime cause of its existence will remain the supreme consideration in conducting it. [...] Policy, then, will permeate all military operations, and, in so far as their violent nature will admit, it will have a continuous influence on them.³²

It is not a mere coincidence that in the principles of counterinsurgency in both FM 3-24 and in the British Army's *Countering Insurgency* (2009) a great deal of emphasis is given to the government fighting an insurgency *having a clear political aim*. This can be traced right back to Thompson.³³ In all instances this recommendation is directed at the friendly Host Nation (HN) that the US or British government is assisting, but that does not affect the validity of this recommendation.³⁴

Second, Thompson recommended that the government must function in accordance with the law. This is a laudable goal but has not been entirely practicable. Every counterinsurgency campaign including the Malayan Emergency, Kenya through to Iraq and Afghanistan which have all witnessed excesses. Of course there is a way in which this principle can be adhered in 'the letter of the Law' but not in 'the spirit of the Law' and that is for a government to enact draconian laws.³⁵ In any event this recommendation too is present in the lists in both the US and British

³⁰ Thompson, 1966: 50-58, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*.

³¹ This quote is actually from a book chapter published in 1979. See Thompson, 1979: 10, 'Regular Armies and Insurgency', in Ronald Haycock (ed), *Regular Armies and Insurgency*. The phrasing in 1979 is much better and comprehensive than the formulation in Thompson, 1966: 50-51.

³² Clausewitz 1989:87, *On War*.

³³ See US Army, 2006: 1-20 to 1-26, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*; British Army, 2009: 3-2 to 3-20, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, 'Countering Insurgency'.

³⁴ The fact that all these manuals assume assistance to a Host Nation (HN) is an aspect that needs to be kept in mind and appropriate qualifications made when Sri Lanka applies these principles. In the Sri Lankan context the Sri Lankan government is not assisting another friendly State in fighting an insurgency; the Sri Lanka government *is* the counterinsurgent.

³⁵ A government can do this by bringing into force Martial Law, suspending *habeas corpus*, suspending magisterial enquiries into deaths, suspending post-mortem examinations of dead bodies, allow police and armed

Army's doctrinal manuals. Thompson's third principle is that the government must have an overall plan. This is very sound advice and has been taken on board and elaborated in great detail in US and British Doctrine.

Thompson's fourth principle was that the government must give priority to defeating political subversion and not hunting-down insurgent cadres, i.e. dismantle the insurgent's infrastructure and win the allegiance of the people and not waste time and effort chasing guerrillas through the jungles. Of course military and police operations against armed units of the insurgents have to go on. But priority must be given to severing the links between the insurgents and the extensive infrastructure system that they need – food, medicine, information, sanctuary and many other goods and services – to carry-on with the insurgency while concurrently the allegiance of the people need to be won over. This recommendation has been very comprehensively elaborated and absorbed into US and British Doctrine.³⁶

Fifth, Thompson recommended that the government secure its own base areas. This is an axiom which any competent government and its armed forces should adhere to, and is standard practice in most competent armies. Thompson also focussed on how to plan and implement a counterinsurgency campaign via a combination of appropriate political and military measures.

When applying this to action and operations on the ground, there will be four definite stages which can be summed up as **clearing, holding, winning** and **won** [emphases added].³⁷

Lt.Colonel David Galula is the next writer we will briefly touch upon. Galula was a French army officer who fought in Vietnam and Algeria. His book *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* first published in 1964 is considered a standard work in the field. After 2001 it has been reprinted and widely read in the US Army and influenced the team which wrote FM 3-24.³⁸ General Frank Kitson is another of the pioneers. His *Low-Intensity Operations* (1971) and *Bunch of Five* (1977) are based on his extensive knowledge and military experiences in Kenya, Malaya, Muscat, Oman, and Cyprus. These books were written while

forces personnel to dispose off dead bodies and a whole range of other similarly very harsh policies.

³⁶ See US Army, 2006: 1-23, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*; where one of its 13 Principles of counterinsurgency is 'Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their Cause and Support'. Also see British Army, 2009: 3-2, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*. Three of its 10 principles are 'Secure the Population', 'Neutralise the Insurgent', 'Gain and Maintain Popular Support'.

³⁷ Thompson, 1966: 111, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*. As will be shown later, a similar 4-phase sequence was a part of the US Army's FM 100-20 for 20 years. And in present US and British doctrine a 3-phase sequence termed 'Clear-Hold-Build' has been devised, which have a great deal in common with Thompson's 4-phase model with additions to meet with the exigencies troops faces in Afghanistan, Iraq and other locations where the global counterinsurgency against Islamic fundamentalism has to be waged.

³⁸ See US Army, FM 3-24, 2006: viii, *Counterinsurgency*

he was a serving officer in the British army. Kitson's concepts and ideas too have influenced the British army's official doctrine.³⁹

For many years the basic military doctrinal texts used by the British Army and the Sri Lanka Army were the multi-volume *Land Operations* manuals published in the late-1960s and 1970s.⁴⁰ The text which is directly relevant to counterinsurgency is Volume-3 titled *Counter Revolutionary Operations*.⁴¹ The conceptual substance of *Land Operations* Volume.3 and the writings of Kitson and Thompson share a great deal in common. Most mid-level and senior Sri Lankan Army officers are familiar with Volume.3 as they have been introduced to it at various British military academies such as RMA Sandhurst, Staff College, Camberley and RCDS (Royal College of Defence Studies). Other officers who have not attended courses in Britain have access to Volume.3 at military training establishments in Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Copies printed in Sri Lanka are available in training establishments and various headquarters of the Sri Lanka Army. Sri Lanka's political leaders, however, have no systematic instruction in this literature other than through their own initiatives. It needs to be noted that Volume.3 was meant to teach counterinsurgency to British troops assisting friendly states or commonwealth states which it was the Britain government's policy to assist. The term 'government' below refers to the governments of such States and not to the UK government.

From 1990 onwards the US Army's primary doctrinal text pertaining to counterinsurgency was 'Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflicts' (Field Manual FM 100-20).⁴² This was the situation up till 2006 when FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* superseded it. As briefly noted earlier in this Chapter from the 1970s to 2006 the US military dropped the use of the term counterinsurgency. Terms such as 'Pacification', 'Stability Operations', 'internal defence', Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) and IDAD (Internal Defence and Development) all refer to counterinsurgency or some aspect of counterinsurgency. These Manuals were meant to teach and guide US army officers and troops assisting friendly 'Host Nations' (HN). The need for clear

³⁹ See British Army, 2009: 3-19, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, '*Countering Insurgency*'.

⁴⁰ In the British Army these Manuals have been superseded by more recent publications. However, these Manuals are important in their own right as they are a part of the history of British military doctrine, and, they are still in use in Sri Lanka.

⁴¹ British Army, *Land Operations*, Vol.3, *Counter Revolutionary Operations* is published in three parts. Part.1 - *Principles and General Aspects*; Part.2 - *Internal Security*; and Part.3 - *Counter Insurgency*, HMSO.

⁴² By 1990 the US Army and US Air Force had developed a unified doctrinal text. Its full title and reference numbers are 'Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict', Field Manual FM 100-20/Air Force Pamphlet AFP 3-20. It was published by the Departments of the Army and Air Force, Washington DC, 5 December 1990. It superseded the FM 100-20 version published in 1981. For the sake of brevity henceforth this text will be referred to as 'FM 100-20' in this Thesis.

political objectives to guide the use of military force, and, the centrality of the people were emphasised in these manuals.⁴³

US Army FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency (2006) and British Army, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, 'Countering Insurgency' (2009)

We now turn our attention to the principles of counterinsurgency set forth in the US Army's Field Manual FM 3-24 *Counterinsurgency* and the British Army's Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, '*Countering Insurgency*'. Due to the length of their titles these texts will henceforth be referred to as FM 3-24 (US Army, 2006) and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army, 2009). The footnote references will be more comprehensive. FM 3-24 was published in 2006 and *Countering Insurgency* in 2009. It can be argued that these two manuals are the legatees of a 50+ year old tradition of counterinsurgency thought and practice coming forward from the days of Robert Thompson and David Galula. This does not mean that they will necessarily be valid for an indefinite period of time nor does it mean that they do not, even as they are, have some inadequacies, in the assessment of the present author.⁴⁴ However, they are the best we have at present and in any event no text would be perfect. All counterinsurgency practitioners, Manuals and academic monographs caution us, there is *no universal blueprint for success in counterinsurgency*. But, there *are* some time and battle-tested concepts which a counterinsurgent would be well advised to take into account when designing a campaign plan. There are other publications too which deal with developing frameworks for counterinsurgency campaigns. They too share a great deal in common with Thompson, Galula *et al.*⁴⁵

The US and British manuals were chosen as they are the distillate of teams of Officers and academics. They bring together the experiences of a wide range of military officers who have been counterinsurgency practitioners and academic researchers.⁴⁶ They are very

⁴³ FM 100-20, Chapter-2:7-8.

⁴⁴ For example the fact that FM 3-24 chooses to place 'Legitimacy' as the first item on its list of COIN principles. The present author thinks that this has to be very critically examined. A second is the virtual non-existence of awareness of the multi-ethnic character of many of 3rd world States, and the problems thereof for COIN. A third are the problems a regional 'superpower' (eg. India) could create for a counterinsurgent (eg. Sri Lanka government). But this is a factor which is dependent on the context of each insurgency and it can be argued that each counterinsurgent will have to learn to cope with the problems as best it can (which is exactly what the Sri Lanka government had to do, as discussed in Chapter-4). Entire Theses could be written which critically examines these two Manuals while comparing and contrasting each with the other. But we cannot go into such detail in this Thesis.

⁴⁵ One example is Melshen, Paul, 2007, 'Mapping Out a Counterinsurgency Campaign Plan: Critical Considerations in Counterinsurgency Campaigning', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol.18, No.4, December 2007, pp.665-698. The primacy of having a clear political aim (Robert Thompson 1966 is quoted) and the shape of a good counterinsurgency campaign are spelt out.

⁴⁶ Both were written by large committees. See Hazel, D.F., 2008, 'British Counter-insurgency Doctrine and its Development since 2001' which gives a good insight into the institutional politics and bureaucratic hick-ups of the British process. Analogous situations must have occurred in the writing of FM 3-24 as well.

comprehensive in their coverage of most aspects of counterinsurgency, and the present author locates the analytical framework for assessing the counterinsurgency efforts of the Sri Lanka government 1977-1994 *within* this body of literature. However, as noted earlier, all recommendations and references to a 'Host Nation' (of which there are a great many in both manuals) do not apply to the Sri Lankan case as the Sri Lankan government and state *was* the primary and sole Counterinsurgent.

FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency. FM 3-24 is the current counterinsurgency Manual for both the US Army and US Marine Corps. It is a large volume and is meant to fill a counterinsurgency 'doctrinal gap' in both forces. In the case of the US Army 20 years had passed after the previous doctrinal manual devoted to counterinsurgency and in the case of the US Marines 25 years are said to have passed.⁴⁷ It is useful to note that in its Acknowledgements, Thompson's *Defeating Communist Insurgency* and Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* are specifically mentioned.⁴⁸

FM 3-24 identifies 13 principles of counterinsurgency. These are what FM 3-24 identified as relevant to *its* specific target audience - the US Army and Marine Corps. As can be seen the 13 are divided into two parts (see below). Principles 1 to 8 are said to have been derived from past insurgencies and 9 to 13 are mentioned as 'Contemporary Imperatives' of Counterinsurgency.⁴⁹ Some criticisms can be made about this separation into two parts. Surely the need to 'Manage Information and Expectations', 'Use the Appropriate Level of Force' and 'Learn and Adapt' are lessons learnt during past insurgencies as well, and not only post 2001 Afghanistan and Iraq?

But we need not quibble about these matters. The compilers of this Manual - which, it needs to be noted, is the combined effort of dozens of personnel - may have had strictly pedagogical reasons for creating these two segments. Doctrine is, after all, 'that which is taught',⁵⁰ and FM 3-24 has a range of very specific tasks that it is supposed to accomplish, among them being guiding planning staff (from the highest level of a Army HQ to Battalion HQ) and increasing

⁴⁷ See Foreword by Lieutenant General David H. Petraeus, U.S. Army, and Lieutenant General James F. Amos, U.S. Marine Corps. The book has a total of 282 pages.

⁴⁸ See US Army, 2006: viii, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*.

⁴⁹ Some criticisms can be made about this separation into two parts. Surely the need to 'Manage Information and Expectations', 'Use the Appropriate Level of Force' and 'Learn and Adapt' are principles and/or lessons learnt in past insurgencies as well? But we need not quibble about these matters. The compilers of this manual - which, it needs to be noted, is the combined effort of dozens of personnel - may have had strictly pedagogical reasons for creating these two segments. Doctrine is, after all, 'that which is taught'. It is reiterated here that any recommendations or any references to a 'Host Nation' (of which there are a great many in both the US and the British manuals) does not apply to this Thesis as the Sri Lankan government and state *was* the sole Counterinsurgent.

⁵⁰ Chambers English Dictionary, 1990: 418, *Chambers English Dictionary*.

HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES FOR COUNTERINSURGENCY (The following principles are derived from past insurgencies).⁵¹

1. Legitimacy Is the Main Objective
2. Unity of Effort Is Essential
3. Political Factors Are Primary
4. Counterinsurgents Must Understand the Environment
5. Intelligence Drives Operations
6. Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their Cause and Support
7. Security Under the Rule of Law is Essential
8. Counterinsurgents Should Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment

CONTEMPORARY IMPERATIVES OF COUNTERINSURGENCY.⁵²

9. Manage Information and Expectations
10. Use the Appropriate Level of Force
11. Learn and Adapt
12. Empower the Lowest Levels
13. Support the Host Nation

British Army's 'Countering Insurgency'. The British Army's equivalent to FM 3-24 is 'Countering Insurgency'. It mentions 10 principles. It clearly states that "The origins of these principles can be traced back directly to those published by Sir Robert Thompson in 1966 in his book *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*."⁵³

The 10 principles⁵⁴ of counterinsurgency are:

1. Primacy of Political Purpose.
2. Unity of Effort.
3. Understand the Human Terrain.
4. Secure the Population.
5. Neutralise the Insurgent.
6. Gain and Maintain Popular Support.
7. Operate In Accordance With The Law.
8. Integrate Intelligence.
9. Prepare for the Long Term.
10. Learn and Adapt.

Towards Implementing Counterinsurgency: the appropriate military and development operations

Appropriate military and development operations need to be implemented on the ground to take these 'principles' forward. The earliest mention of such an implementation plan is in

⁵¹ See US Army, 2006: 1-20, *Counterinsurgency*. They are explained in detail in pp. 1-21 to 1-24. In the original text these principles are given as bullet points. The numerical signifiers were given by the present author.

⁵² See US Army, 2006, *Counterinsurgency*. They are explained in detail pp. 1-24 to 1-26.

⁵³ British Army, 2009: 3-1, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

⁵⁴ British Army, 2009: 3-2, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

Thompson 1966. After earlier in the book referring to the five basic principals he recommends that a counterinsurgency should have Thompson went on to say:

When applying this to action and operations on the ground, there will be four definite stages which can be summed up as *clearing, holding, winning and won* [emphases added].⁵⁵

He then went on to describe these four in detail.⁵⁶ These four phases are the inspiration for the four-stage Internal Defence and Development (IDAD) scheme found in the US army's counterinsurgency manuals FM 100-20 of 1981 and 1990.⁵⁷

These same four phases appear, under different synonyms, in both US and UK doctrinal Manuals, sometimes called 'Pacification', sometimes called 'Internal Defence and Development' (IDAD), sometimes called 'consolidation operations'. In 1990 the US Army's FM 100-20 manual mentioned four stages and named them Preparation, Offensive, Development and Completion stages.⁵⁸ The overall operation is termed 'Consolidation Operations' and was defined as follows. Although the following is 24 years old, it is still a very credible and useful guide as to how a counterinsurgency campaign should be organised and implemented:

Consolidation operations are interdepartmental, civil-military efforts which integrate counterinsurgency activities to restore government control of an area and its people. They combine military action to destroy or drive out the insurgents with programs for social, political and economic development. [...] *Consolidation operations* first establish firm control of an operating base area. Then they expand outward to enlarge the area of government control. *This requires seizing, and consolidating control over contested areas.* [...] Once the force has cleared an area of insurgent tactical forces, *the government must maintain an adequate defence.* The defensive mission shifts to police and paramilitary forces as the situation improves. *But military units continue to provide security as long as a credible insurgent threat remains.* Police and paramilitary action to neutralize the insurgents' infrastructure ensures that the area remains secure. Balanced development seeks to *mobilize the people to the government side* [emphasis added].⁵⁹

By 2006/2009 the US Army and the British Army began using a three-phased sequence called '**Clear-Hold-Build**'. A close examination of this sequence clearly reveals that they are the contemporary evolution of concepts articulated by Thompson in 1966 and FM-100-20 (above), adapted and modified to suit the circumstances of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan 40 years

⁵⁵ Thompson, 1966: 111, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*.

⁵⁶ These are very well known. Please refer Thompson, 1966: 111-114, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*.

⁵⁷ See US Army, 1981: 45-66, Field Manual FM 100-20, *Low Intensity Conflict*, (Chapter 4: Host Country Internal Defence and Development Concepts and Doctrine) for an initial Doctrinal effort. See US Army, 1990: 2-7 to 2-13 and E-2, Field Manual FM 100-20, *Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict* for a further developed formulation of the doctrine.

⁵⁸ FM 100-20, 1990: Appendix.E:4-6.

⁵⁹ FM 100-20, 1990: Appendix.E:4.

later.⁶⁰ The phrasing is different and the US and British Army manuals go into great detail on numerous problems which officers and troops have had to face from the 2001 onwards, especially in Iraq and Afghanistan. Reducing the phases from 4 to 3 also eases counterinsurgency planning and aids clarity. In any event the conceptual 'DNA', so to speak, of Thompson's original formulations can still be discerned in the current doctrinal manuals.⁶¹ The US Army's FM 3-24 says:

A **clear-hold-build** operation is executed in a specific, high priority area *experiencing overt insurgent operations*. It has the following objectives: Create a secure physical and psychological environment; Establish firm government control of the populace and area; Gain the populace's support.⁶²

The British Army's '*Countering Insurgency*' says:

Clear-Hold-Build operations are part of the overall security effort; they are executed in specific, high-priority areas *experiencing overt insurgent operations*. They have the following objectives:

- Create a secure physical and psychological environment.
- Establish firm government control of the population and area.
- Gain and secure the population's support. The extent to which popular support has been gained can be measured by its participation in local programmes to counter the insurgency, for example joining locally-recruited civil security organisations and providing useful information about the insurgents.⁶³

As can be seen the phrasing of the US and British formulations is almost identical. The 'principles' articulated in these two manuals and the Clear-Hold-Build implementation model are the strategic essence of US and British counterinsurgency doctrine at present, and that is sufficient for this Thesis because it focuses on the strategic level of counterinsurgency.⁶⁴ Of course these two manuals have numerous other sections which deal with operational and tactical issues (and some which fall within the ambit of strategy) such as supply and logistics problems, the use of artillery, the use of close air support, the need for 'situational awareness', the utilization of UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles) as reconnaissance platforms for increasing situational awareness and many more subjects. According to Sri Lanka's very limited budgetary capabilities some of these technologies have been acquired over the years

⁶⁰ See 'CLEAR-HOLD-BUILD' in US Army, FM 3-24, 2006: 5-18 to 5-22, and British Army, 2009: 4-14 to 4-20, *Countering Insurgency*.

⁶¹ In this context DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acids) is used in a metaphorical sense.

⁶² See US Army FM 3-24, 2006: 5-18, *Counterinsurgency*. The acronym 'IDAD' is completely absent in FM 3-24. It's 'Clear-Hold-Build' which is used instead. The subject matter of 'Clear-Hold-Build' is very similar to that of IDAD in earlier Manuals. The present author cannot say at present why the phrase 'Internal Defence and Development' (along with its acronym IDAD) were totally excluded from FM 3-24. This may have been done for pedagogical reasons to and also to establish FM 3-24 as a fresh text in the US Army and US Marine Corps officers who are the prime 'target audience' for this Manual.

⁶³ See British Army, 2009: 4-14, *Countering Insurgency*.

⁶⁴ This does not mean that the Operational and Tactical levels of counterinsurgency warfare are unimportant. As shown by military history a great many beautiful strategies have been undone by incompetence or sheer lack of capability at the Operational and Tactical levels. Or have been shown to be deeply flawed as for example was revealed by the French decision to establish a Base in Dien Bien Phu. For example see Ready, J. Lee, 1996: 245-263, *Arrogance on the Battlefield: A Primary Cause of Defeat, 1755-1991*.

by Sri Lanka's armed forces. But such issues cannot be dealt-with in this Thesis due to the need for brevity.

II

Developing a COIN Assessment Framework for the Sri Lanka Government's Operations, 1977-1994

We will now begin the task of developing a series of Research Questions to analyse and assess the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency efforts 1977-1994. We will develop these via a critical assessment of FM 3-24 (US Army) and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army).

The following seven (07) Research Questions have been developed by the present author by critically examining counterinsurgency literature available⁶⁵ to him, and, weighing and assessing such literature alongside the political, military, ethnic, and geopolitical context that Sri Lanka was 'caught' within, during 1977-1994. The word 'caught' is used intentionally to flag the inextricable situations within which Sri Lanka was (and still is) in. For example, the multi-ethnic composition of Sri Lanka and the tensions between the Sinhalese and the Tamils (discussed in Chapter-1). And the many problems and tensions arising from the proximity of Tamil Nadu and India from which Sri Lanka cannot escape. Most aspects of the strategic context which existed in 1977-1994 still prevail.⁶⁶ As noted earlier, the reason for having the subject matter covered on Chapter-1 ahead of this Chapter is to enable the reader to understand the political, historical and geopolitical context within which the Sri Lanka government *tried to as best as it could - with a great many flaws and mistakes* - to cope with the Tamil insurgency.

It is acknowledged that there is an inevitable element of subjective 'selection' by the author in the following assessments and analyses. This is in consonance with contemporary understanding that absolute objectivity is impossible in social science texts and that the

⁶⁵ The present author did not have access to most of the new books on counterinsurgency which have been published after 2001 as there is not a single university library in Sri Lanka which meets the funding and standards of a standard European or US academic library. FM 3-24 (US Army) and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army) could be obtained via the internet. However many of the COIN 'classics' were consulted. Journal articles which could be accessed via the University of Northampton's website were consulted.

⁶⁶ But such post-1994 discussions fall outside the ambit of this Thesis and cannot be pursued in this text.

author's is always 'present' within any text. This being said, however, the present author has strived to achieve as balanced and 'objective' an assessment as possible of both the literature and the insurgency and counterinsurgency in Sri Lanka.

Table 2.1: The Side-by-Side Comparison and Assessment of the Principles of Counterinsurgency in the US and British Army Manuals, and, the identification of the Research Questions Applicable to Sri Lanka (in Blue Text, below)

<p>US Army FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency</p> <p>Publication Year: 2006.</p> <p>Source: See Pages 1-20 to 1-26.</p>	<p>British Army Field Manual Vol.1 Part.10, Countering Insurgency</p> <p>(Note: the numerical order of this column is not in the same sequence as in the original Manual. This is to enable the principles to correspond – where possible – with the FM 3-24 column on the left.)</p> <p>Publication Year: 2009</p> <p>Source: See Pages 3-1 to 3-20.</p>	<p>The present author's assessments and analyses of the principles in these two manuals, while also correlating with COIN literature from the 1960s onwards. These assessments are done <i>from the perspective of Sri Lanka's specific needs and problems, 1977-1994.</i></p>	<p>Research Questions which have been distilled to research the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the Tamil insurgency, 1977-1994.² These are the 7 questions which are in the Introductory Chapter.</p>
<p>1. Legitimacy Is the Main Objective.</p>		<p>Legitimacy is the most important component of a stable political system and government. FM 3-24 placing Legitimacy as the first principle is laudable but somewhat Utopian and unrealistic. 'Creating' political legitimacy is a very complex phenomenon and can take many decades to achieve. In any event FM3-24's principle-1 can be subsumed within principle-3.</p>	<p>The British formulation of 'Primacy of Political Purpose' is assessed as being theoretically and practically better grounded and is therefore assessed as being preferable.</p>
<p>2. Unity of Effort Is Essential.</p>	<p>2. Unity of Effort.</p>	<p>Intra-Governmental Cooperation did exist to an adequate level in Sri Lanka.</p>	<p>Understood. No requirements for a specific Research Question in the Sri Lankan context.</p>
<p>3. Political Factors Are Primary.</p>	<p>1. Primary of Political Purpose.</p>	<p>Political aim(s) of the government. Very relevant and Significant. Matches Thompson's (1966) 1st principle.</p>	<p>1. Did the government have Political Purposes?</p>
	<p>4. Secure the Population.</p>	<p>Political, Military & Police measures. Very relevant and Significant.</p>	<p>2. Did the government give security to the</p>

			Tamil population?
	5. Neutralise the Insurgent.	Mix of coercive (police & military) and persuasive measures Very relevant and Significant.	3. Did the government neutralise the Tamil insurgents?
	6. Gain and Maintain Popular Support.	Measures to build popular support for the government.	4. Did the government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?
4. Counterinsurgents Must Understand the Environment.	3. Understand the Human Terrain.	The Counterinsurgent must be aware of the political, historical & cultural context of the insurrection.	This is well understood in Sri Lanka. No requirements for a specific Research Question.

Sri Lankan counterinsurgents – i.e. political leaders, armed forces, police, intelligence organisations, civilian bureaucrats - knew (and know) the 'Human Terrain' of the Tamil insurrection to a very high degree. Of course it can be suggested that there is room for improvement. The Sri Lanka government, armed forces and police – although dominated as they are by the majority Sinhala ethnic group – have lived amidst the Tamils for decades.

5. Intelligence Drives Operations.	8. Integrate Intelligence.	Intra-Governmental intelligence gathering and cooperation has developed in Sri Lanka. Strategic and tactical intelligence have gradually improved. However, intelligence organisations are a very difficult subject to research in Sri Lanka.	Research Questions on these subjects cannot, as yet, be researched in Sri Lanka with adequate empirical rigour.
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On Intelligence 'driving' Operations. It is possible that in the 1970s the government's intelligence services were inadequate to cope with the challenge posed by the Tamil insurgents. These organisations are reputed to have improved from 1977 onwards. The present author cannot state anything definite about this as this subject is difficult to research in Sri Lanka because: (a) there is an 'aura' of secrecy in the government regarding all such subjects; (b) there is no Freedom of Information Act in Sri Lanka; and (c) politicians, armed forces and police officers, most academics and journalists based in Sri Lanka are unaware of the fact that 'Intelligence' has become an accepted area of academic research in other parts of the World, and that there are academic Journals devoted to Intelligence and the History of Intelligence.

Questions such as: (a) Were the operations conducted by the military 'driven' by Intelligence? (b) If so how? (c) If not, why not? (d) How well do these organisations coordinate with each

other? (e) What were the governments Intelligence organisations in 1977? What were they in 1994? (f) Were these intelligence organisations developed over time? And if so how? Questions such as these cannot be addressed at present as no substantial empirical or qualitative information regarding such issues can be located.

Over time, from 1977 onwards, the MoD, armed forces and police are reported to have developed intelligence services or improved services which existed before 1977. However, except for occasional comments in newspapers there is no public access to any of these subjects. Some of the armed forces operations (some of which are mentioned in this Thesis) would certainly have needed intelligence. As to whether there is 'integration' and/or 'inter-departmental cooperation' of Intelligence cannot be researched at present. From the military operations carried out by the armed forces it can be deduced that Intelligence had to have played a role. The Tamil insurgents too developed intelligence gathering capabilities but that too is another subject which is inaccessible.

<p>6. Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their Cause and Support.</p>		<p>This FM 3-24 'principle' in fact combines two distinct tasks: separating insurgents from their <i>cause</i> and separating the insurgents from their <i>support base</i> (i.e. the Tamil civilians).</p> <p>Separating insurgents from their <i>cause</i> is a very arduous and time-consuming task. In most counterinsurgencies this can never be achieved, especially the leaders at all levels.</p> <p>The best that can be achieved is to separate the insurgents from their <i>support base</i> (i.e. the Tamil civilians).</p>	<p>5. Did the government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base, i.e. the Tamil people?</p>
<p>7. Security Under the Rule of Law is Essential.</p>	<p>7. Operate In Accordance With The Law.</p>	<p>With the escalation of the insurrection Sri Lanka was placed under Emergency Law. A 'Prevention of Terrorism Act' came into effect. Over the years violations of human rights by government forces have been reported by various Human Rights organisations. The insurgents too have committed violations but governments and insurgents are not assessed by the same criteria. (Note: this last item is not well understood by the Sri Lankan armed forces, police and the Sinhala public.)</p>	<p>6. What were the relationships the government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?</p> <p>This is a very large subject and merits several Theses. Many Reports and Books have been published on this topic. This fact is mentioned in the Introductory Chapter. However this question will be addressed to</p>

			the degree possible, given the need for brevity, in Chapter 6 'Conclusions'.
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8. Counterinsurgents Should Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment	9. Prepare for the Long Term.	There was no public statement by the government that the counterinsurgency could be long-drawn. But when that turned out to be the case, the government stayed the course.	The government did not show any sign of giving-in to the insurgents and allowing a separate state to be created. No specific Research Question required.
9. Manage Information and Expectations.		Information Operations (IO) and attempts to "manage" the Media.	A diverse and mixed-bag of policies, mistakes, confusion, misinformation and censorship. No particular research question needed.
10. Use the Appropriate Level of Force.		By and large this is what occurred up to 1994.	No particular research question needed.

Use the Appropriate Level of Force. By and large this is what occurred up to 1994 and no particular research question is needed. As the Tamil insurgents acquired RPGs, heavy machine guns and some heavy weapons such as large calibre mortars and suicide boats, some of the encounters during 1990-1994 became somewhat semi-conventional in character. Consequently the army, navy and air force too acquired heavier weapons in due course. After 1994 both the LTTE and the government acquired heavier weapon systems. For example the air force obtained Kfir fighter-bombers only after 1994. But these matters fall outside the ambit of this Thesis.

11. Learn and Adapt.	10. Learn and Adapt.	A truism. Understood.	No particular Research Question is required.
12. Empower the Lowest Levels.		Sri Lanka's armed forces and police were, and are, organised in a somewhat old-fashioned and very hierarchical fashion. ⁷	There was very little, if any, "empowerment" of the lowest levels. A specific Research Question not required.

Empower the Lowest Levels. Sri Lanka's armed forces were in 1977-1994 (and probably still are) similar to the US and British armies of the late-1950s and early-1960s. This is an impressionistic assessment as comparative scientific surveys have never been done. Nor would it have been practically possible to conduct such research surveys in the midst of the insurgency during 1977-1994. In any event permission to conduct such surveys would not, in all probability, have been given by the Sri Lanka government.

13. Support the Host Nation.	'Host Nation' is mentioned numerous times from pages 3-1 to 3-20. And throughout	This 'Host Nation' issue is one of the biggest inadequacies of US and British counterinsurgency	No particular Research Question required.
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	the British manual and FM 3-24. But the British do not mention it as 'principle' as does FM 3-24.	doctrine for countries such as Sri Lanka. This 'principle' does not apply to Sri Lanka.	
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The Sri Lankan government and armed forces were not involved in assisting a 'Host Nation'. They *were* the entities which were under attack by the Tamil insurgents.

Issue inadequately dealt-with by both Manuals		
<p>There is a virtual non-existence of how to deal with involvement of a regional power (i.e. Tamil Nadu and India in the case of Sri Lanka), and the problems and difficulties caused by that power.</p> <p>But such matters are a part of the regional political context of an insurgency and it can be argued that such matters do not fall within the purview of the US or British Armies, but are within the realm of high-level inter-State politics.</p> <p>And therefore have no place in counterinsurgency manuals. There is a great deal of accuracy in such a position.</p>	<p>How to combat the assistance an insurgency could get from a neighbouring country is not one of the 'principles' discussed in either manuals. The complex manner in which the policies of a nearby country (or countries) can assist an insurrection – eg. sanctuary, popular support, supplies including weapons, etc – seriously affects the counterinsurgency efforts of a country such as Sri Lanka.</p>	<p>7. Did Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the secessionist insurrection?</p> <p>(Although the role of adjacent countries and 'cross-border operations' are discussed in these manuals – eg. Pakistan in the Afghan conflict – this issue needs far more emphasis by country such as Sri Lanka.)</p>

Each insurgency and counterinsurgency is different from one another. This is a truism and a caution which is mentioned in all counterinsurgency literature. The policies adopted by an adjacent country – eg. whether to allow safe sanctuary on its territory for insurgents; whether to allow arms to be smuggled through its territory; whether to provide arms to the insurgents; and numerous other policies **will depend on the specific insurgency and the inter-state relations existing in that situation**. Such inter-state relations do not fall within the purview of armies under civilian control within a democratic framework – which are what the US, British and Sri Lanka armies are. Therefore it not being a 'principle' in these manuals – and in most counterinsurgency literature – is understandable. In the case of the Tamil insurrection, however, this is a very significant Research Question for Sri Lanka. It will be addressed in Chapter 6, 'Consolidated Conclusions'.

Therefore, in conclusion, the following seven Research Questions are the core of this Thesis's concerns:

1. Did the Sri Lanka government have Political Purposes?

- 2. Did the Sri Lanka government give security to the Tamil population?**
- 3. Did the Sri Lanka government neutralize the Tamil insurgents?**
- 4. Did the Sri Lanka government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?**
- 5. Did the Sri Lanka government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base?**
- 6. What were the relationships the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?**
- 7. Did the Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection?**

All the above 7 Questions are analysed and discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. The overall assessments and conclusions pertaining to the period of 1977-1994 are addressed in detail in Chapter 6, 'Conclusions'.

Chapter.3

The Tamil Secessionist Insurrection, July 1977 to anti-Tamil Pogrom-Riots of July 1983: President JR Jayewardene & UNP Government's Policies

Introduction

This Chapter is devoted to the assessment and analysis of the policies adopted by the newly elected United National Party (UNP) government from July 1977 to July-1983. During these six years the Tamil Secessionist Insurrection gradually grew and many aspects of the 'strategic defensive' phase of an insurrection can be seen. The chapter begins with the UNP's victory at the general elections of July 1977 and ends with the analysis of one of the most crucial turning points in postcolonial Sri Lanka history, namely the anti-Tamil pogrom-riots of July 1983. When referring to the violence which began in Colombo on 24 July 1983, it is the present author's assessment that 'anti-Tamil pogrom-riots of July 1983' is the most accurate description.¹

As discussed in the previous chapter, the TULF's 1976 Resolution which called for a separate Tamil State was a clear and public political message to Tamil civilians in general and Tamil youth in particular. The message was that the time had come for the Tamil people to embark upon an armed rebellion against the (Sinhala dominated) government and state, it was 'Call to Arms'. The strategy of the TULF was to use the parliamentary elections as a springboard for creating a movement within the Tamil people to create a separate state. This was openly and publicly stated by the TULF in the months and weeks before the Elections. The party was confident that it would win most the seats in the Northern and Eastern Provinces (which is precisely what happened) and expected to benefit from these electoral gains. As *The Times (London)* accurately said:

The TULF leaders *with victory assured*, maintain that they regard the general election on July 21 as a *plebiscite* on whether the Tamils want a separate state [emphasis added].²

¹ Due to the length of the phrase, however, alternative phrases such as 'July 1983 anti-Tamil riots', 'anti-Tamil riots', 'July 1983 riots' are also used in contexts where no confusion would be caused. The word 'Pogrom' is used to denote the very high probability (evidence submitted in this Chapter) that influential sections of the UNP government had a role in organising and triggering off the anti-Tamil violence. 'Pogrom' means an organised massacre, especially of Russian Jews, and the word originated sometime in the 19th Century (See Chambers English Dictionary, 1990:1125).

² *The Times (London)* 6 July 1977, 'Tamils hope to hold balance after Sri Lanka election'.

The TULF turning of the general elections into a plebiscite for the creation of a separate Tamil state was seen by Sinhala parties and Sinhala voters as a profound misuse of the electoral and democratic process.³ A couple of weeks prior to the elections the TULF went further and stated in its Manifesto that its nominees elected to parliament would “constitute themselves into the Assembly of Tamil Eelam, the name they have chosen for their Tamil state.”⁴ To the majority Sinhala political parties and Sinhala voters these were very disturbing and inflamed anti-Tamil sentiments. In the months prior to the General Elections Prime Minister Mrs Bandaranaike had formal discussions with MPs of the TULF but no progress could be made.⁵

It needs to be noted that in February 1977 – i.e. *before* the general elections of July 1977 - targeted acts of insurrection had already begun. One of the first targets were Tamil policemen.⁶ Their killings were very clear messages to Tamil civilians that the insurgent groups – quite small in number during this period - would not tolerate any Tamils working for the police nor working as police informants and also advertised the groups’ growing military capabilities. Most details of insurgent attacks and military tactical details are in footnotes and the Annexures.

3.1: General elections 1977 and the UNP comes to power

The UNP won 140 of the 168 seats in parliament which gave it an unprecedented $\frac{5}{6}$ th parliamentary majority. This majority gave the UNP the power to change the Constitution as it wished. As can be seen from Table 3.1 the then prevailing ‘first past the post’ representation system gave wildly disproportionate results.

The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) which had been in power from 1970 to 1977 was overwhelmingly defeated, its representation reduced to 8 seats.⁷ The large difference between the UNP and SLFP was a skewed result of the simple ‘first past the post’ electoral representation system in existence at that time. The UNP’s $\frac{5}{6}$ th majority in parliament was obtained from

³ While it can be argued that such a tactic is acceptable in democratic politics, in Sri Lanka this was the first time that Sinhala voters heard about such a practice. To date this is the first and last time that such a tactic has been used in Sri Lanka.

⁴ *The Times (London)*, 11 July 1977, ‘Independence plan of Tamils in Sri Lanka’.

⁵ *The Times (London)* Tuesday, 22 Feb 1977, ‘Premier holds Colombo talks with Tamils’. In the present author’s assessment it was far too late for such discussions as the general elections were a few months away and the TULF would need to talk to the new government which came to power.

⁶ ‘Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003’, 2005: 1660. The first policeman was PC Karunanithi on 14 February 1977. The next two constables – both of whom were coincidentally named Shanmuganathan - were killed on 18 May 1977. The data in the ‘Roll of Honour’ will be given in two ways. One, with the page number (as in this footnote). Secondly, as figures from spreadsheets.

⁷ *The Times (London)*, 23 July 1977, ‘Mrs Bandaranaike’s Party is crushed in Sri Lanka election’.

50.92% of votes polled. As can be seen the SLFP obtained 29.7% which was the second largest number of votes polled. This needs to be kept in mind when evaluating UNP policy over the following years, and, when assessing the Tamil insurgency and anti-Tamil hostility by the Sinhalese majority.

Table.3.1: General Election Results, 21 July 1977

Political Party	Votes polled In the entire island	Percentage Of Votes Received	Ethnic Composition (estimated). This column is not from Abeynaike 1983:88-89	Seats Contested	Seats Won
UNP	3,179,221	50.92%	Majority Sinhalese. Plus large numbers of Colombo Tamils and Muslims	154	140
TULF	421,488	6.75%	Tamils	24	18
SLFP	1,855,331	29.72%	Vast majority Sinhalese, plus a few Muslims & a very few Tamils	147	8
CWC	62,707	1%	Tamils of the plantations (brought from India during British Colonial period)	2	1
ULF (LSSP)	225,317	3.61%	Primarily Sinhalese with a very few Tamils	82	0
ULF (CP)	123,856	1.98%	Primarily Sinhalese with a very few Tamils	25	0
MEP	22,639	0.36%	Primarily Sinhalese	27	0
Independents	353,073	5.65%	Unidentifiable	295	1
Total (inclusive of spoilt votes)	6,243,573			765	168

(Source: Abeynaike 1983:88-89)

The huge parliamentary majority enabled the UNP to form a strong Government entirely by itself for the first time after its electoral defeat in 1956, and also to change the Constitution as it wished. But as the voting data shows, significant numbers of the Sinhalese electorate and a majority of Tamils in the North and East did not vote for the UNP. Consequently, it can be argued that the UNP should have conducted itself with far greater political circumspect. The left-wing *Lanka Sama Samaja Party* (LSSP) and Communist Party (CP) did not win a single seat, although both of them received an aggregate of 349,173 votes, which was 82.8% of the votes won by the TULF (calculated from Table 3.1).

In relation to the Tamil insurgency the most significant consequence of the elections was that the pro-secessionist TULF won 18 seats, the second largest number, and this automatically resulted in TULF's leader becoming the Leader of the Opposition. The TULF, however, had received only 6.75% of total votes polled which was far less than the SLFP's 29.7% of votes polled (see

Table 3.1). This freak result was yet another result of the 'first past the post' electoral representation system prevailing at that time. The SLFP's total votes were actually 340% more than the TULF's total votes. The SLFP was unquestionably the foremost opposition party and its leader should have been the leader of the opposition. Millions of SLFP voters and even UNP supporters knew this. Ominously, that fact that the TULF had obtained the Leader of the Opposition appointment served to further amplify Sinhala anxiety and anti-Tamil feelings because the Leader of the Opposition (i.e. theoretically the leader of an alternative government) had fallen into the hands of a Tamil party which advocated secession.

The new UNP government's formal acknowledgment of Tamil Grievances. How did the new UNP government understand the unrest and agitation amongst the Tamils? The UNP's Election Manifesto of 1977 provides the most cogent answers. This important document was prepared under the UNP's highest leadership.⁸ The UNP's leadership would have keenly observed the many political and militant incidents between 1972-1976 and the gradual emergence of the Tamil insurrection. Most important of all was the 1976 'Vaddukkoddai Resolution' where the TULF decided on a policy of secession and called for the creation of separate State for Tamils.⁹

This secessionist mobilisation posed a grave threat to the unity and security of the entire country. The UNP's leaders were certainly aware of these tendencies. The Tamils were a large segment of the electorate and the UNP's 1977 Manifesto made a comprehensive set of promises to the Tamils:

The United National Party *accepts the position* that there are *numerous problems* confronting the Tamil-speaking people. *The lack of a solution* to their problems has made *the Tamil-speaking people support even a movement for the creation of a separate State*. In the interest of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country, the Party feels such problems should be solved without loss of time. *The party*, when it comes to power, *will take all possible steps to remedy their grievances* in such fields as: (1) Education; (2) Colonisation; (3) Use of Tamil language; (4) Employment in the public and semi-public corporations. We will *summon an All-Party Conference* as stated earlier and *implement its decisions* [emphases added].¹⁰

⁸ Which was, at that time, composed of J.R. Jayewardene, R. Premadasa, Lalith Athulathmudali, Gamini Dissanayake and a few others. This Manifesto was prepared during the period 1976-1977 and included many subjects which were under discussion by the UNP leadership during the entire period they were in Opposition (i.e. 1970-1977). Jayewardene went on to become the Executive President of the Country from 1978 to Dec 1988. Premadasa was the President from Jan. 1989 up to May 1993, when he was assassinated by the LTTE. The LTTE killed Athulathmudali in April 1993 and Dissanayake in October 1994.

⁹ Wilson, A. J. 2000: 104 and 110, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*.

¹⁰ Abeynaike, 1987: 296. *Parliament of Sri Lanka*. This is quoted in full as in the original Manifesto so as to convey the depth and scope of the UNP's understanding of Tamil grievances at that time.

Evidence of the Conceptual Existence within the UNP of a Potentially Coherent Counterinsurgency Approach. The above is evidence of the existence within the UNP – albeit at a conceptual and potential level - of a balanced counterinsurgency approach. That does not mean, however, that such concepts are automatically translated into policy or that powerful sections *within* the government would not oppose such concepts. In any event the Manifesto indicated to the Tamils that the UNP was ready to work towards a political *rapprochement* with the Tamils. This had the potential of giving birth to a coherent counterinsurgency project. The UNP's undisputed leader J.R. Jayewardene was a very experienced politician and it is useful to remind ourselves that it was Jayewardene who, 20 years earlier in 1956, had warned the then government of the possibility of civil war and bloodshed in the future if the Sinhala Only legislation was enacted.¹¹ And in 1966 he had publicly stated that a situation analogous to "civil war" existed between the Sinhalese and Tamils.¹²

First, the UNP Manifesto acknowledged that the Tamil people were confronted by numerous problems. The Manifesto used the word 'grievances' to refer to four grievances which had been articulated on numerous occasions and publications by Tamil parties for several decades.¹³ The four areas were access to **university education**; **land settlement**; the hindrances to the use of the **Tamil language** in official transactions; and **government jobs**

Second, the Manifesto stated that as a direct consequence of the non-resolution of these grievances (it was implied that this lack of resolutions were the responsibility of previous governments), that some Tamils had begun to support a movement to create a separate State. Here the UNP Manifesto was alluding to the TULF's Resolution which demanded a separate Tamil State. Third, the Manifesto stated that "in the interest of national integration and unity so necessary for the economic development of the whole country", it felt that these grievances of the Tamils needed to be remedied without any loss of time and that once it came to power it would take all possible steps to remedy these grievances of the Tamil people.

¹¹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 4 June 1956:5, 'J.R. Jayewardene on Sinhale Bill'.

¹² *Ceylon Daily News*, 22 April 1966:1, 'J.R.'s firm proposals to put Economy Right'.

¹³ These four areas have been reiterated over and over again by Tamil politicians for many decades. See Chapter.1 for a discussion of these four. These four issues are also mentioned in the TULF's 1977 Manifesto as well. But by this time the creation of a separate state was the highlight of the Manifesto and not obtaining any redress of these grievances from the government. See Tamil United Liberation Front, 1977: 323-326, *Election Manifesto 1977*, [a translation from Tamil to English].

Fourth, there was no mention of 'terrorism' or 'anti-terrorism' in this Manifesto. Nor was there any statement to the effect that terrorism would have to be suppressed by the government *before* Tamil grievances were addressed. It was clearly stated that it was the Tamil people who had these grievances and that these grievances needed to be addressed.¹⁴

Several difficult issues faced by the new government need to be flagged at this point. The government understood these as grievances of the Tamil people, but was faced with a range of opposition which arose from within *both* the Tamils and its own Sinhalese constituents: First, the Tamil insurgent groups did not want the government to successfully address these issues because they had already passed the 'point of no compromise' and were driving towards *full independence*. They did not want any solutions to be found through reform. For the Tamil insurgents it was 'no' to reform and 'yes' to revolution.¹⁵ Second, the Sinhala-Buddhist voters were greatly agitated about the secessionist movement and hostile to any signs of the government weakening its stance against secession. It needs to be noted that *at least 2 Million Sinhalese had voted against the UNP* (see Table 3.1). President Jayewardene had a very difficult balancing act on his hands.

The UNP Manifesto did not make any direct reference to the relatively low-intensity guerrilla actions of Tamil insurgent groups which had *already* begun to occur from 1972 onwards. Some pro-SLFP Tamil politicians, Tamil policemen and Tamil police informants had already been assassinated. Significant bouts of political agitation had taken place in the Northern and Eastern Provinces from 1972 onward, along with the Tamils' boycott of the Constitution of 1972. These occurrences were well known by the leaders of the UNP. However, the UNP did not raise the bugbear of 'terrorism' and correlate it in any way with addressing Tamil grievances (this changed completely from 1978/1979 onwards with the gradual and unstoppable escalation of the Tamil insurrection from the time the new government took office).

The importance of these formulations of the UNP's 1977 Manifesto cannot be overstressed. These formulations incorporated a clear and unequivocal acknowledgement that the Tamil people had grievances and that the absence of solutions to these grievances had led to the

¹⁴ The point which needs to be flagged here is that later on the government began to identify the articulation of grievances as being done by Tamil militant groups and not by the Tamil people.

¹⁵ This is analogous to the Reform vs. Revolution debates which have taken place prior to and during numerous Socialist/Communist Revolutions, and is a recurring theme in insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare. The refusal by the LTTE to settle for anything less than a separate state was clearly demonstrated when it reneged on the Indo-Lanka Accord. Discussed later in Chapter-4.

emergence of a movement to create a separate State. Such an acknowledgement is *sine qua non* for any process of negotiation and conflict resolution, and, for the formulation and implementation of coherent counterinsurgency policies within an insurrection. *Such awareness by a government is the first and most important step in the formulation of any coherent counterinsurgency programme.*

On the day of the election victory itself UNP leader JR Jayewardene said that he would summon a round table conference – as promised in the UNP's Manifesto – to discuss the problems faced by the Tamils.¹⁶ Several weeks later the UNP government promised the country a new Constitution which would guarantee fundamental rights, freedom of the press and independence of the judiciary.¹⁷

At the same time, however, the TULF began to immediately work *against* the spirit of negotiation and reconciliation implicit in the UNP government's promises. The TULF – strengthened by its election victory – increased its agitations and demands for a separate state.¹⁸ This, in turn, led to an increase in the level of anger and anxiety among Sinhala voters and politicians. In response to the TULF's political mobilization the UNP promised to hold an all party conference and take all possible steps to address the grievances of the Tamils.¹⁹ A caveat is appropriate here. The UNP's 1977 election promises in relation to Tamil grievances lagged far behind – *from the perspective of many Tamils* – the demand for a separate state.²⁰ By 1977 a significant number of Tamils had moved beyond these grievances and wanted a separate state.²¹

Devolution of political power to the North and East was what Tamil parliamentarians had agitated for several decades prior to 1977. The UNP Manifesto, however, was completely silent on the devolution of power. Nonetheless, from the perspective of coherently countering the

¹⁶ *The Times (London)*, 23 July 1977, 'Mrs Bandaranaike's party is crushed in Sri Lanka election'.

¹⁷ *The Times (London)* Friday, 5 Aug 1977, 'New constitution promised for Sri Lanka'.

¹⁸ *The Times (London)* 4 August 1977, 'Liberation front's success in Sri Lanka elections may force new Prime Minister to amend constitution. Demand grows for separate Tamil state'.

¹⁹ *The Times (London)* 4 August 1977, 'Liberation front's success in Sri Lanka elections may force new Prime Minister to amend constitution. Demand grows for separate Tamil state'.

²⁰ By the General Elections of 1977 for a significant number of Tamils the old grievances were irrelevant (the exact or even approximate percentages cannot be calculated as no scientific research or survey could not be done, nor did Sri Lanka have any organisations which could do such an opinion survey). Rather, for them the issue was to create a separate State. By 1977 a significant proportion of Tamils were *already* committed to a separate State. Political agitation was had already been underway for years within the Sri Lanka Tamil population. By 1977 the TULF had made the demand for a separate Tamil state the sole plank of its electoral campaign, and, as mentioned earlier intended to interpret the general election's results as a plebiscite on the creation of a separate state.

²¹ See Wilson, A. J. 2000: 82-111, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*.

secessionist insurrection the new UNP government's acknowledgement of Tamil grievances was a good starting point for negotiations between the TULF and the new UNP government. It was an initial step on which the new government and those in the TULF who were for a negotiated solution could have built-upon.

3.2: The anti-Tamil riots of August 1977: Further Spoiled Sinhala-Tamil relations; Exacerbated Secessionism

On 15 August 1977, hardly more than a week after the statements between the new government and the TULF, serious anti-Tamil rioting began to occur in widespread areas of the country. The disorder began in Jaffna and was reported as having begun subsequent to police firing on Tamils who are said to have attacked the police during a school carnival. Four Tamils were killed in the shooting.²² Horowitz says that Sinhalese police and armed forces personnel in Jaffna were involved in precipitating the initial violence in Jaffna.²³ These riots occurred at the worst possible time – when the new government had not even found its feet, so to speak. It is entirely possible that the initiation of these riots were done deliberately by anti-UNP elements so as to increase the government's difficulties right from the inception of its tenure. And this objective was achieved as it and spoiled Sinhala-Tamil relations and exacerbated Tamil Secessionism.²⁴ A state of emergency was declared, island-wide curfews imposed and the armed forces and police were deployed on 'internal security' tasks to quell the rioting.²⁵

Consequent to the 1977 riots the Tamil secessionist insurrection undoubtedly witnessed an

²² *The Times (London)*, 19 August 1977, 'Curfew in Sri Lanka as 14 die in widespread riots'.

²³ Horowitz 1980:213, *Coup Theories and Officers' Motives*.

²⁴ It is highly probable that anti-UNP forces initiated these riots. Such a conspiracy did not require a great deal of organisation or personnel. The predisposition existed amongst significant numbers of Sinhala voters to cause some damage to Tamils due to the secessionist platform of the TULF. The rioting needed only a few sparks to set it off.

²⁵ By 20 August anti-Tamil rioting was underway in a number of areas in the island, including Kandy. The UNP's Prime Minister Jayewardene was compelled to hold an emergency Cabinet meeting. On 20 August government imposed a 35 hour curfew throughout the entire country. By 25 August 25,000 Tamils were evacuated by the government to the Northern and Eastern provinces at their own request. The government owned airline *Air Ceylon* was ordered to ferry refugees without charging them on shuttle flights to Jaffna (in the Northern Province) and Trincomalee and Batticaloa (in the Eastern Province). In the meantime by 25 August at least 54 people were reported killed. For the fifth successive night an all-night curfew was imposed throughout the entire island. The government arrested rioters and implemented law and order measures to suppress the disorder: by 26 August 1,700 Sinhalese were reported detained among whom was a former SLFP Minister and his son. By 29 August 3,000 were under arrest and by 30 August 4,000 were under arrest for offences including murder, arson, looting, assault and curfew-breaking. On 31 August 5,000 were under arrest. (Sources: *The Times (London)* 20 Aug 1977, 'Cabinet meets as riots in Sri Lanka spread'. *The Times (London)* 22 Aug 1977, '25 killed during week of violence in Sri Lanka; *The Times (London)* 25 Aug 1977, 'Tamils escorted to safety in exodus of fear'; *The Times (London)* Friday, Aug 26, 1977, '1,700 held in Sri Lanka after rioting'. *The Times (London)* 30 Aug 1977, 'Anti-Tamil violence quelled by troops in Sri Lanka'. *The Times (London)* 31 Aug 1977, '5,000 held over Sri Lanka communal violence'.)

increase in intensity although still very much less than that which occurred after the July 1983 pogrom-riots

The anti-Tamil riots which followed the elections of 1977 and did much to encourage a Tamil resort to arms, and the anti-Tamil riots of 1983, which accelerated the armed warfare, were both asserted to have been organised, at least in substantial part, by activists associated with the UNP.²⁶

Historian Wickramasinghe says, 'The 1977 general elections, followed by anti-Tamil riots that left 128 dead, served to radicalise and further inflame the Jaffna peninsula.'²⁷ This was also the assessment of both Hellman-Rajanayagam and Marks.²⁸ These riots unquestionably hardened the Tamil secessionists and made the new government's proposed conciliatory policies more difficult to take forward. Even moderate Tamil politicians became less amenable to compromise with the new UNP government. The ordinary Tamil people were further disenchanted with the new UNP government. But the government too could not afford to just give-in to Tamil secessionist demands. In early September 1977 President Jayewardene totally excluded the possibility of a separate state for Tamils and said that the TULF would not be permitted to raise that Option in the forthcoming All Party Conference. The TULF took a diametrically opposing view and said that the violence of the previous month had vindicated its demand for a separate state.²⁹

By April 1978 relatively small scale 'strategic defensive' type guerrilla attacks were being conducted by Tamil insurgents. On 7 April 1978 the LTTE killed 4 policemen in Murunkan, Mannar District.³⁰ Other hit-and-run type actions ensued in the following months. In response to the escalating insurgency in May 1978 the Government passed several strong Laws to counter the gradually escalating insurrection.³¹

In mid-August 1978 the Sri Lankan parliament passed into law the 2nd Republican Constitution. It was scheduled to become law on 7 September 1978.³² Under this new Constitution Prime Minister JR Jayewardene became the Executive President with

²⁶ Horowitz, 1989: 7-8, *Incentives and Behaviour in the Ethnic Politics of Sri Lanka and Malaysia*.

²⁷ Wickramasinghe, Nira 2006: 283, *Sri Lanka in the modern age: a history of contested identities*.

²⁸ See Hellman-Rajanayagam 1986:66, 'The Tamil 'Tigers' in Northern Sri Lanka: Origins, Factions, Programmes'; and Marks 1986:68, "'Peoples War" in Sri Lanka: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency'.

²⁹ *The Times (London)* 3 Sep 1977, 'Sri Lanka rules out separatism for Tamils'.

³⁰ 'Official Roll of Honour-1977-2003', 2005: 1660.

³¹ *The Times (London)* 20 May 1978, 'Sri Lanka adopts drastic anti-terror laws'. One law proscribed the Tamil Tiger Liberation movement and other similar organisations. The other was the Criminal Procedure (Special Provisions) Act.

³² *The Times (London)* 18 Aug 1978, 'Sri Lanka President given extra powers'. This new Constitution, the 2nd Republican Constitution, replaced the 1st Republican Constitution enacted in 1972 by the previous government led by SLFP leader Mrs Bandaranaike.

unprecedented Executive powers. This new Constitution was bitterly opposed by the TULF which boycotted the entire proceedings.³³ The new Constitution too retained the primacy given to Buddhism while assuring all other religions their right to practice.³⁴ This new Constitution contributed to the escalation of the Tamil insurgency.

On 7 September 1978 the exact day the new Constitution came into effect a bomb exploded aboard an *Air Ceylon* airliner which was on the tarmac at Ratmalana Airport a few miles south of Colombo. The aircraft was irreparably damaged. The bomb should have exploded when the aircraft was in flight.³⁵ One week later the LTTE claimed responsibility for the act to *The Times (London)*.³⁶ At that time this was an unprecedented attack by Tamil insurgents. During the subsequent months the Tamil insurgents kept up small scale attacks. They killed two policemen in December 1978 and one each in February, March and July 1979, all of whom were Tamils.³⁷ The government introduced legislation to ban secessionist movements only in 1979³⁸.

3.3: President Jayewardene Orders Army to 'Wipe Out Terrorism', July to December 1979 (and the Human Rights Pitfalls of such an Order)

By early July 1979 Tamil secessionist groups had killed a total of 13 policemen.³⁹ In mid-July President Jayewardene declared a 'State of Emergency' in Jaffna District and publicly issued a Directive to Brigadier T.I. Weeratunga to eradicate terrorism from the Jaffna district by 31 December 1979. This directive was given wide publicity at the time:

It will be your duty to eliminate in accordance with the laws of the land the menace of terrorism in all its forms from the Island and more especially from the Jaffna district. I will place at your disposal all resources of the State. I earnestly request all law-abiding citizens to give

³³ *The Times (London)*, 8 Sep 1978, 'Tamil Opposition boycotts Colombo celebrations'.

³⁴ Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 1978: 5. All other religions were assured the rights granted by Articles 10 and 14(1)(e) of the Constitution.

³⁵ *The Sunday Times (Sri Lanka)*, 6 Sep 1998, 'Tomorrow is the 20th anniversary: The day the Avro was bombed'. It was due to a fortuitous unscheduled delay that the aircraft was not flying somewhere above Colombo when the explosion took place. If that had that happened the propaganda consequences for the government would have been many dozens of times worse as it would have made headline news around the world. The aircraft was due to be ferried from Ratmalana airport to Katunayaka airport (north of Colombo), at that time Sri Lanka's only international airport. But the Captain fortuitously delayed its departure when he requested that the aircraft's interior be cleaned before leaving Ratmalana and not at Katunayaka as had been scheduled. If not for this delay the bomb would have exploded while the aircraft was in the air between Ratmalana and Katunayaka airports. In that event the two pilots and any others who were on board would have been killed and also some people on the ground as well.

³⁶ *The Times (London)*, 15 Sep 1978, 'Group claims it bombed aircraft'. The LTTE said that it had done so as an expression of opposition to the newly enacted 2nd Republican Constitution.

³⁷ 'Official Roll of Honour-1977-2003', 2005: 1660.

³⁸ *Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act, No. 48 of 1979*. This legislation did not stop the Tamil insurrection from escalating. But is here flagged to indicate the government's lack of preparedness and unawareness of the secessionist threat that was developing in the country.

³⁹ 'Official Roll of Honour-1977-2003', 2005: 1660.

their cooperation to you. This task has to be performed by you and completed before the 31st December 1979 [emphases added].⁴⁰

During the next six months (July to December 1979) Jaffna was governed by Brigadier Weeratunga and his staff under Emergency Regulations. There was a large military and police presence in Jaffna and the security forces carried out what they thought were counterinsurgency operations – i.e. cordon and search operations, patrols, arrests and interrogation of suspects. It is highly likely that some instances of torture, extra judicial executions and disappearances took place. Although relatively small in comparison to what occurred in later years (which have been documented by organisations such as Amnesty International) these cases were disturbing at the time to the Jaffna people and human rights and civil rights organisations working in Colombo. As press censorship was being enforced at that time through Emergency Regulations, these statements critical of the government did not – and would not have been allowed to – appear in the press. But concerned human rights activists in Colombo documented these allegations about the army's actions in Jaffna.⁴¹ Amnesty International's 1980 Annual Report gave detailed information of the names of the two Tamils whose bodies were found, the name of the Tamil youth who died in hospital due to assault injuries, and the names of the other three Tamils who disappeared and were never seen again.⁴²

The army's harsh methods served to further alienate the Tamil people. As a result of support for the Tamil insurgents or fear of them, government forces did not receive cooperation from Tamil civilians. It rapidly became clear that the majority of Tamil civilians in Jaffna were either frightened or, worse, politically disinclined to help government forces. Whatever the combination of causes this indicated that the *allegiance* of a sizable segment of the Tamil people in the Jaffna peninsula had, by that time, *already been lost by the government*. There is no

⁴⁰ *Ceylon Daily News*, 16 July 1979, 'Root out terrorism Brigadier ordered'.

⁴¹ For example, on 1 August 1979 the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) of Sri Lanka in a statement said that: "CRM is gravely concerned at the allegations that several persons have died after being taken into custody by the police after the declaration of emergency in the North last month. *According to the information available to CRM it appears clear that at least some of these persons had been tortured before they died.* [...] The emergency regulation which permitted the police to dispose of dead bodies without inquest or other formality has, fortunately, been revoked. (It was made by the last government in 1971 and evoked much criticism both at home and abroad; one of the initial aims of CRM, which was founded the same year, was to work for its revocation.) *The experience of those days proved that this power was used as a weapon of terrorism and murder by the police.* It is incredible that this extraordinarily obnoxious regulation could have been made part of our law again even for a few days [emphases added]". (Source: Civil Rights Movement (CRM), 1 August 1979, 'Torture and Death in Custody', page.1.)

⁴² Amnesty International, Annual Report, 1980:232. On 1 August 1979 CRM was unable to give the names or the precise number of Tamils who were affected nor the details of their ordeals due to difficulties in obtaining exact information and difficulties in corroborating the accounts given by informants. Amnesty International had more time, and was able to give these details.

evidence that the significance of this was understood by either the government or the army at the time.

A large portion of the Army was deployed in Jaffna Peninsula.⁴³ In the face of the army's arrival in July 1979 Tamil guerrilla cadres tactically withdrew to Tamil Nadu. In 1980 insurgent armed actions ceased and not a single policeman or army soldier was killed.⁴⁴ The government and the army concluded that 'Tamil terrorism' had been eliminated and that the army's objectives had been achieved. Newspaper interviews given by Brigadier Weeratunga proudly conveyed this assessment to the general public.⁴⁵ The government's over-confident claims was what it actually believed and were not made for public consumption. The Army's Annual Report for 1979 sent by the then army commander Major General JED Perera to the MoD - an official and Secret classified document - made this same assessment:

"Anti-Terrorist Ops. In July 1979, H.E. The President appointed Brig. T.I. Weeratunga as Commander Security Forces Jaffna consequent on the declaration of a State of Emergency in the Jaffna district and the Army was committed on a considerable extent in Operations to combat terrorist activities in Jaffna. Throughout this period a major portion of the Army was deployed in the Jaffna peninsula, Batticaloa, Mannar, Trincomalee, Vavuniya in pursuance of the President's directive for the elimination of terrorism by 31 Dec.79. This objective was realised and the emergency lapsed at the end of December 1979 [emphases added]".⁴⁶

The army's and the government's assessment that terrorism had been eliminated was a gross misreading of the situation. In reality the Tamil insurgents had done a simple tactical withdrawal to South India. Twenty years later the army's 50th Anniversary official history admitted that "It was subsequently found that the rebel forces had crossed to India and set up bases and training camps there".⁴⁷ Some Tamil insurgents are said to have undergone military training in Lebanon. At this time the number of hardcore insurgents was estimated as being no more than 200 cadres.⁴⁸ Once the majority of the army left the Jaffna peninsula during the course of 1980 Tamil insurgents trickled back to Jaffna from India and insurgent activity again gradually increased from 1981 onwards: six policemen and 2 army soldiers were killed in 1981 and eight police and 3 army personnel were killed in 1982.⁴⁹

⁴³ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 195, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*: 290.

⁴⁴ See 'Official Roll of Honour-1977-2003', 2005: 873 and 1660.

⁴⁵ See for example, *Ceylon Daily News*, 23 August 1979, 'No Fear of Terrorist Gunplay: Calm settles over Jaffna Peninsula; *Sun*, 24 Dec 1979, 'Brig. Weeratunga says ... Its all Calm and Quiet in the North'.

⁴⁶ Sri Lanka Army Annual Report 1979:9. This Report is prepared by AHQ Colombo with the cooperation of all the Heads of the different Directorates and departments in the army. It is sent under the signature of the Commander of the Army.

⁴⁷ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 195, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*: 291.

⁴⁸ Marks 1986:69 "Peoples War" in Sri Lanka: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency'. And Singer 1986:14, Report on the Pressures and Opportunities for a Peaceful Solution to the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka'.

⁴⁹ See 'Official Roll of Honour-1977-2003', 2005: 873 and 1660.

3.4: Evidence of the Existence within the Government of a balanced Counterinsurgency policy trend and a 'Pogrom against Tamils' trend

After the election victory of 1977 UNP's leader Jayewardene (at that time the Prime Minister) proceeded rapidly with the creation of a new Constitution which included an Executive Presidential system. With the enactment of this new Constitution in September 1978 he became the Executive President (with vastly enhanced powers when compared with the Prime Minister of the previous decades). Another UNP leader R. Premadasa became the Prime Minister. Jayewardene worked with a large group of UNP, Sinhala and Tamil scholars, lawyers and advisors on the creation of the new Constitution. None of the Opposition parties (of which the most significant were the SLFP and TULF) supported the enactment of the new Constitution. But the UNP passed it through Parliament with ease as it had $\frac{5}{6}$ th majority in parliament.

It has been acknowledged in print that during 1977-1980 Jayewardene worked very closely with several Tamil scholars - prominent among whom was political science Professor A. Jeyaratnam Wilson - to draft the 1978 Constitution.⁵⁰ Another was Dr Neelan Tiruchelvam a Harvard educated legal scholar and an expert in Constitutional Law who worked alongside Professor Wilson. Both had good links with the UNP and the TULF.⁵¹ It is relevant to note at this juncture that radical pro-secessionist elements in the TULF and Tamil insurgents were critical of the work of such Tamil scholars as they were seen as assisting the government to develop political and Constitutional reforms *within* a united Sri Lankan state. These scholars and others who worked to bring-about a negotiated solution were considered as 'collaborators' at best and 'traitors' at worst.⁵²

⁵⁰ See Wilson, A. Jeyaratnam, 1993: 75, 'The presidential idea in the constitutions of South Asia—A response to Jean-Alphonse Bernard'. Here Professor Wilson says that it was as a response to a suggestion by President Jayewardene that he wrote his book *Gaullist System in Asia: The Constitution of Sri Lanka* (1980). This was meant to be a 'guide' and 'handbook' for the President to help him in performing his presidential duties. Such details reveal how closely Wilson worked with the President at that time. In later years Wilson became disillusioned with Jayewardene and moved closer to secessionism as evidenced by books such as his 1988 publication *The Break-Up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict*.

⁵¹ Professor Wilson was the son-in-law of S.J.V. Chelvanayakam, the leader of the *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi*, 'Lanka Tamil State Party' (a.k.a. "Federal Party"). The "Federal Party" was the core around which the TULF was constructed. Wilson died of natural causes in 2000. Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam came from an influential Tamil family. His father M. Tiruchelvam too was a lawyer and a leader in the "Federal Party" and was a Minister in the UNP's coalition government of 1965-1970. Dr Tiruchelvam was appointed as a TULF Member of Parliament in 1983. He was killed by an LTTE suicide bomber in Colombo in July 1999.

⁵² Wilson lived abroad and died of natural causes in 2000. Tiruchelvam was assassinated by an LTTE suicide bomber in Colombo in July 1999.

The Balanced Counterinsurgency Policy Trend. After the enactment of the 1978 Constitution one of President Jayewardene's urgent tasks was to try and develop a political institutional structure within which some degree of political powers could be delegated to Tamils. He now enjoyed full Executive powers of an Executive President. The TULF insisted that devolution of power had to be an essential feature of any settlement.⁵³ After a great deal of consultations and discussions the District Development Councils (DDCs) were enacted in 1980. The DDCs would devolve some political powers to each of the 25 *Districts* of the entire island. The government insisted that the District had to be the 'Unit of Devolution' and not a Province. The government was certainly not agreeable to combining the Northern and Eastern Provinces into one entity. The District was the institutional structure within which President Jayewardene and the Cabinet assessed that the Tamils could be granted a (modest) degree of autonomy. The President and the Cabinet were apprehensive that a larger 'Unit of Devolution', and/or greater powers would accelerate the secessionist insurgency. Analysts and scholars can (and should) question these assessments of any government. But ultimately it is governments' which assess state security threats, make *decisions*, and are held responsible for all consequences – whether they be good, indifferent or bad. And this was the decision made by President Jayewardene's government at the time.⁵⁴

The TULF lobbied for a larger Unit of Devolution, and for more Powers of Devolution. But President Jayewardene and his Cabinet's assessment of the threats to the security of the unity of Sri Lanka while balancing Tamil demands, was that the DDCs were the political reforms that the government could concede at that point in time. President Jayewardene wanted to proceed in a gradual and prudent fashion: "the President had promised [...] that *if the scheme proved to be viable*, substantive powers would be devolved to the District Councils [Emphases added]".⁵⁵ From a counterinsurgency perspective this was the government's effort to reach out to the Tamil people, address their grievances, and thereby strengthen its Centre of Gravity in relation to the Tamil people. The TULF was eventually cajoled and persuaded to

⁵³ De Silva, K.M., 1986: 313, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multiethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985*.

⁵⁴ The 'tug-of-war' between the government on one side and the TULF and the Tamil insurgent groups on the other on the 'Unit of Devolution' is a continuous thread that runs from the DDCs and through the numerous negotiations (with the involvement of the Indian central government) from July 1983 to July 1987. This matter is very important in the context of the Tamil insurrection and the UNP governments' threat assessments and policies. See references to 'Unit of Devolution' and the Tamils insisting on a Unit which combined the Northern and Eastern Provinces in the Introduction, Chapter-2, and Chapter-4.

⁵⁵ Nesiiah, Devenesan, 2013, *The Sunday Leader*, 4 August 2013, 'On The 30th Anniversary Of The Pogrom Of July 1983'. What we can infer from this is that President Jayewardene wanted to be prudent and careful. He wanted to proceed slowly, step by step. One cannot entirely fault him for this as the Tamil insurgents were already active and their goal was a separate state carved out of this same territory.

give the DDCs a chance to work.⁵⁶ But the Tamil insurgent groups rejected the DDCs, and agitated for its boycott, vowed to disrupt the entire process and also threatened death to Tamil politicians who came forward as candidates – all actions which they implemented.⁵⁷

In mid-July 1983, at a time the insurrection was at a much higher intensity and just prior to taking very harsh measures (discussed later in this Chapter) the President publicly revealed that “*at one time his party had been anxious to apply policies in the Northern regions in such a way as to attract popular support there* [emphases added]”.⁵⁸ The phrasing of the above was in complete consonance with British and US counterinsurgency Doctrine. It could have been a result of the President reading and studying insurgencies and how to counter insurgencies over the previous months (as publicly revealed by him in May 1983). And also the result of discussions and study with Cabinet colleagues such as Athulathmudali.⁵⁹ Although the word ‘counterinsurgency’ was never mentioned in any publicly available government document, speech or statement at that time or in the future (to the knowledge of the present author), what President Jayewardene said was *tantamount* to saying that his government *had* tried to implement a counterinsurgency strategy during the previous years. The fact that *civilian* leaders of the UNP government were studying counterinsurgency literature was further corroborated by Minister of National Security Athulathmudali who specifically mentioned (in 1984) that policies similar to those implemented by General Gerald Templer in Malaya would be adopted in Sri Lanka.⁶⁰

It is the present author’s assessment that *if* the Tamil insurgents could have been satisfied with the DDC system in 1980 and had cooperated with the government in implementing them then the grievances of the Tamils *may* have been gradually addressed within a undivided Sri Lanka and without the deadly insurgency and counterinsurgency which engulfed the country for the next 30 years. But there was deadlock between the two sides: from the ‘Tamil insurgents’ side the DDCs fell far short of the powers and territorial unit of self-government they wanted.

⁵⁶ De Silva, K.M., 1986: 313, *Managing Ethnic Tensions in Multiethnic Societies: Sri Lanka 1880-1985*.

⁵⁷ Described and analysed later in this Chapter.

⁵⁸ *The Sunday Observer*, 17 July 1983, ‘Stricter measures to combat terrorism’, which was a reprint of the full text of the interview with the *Daily Telegraph* on 11 July 1983.

⁵⁹ *Sun*, 14 May 1983, ‘President vows to eliminate terrorism: Martial Law if necessary’. Lalith Athulathmudali read Law at Oxford, was a past President of the Oxford Union and taught at universities in Singapore, Israel and Scotland prior to entering politics in Sri Lanka.

⁶⁰ This was one of the rare instances when the Malayan Insurgency and General Templer were publicly mentioned. Athulathmudali was one of the most capable and educated Cabinet Ministers. He was Minister of National Security – a new Ministry created after the 1983 pogrom-riots and the escalation of the Tamil insurrection – at that time and quite clearly had begun to study the Malayan insurgency. See *The Island*, 17 January 1985, ‘A mixed population in Lalith’s 2-point plan to combat terrorism’. (Incidentally, Athulathmudali was assassinated by the LTTE in late-April 1993 in Colombo.)

From the government's side the DDCs were the maximum that it *assessed* that it could concede to the Tamils without endangering the State and also losing support of its Sinhala voter base.

The Parallel (Covert) 'Pogrom Against Tamils' Trend, circa 1980 onwards.

Concurrent with the President's initiatives regarding the DDCs and other negotiations with the TULF, there was evidence of a separate covert plan by some sections of the UNP's leadership to carry-out anti-Tamil riots to 'teach Tamils a lesson' and thereby, presumably, bring an end to the insurrection.⁶¹ One of the UNP leaders whose name appears in many publications is that of Minister of Industries Cyril Matthew.⁶² Matthew was the leader of the UNP's trade union organisation the *Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya* (JSS) which was very publicly active in the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 (discussed later in this Chapter).

The Jayewardene government also included, in very prominent positions, Sinhalese chauvinists who carried their anti-Tamil efforts to dangerous extremes. These leaders turned the ruling party's trade union [the JSS], which very large numbers of workers were enticed or often compelled to join after 1977, into something akin to a private army. This union engaged in widespread violence and intimidation against opposition parties, civil liberties groups [...] The use of violence by the union surfaced once again during the anti-Tamil riots of 1983.⁶³

There would also have been other UNP leaders who would not have been averse to such policies if the Tamil insurrection could be brought to an end by such means. To confirm the existence of this covert plan was very difficult to research and establish because of its political sensitivity but was useful for this Thesis. The evidence that has been marshalled to date by the present author come from many separate published and verbal sources stretching over a period of 33 years, from 1980 to 2013. The following are the separate items of evidence available at present to the author. They are arranged in chronological order from the oldest to the most recent. The first three items are from *before* the July 1983 anti-Tamil riots. The fourth is a statement by a senior government Minister in 2012. (Other circumstantial evidence is analysed later in this Chapter when assessing the responsibility for the July 1983 riots.)

Chronologically the earliest and also one of the most significant items of evidence is a conversation which is reported to have taken place in 1980. Devenesan Nesiah who was a senior Tamil civil servant in 1980 published an article in 2013 – the 30th Anniversary of the

⁶¹ This was, of course, a manifestation of the sheer ignorance that most civilian political leaders *and* military officers had at that time. In 1979-80 Sri Lankan civilian political leaders of *all* political parties, not only the UNP, and military officers had no first hand experience of a protracted insurrection. The fact that attacking Tamil civilians would have a result that was the exact opposite that they wanted was not understood.

⁶² Meyer, Eric 1984:142; 'Priya Samarakone' [pseudonym] 1984:115; Obeyesekere, Gananath 1984(a):161-162; and extensively in Hoole, 2001. This is not an exhaustive list.

⁶³ James Manor and Gerald Segal, 1985: 1172, 'Causes of Conflict: Sri Lanka and Indian Ocean Strategy'.

pogrom-riots of July 1983 - where he says that he was informed by Professor A. J. Wilson and Dr Neelan Tiruchelvam that President Jayewardene had informed them that an anti-Tamil pogrom was being planned. Nesiiah published this account in August 2013 and because of its importance the relevant section is quoted in full below:

[...] My story starts earlier, around 1980, during the time that I was posted to the Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration. I had an unexpected visit from Prof. A. J. Wilson and Dr Neelan Tiruchelvam. *I did not know it then, but the pogrom was already in the making.*

The objective of the visit of Wilson and Neelan was to inform me that the island-wide District Development Council (DDC) elections were likely to be held soon, and that I was likely to be posted as the Government Agent and District Secretary of Jaffna immediately after those elections.

They were keen that I should accept the appointment and help to develop the Jaffna DDC as a model for all others. I expressed my opinion that the DDC scheme provided for little or no devolution and that any decentralization was to the District Minister, U. B. Wijekoon, an admirable man but who was appointed by, and answerable to, the President and not to the District Councils.

They agreed, but said that *the President had promised them that if the scheme proved to be viable, substantive powers would be devolved to the District Councils. That was why the Tamil leaders were keen that I should be Jaffna's Government Agent and District Secretary.* I asked them if they believed in that promise.

They confessed that they too had reservations, but that in addition to the unconvincing *carrot* of future devolution, *the President had referred to a compelling stick in the form of a pogrom planned by unknown persons, of which the President came to know of. He had suggested that the way to avert the pogrom was to sustain an ongoing political partnership between the Sinhalese and Tamil leaders.* In the circumstances, I agreed to accept the appointment if and when I received it [emphases added].⁶⁴

The second item of evidence is a remarkably discerning article published on 5 June 1983 by the *Sun's* defence correspondent Ranil Weerasinghe.⁶⁵ This was published shortly after the

⁶⁴ Nesiiah, Devenesan, 2013, *The Sunday Leader*, 4 August 2013, 'On The 30th Anniversary Of The Pogrom Of July 1983'. Nesiiah published this in August 2013, during the 30th Anniversary discussions and debates in the Sri Lankan press about the pogrom-riots of July 1983. This information is of high significance to research on the pogrom-riots of July 1983 (discussed later in this Chapter). A question can be raised as to how dependable is Nesiiah's account? Both other witnesses are dead, i.e. Wilson (in 2000 through natural causes) and Tiruchelvam (assassinated by a suicide bomber in 1999). The present author met Dr. Nesiiah at his residence in Colombo on 14 September 2013 where we had a two hour discussion where many subjects were discussed. During the course of this interview Dr. Nesiiah guaranteed to the present author that everything in his article was true and accurate. The present author will continue to search for further evidence to corroborate Dr. Nesiiah's claims. Dr. Nesiiah is fully aware of the need for complete accuracy in relation to specific events and conversations incorporated in his article. Dr. Nesiiah has a B.Sc in Mathematics (University of Ceylon), an M.A. in Economics (University of Sussex). Some years after 1983 while still a government official he obtained official leave and completed his PhD from Harvard University, USA. He revised and published his PhD Thesis as a book, *Discrimination with Reason?: The Policy of Reservations in the United States, India and Malaysia*, 1997, USA: Oxford University Press. Dr. Nesiiah has served as the Government Agent (G.A) of Mannar, Batticaloa and Jaffna, and many other government administrative posts. Although Dr. Nesiiah may be criticised for not revealing this information much earlier, such critics must be mindful of the fact that Dr. Nesiiah is a Tamil and had to be cautious when revealing such information. He had to think of his and his family's security and furthermore, his government pension could be stopped or delayed at any time by the government via numerous administrative methods. Further research to corroborate Dr. Nesiiah's account is being continued by the present author.

⁶⁵ The contents of many articles by the *Sun's* defence correspondent at that time, Ranil Weerasinghe, circa 1977-1983 were insightful and revealed that he had very good contacts and sources within the highest levels of government including the Cabinet, police and the army. The details and nuances of his articles are very insightful. The fact that these articles are contemporaneous texts written *before* the July 1983 riots - i.e. *before* the damage done to Sri Lanka's international image and its reputation was realised by the government,

killing of two airmen in Vavuniya and a day after the killing of a UNP local government candidate in Jaffna, and substantial segments are quoted below:

Terrorists last morning shot and killed another Northern UNP local government candidate in what *defence analysts* claimed was now emerging as *an obvious attempt to invite military and public retaliation as a means to precipitate another bout of ethnic violence*.

The killing [...] they stated was *definitely with the purpose of fanning the unrest* that has been building throughout the country. [The killing of the two airmen, burning a bus in Akkaraipattu, and last morning's killing] has now *been identified as a co-ordinated sequence to firstly create an atmosphere of tension and then fan it into flames in order to envelope the entire country in a communal conflict*. [...] recent actions by the terrorists [...] has (sic) been particularly brutal [...] with the *intention being to incense the service personnel of all branches*. [...] The intelligence agencies have also not ruled out the possibility of a strike outside [the North and East] with the sole intention of '*setting fire to the fuse leading to the powder keg*' [emphases added].⁶⁶

The above *Sun* article has many sentences pregnant with meaning: (1) unnamed 'defence analysts' had claimed that there was an obvious attempt by the insurgents to *provoke the military and Sinhala public* into perpetrating *another* (the word "another" is probably a reference to the riots of 1977 and 1981 which occurred some years earlier) bout of ethnic violence. And this was precisely what occurred 1½ months later. (2) That there was a *co-ordinated sequence* by the insurgents... *to envelope the entire country in communal violence*. This too was precisely what happened in July 1983. (3) That there was an *intention* by the insurgents to *enrage* the personnel of all branches of the armed forces. This too happened in July 1983. (4) That all these attacks were being done by the insurgents with the intention of "*setting fire to the fuse leading to the powder keg*". What do the allegories "fuse" and "powder keg" mean? It is the present author's assessment that within the context of the guerrilla attacks occurring in the country at that time "fuse" meant increasing the anger of Sinhalese people and the armed forces personnel, and "powder keg" meant anti-Tamil riots.

As can be seen, in the above article there was no mention of the Tamil insurgents' campaign to create a separate State; no mention of the insurgents using guerrilla warfare tactics to make areas of the North and East ungovernable; no mention or even an allusion to 'strategic defensive' phase of an insurrection. There was no mention that the attacks could be a part of an insurgency where impressing and winning the support of Tamil people were important

journalists and the Sinhala public; *before* the damage done to Tamils and Tamil owned businesses became widely known; *before* the total consequences to the country (discussed in detail, later in this Chapter) of the July 1983 anti-Tamil riots was realised by the government and establishment; and *before* the attempted 'cover-ups' by the government makes these *Sun* articles specially valuable. They are devoid of the attempts to diminish the deleterious consequences of the pogrom-riots which appeared in some texts – both journalistic and academic – published *after* the riots.

⁶⁶ *Weekend*, 5 June 1983, 'Another UNP Organiser gunned down: Terror attacks with diabolic motive?' *Weekend* was the Sunday paper of the *Sun*. The phrase 'service personnel' meant the armed forces and police.

political objectives for the insurgents. The assessments of the journalist were that the insurgents' only objective was to provoke the Sinhalese to riot against the Tamils and to enrage the armed forces and police into aiding and abetting that rioting.⁶⁷ *The present author's deduction is that this journalist had picked-up information of the planned attacks against Tamils from his political and defence contacts and that – as a journalist – he could not resist a 'scoop'. But, as he realised that revealing this knowledge in clear-cut language would be dangerous to him, he chose to express himself using allegories and metaphors.*

The third item of evidence is a conversation overheard by a Tamil lady in early July 1983 at a formal dinner in a hotel. She had overheard a government Minister seated at a nearby table saying “*Just wait a few weeks and they [i.e. Tamils] will be taught a lesson*” [emphases added].⁶⁸ This account was published in 2001 in Hoole's book which is a landmark publication which documents the entire conflict. The entirety of Chapter.11 of Hoole's book is devoted to describing and analysing circumstantial evidence of the UNP government's role in the July 1983 riots.⁶⁹ Hoole is very rigorous in his research and while he does not reveal the name of the lady for obvious security reasons a substantial degree of dependability can be placed on his account.

The fourth item of evidence appeared in a book review published in May 2012. This was written by a very knowledgeable and experienced former civil servant and later politician who has served as a Minister in both UNP and SLFP governments. He publicly stated that the UNP government was responsible for the pogrom-riots of July 1983.⁷⁰ The fifth set of evidence – but by no means the last - is the large amount of detailed information and circumstantial evidence that Hoole has painstakingly gathered together.⁷¹

⁶⁷ The reasons for this myopia could have been, first, unawareness of insurgencies and their phases such as 'strategic defensive'.

⁶⁸ Hoole, Rajan. 2001: 104, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

⁶⁹ Hoole, Rajan. 2001, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*. Hoole's book is 504 pages in length and has a great deal of empirical information and analyses. Due to the need for brevity only information directly relevant to this Thesis will be abstracted from Hoole's book. Chapter.11 is titled 'July 1983: Planned by the State or Spontaneous Mob Action?' is 26 pages in length and has a great deal of empirical information published nowhere else. Hoole has gathered a great deal of circumstantial evidence including the use of electoral lists by organised mobs to identify Tamil owned houses and a list of Tamil journalists' whose houses were targeted, attacked and destroyed. Such lists – specially the second mentioned above - could not have been organised in a matter of hours. These matters will be dealt with later when we analyse the responsibility for the July 1983 riots.

⁷⁰ The reviewer was Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama who worked as a Permanent Secretary to several Ministries and then became a politician. See *The Island*, 19 May 2012, book review, 'When you read the book "Gota's War" you learn that it does not mean Gota won the war single-handedly'.

⁷¹ See Hoole, Rajan. 2001: 144-177, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*. This is a very significant book which has a great deal of meticulously gathered evidence.

At this point we must stop discussing this issue as we have to deal with the same subject when the responsibility for the July 1983 riots is analysed later in this chapter. Then, many other items of *circumstantial evidence* which point to prior planning of the July 1983 riots too will be analysed.

3.5 Government Attempts to hold DDC Elections Attacked by Tamil Insurgents and Subsequent deterioration of Law and Order, 1981 to early-1983

The government decided to hold DDC elections throughout the country in 1981. In the backdrop of the rejection of the DDCs by Tamil insurgent groups and the grudging participation by the TULF, the strategy adopted by the Tamil insurgents was that any Tamil who participated as a candidate or supported the government in any way was a traitor to the Tamil nation and therefore eligible to be killed. The elections in Jaffna were the most violence-prone. They were scheduled to be held on 4 June 1981 and some days prior to the elections a Tamil UNP candidate was assassinated. On 31 May several policemen were shot at during a TULF political meeting and at least one policeman was killed.⁷² The killing of policeman enraged police personnel and UNP supporters who rampaged through Jaffna destroying commercial and private property.

They set fire to the Public Library in Jaffna. This Library was to have had one of the best collections of Tamil books in the entire region.⁷³ The Presidential Truth Commission of 2002 called it a "wanton criminal act by police".⁷⁴ The fact that two important government Ministers - Gamini Dissanayake and Cyril Mathew - were in Jaffna at this time coordinating the government's election campaign fuelled speculation of government involvement. There was outrage over this incident.⁷⁵

The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) Chairman Bishop Wickremasinghe visited Jaffna in early June 1981 and wrote to President Jayewardene. The Bishop itemised the destruction to the Jaffna Library, the TULF office, the residence and vehicle of the TULF's Member of

⁷² 'Official Roll of Honour-1977-2003', 2005: 1660.

⁷³ Some 90,000 volumes were destroyed, along with many rare manuscripts and the loss was estimated as being irreparable. See Matthews 1982:1124-1125, 'District Development Councils in Sri Lanka'.

⁷⁴ Government of Sri Lanka, 2002:27, Report of the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence (1981-1984).

⁷⁵ Professor Gananath Obeyesekere wrote: "The burning of the public library was a profoundly symbolic act: the library contained priceless manuscripts pertaining to the identity of the Tamils of Jaffna. On the Buddhist side it was an unparalleled act of barbarism, since rarely in Sri Lanka's recorded history (and perhaps even in the larger history of Buddhism) was there an example of book burning of this magnitude. The people of Jaffna identified the outsiders as the thugs of a prominent cabinet minister. The rumour in the Sinhalese areas was the same. Yet no action was taken by the President." See Obeyesekere 1984(b):47, 'Political Violence and the Future of Democracy in Sri Lanka'.

Parliament for Jaffna, the premises of the *Eelanadu* regional Tamil newspaper, and shops in the Jaffna bazaar. The Bishop reported that many eyewitnesses had stated that the perpetrators of these acts were policemen in civil clothes.⁷⁶

One hour after the voting for the DDC elections ended, the government declared a State of Emergency throughout Sri Lanka effective from 5pm onwards on 4 June 1981.⁷⁷ The UNP government won 11 of the 17 DDCs for which elections were held on 4 June 1981. The remaining six – all in Tamil majority areas – were won by the TULF.⁷⁸ But the government's victory was hollow as the violence in Jaffna prior to the elections negated a great deal of the legitimacy of the elections in the minds of many Tamils. The government did not take any formal measures to inquire into or punish the perpetrators of the above violent acts in Jaffna.⁷⁹ Inevitably the fissure between the government and Tamil people widened. Insurgent attacks gradually increased from 1981 onwards. The government in turn attempted to counter these with the use of the police and the army and human rights violations occurred.⁸⁰

Small-Scale Anti-Tamil Riots, August 1981. On 7 August 1981, relatively small scale anti-Indian Tamil rioting began to occur in some Sinhala-majority parts in the country.⁸¹ In a large majority of cases the victims were Indian Tamils who worked on estates and plantations.⁸² On 17 August, ten days after the rioting began the government stated that 7

⁷⁶ Civil Rights Movement (CRM), 1981c: 2. 'The events in Jaffna since 31st May 1981', text of letter dated 24 June 1981 sent to President Jayewardene by CRM's Chairman Bishop Laksman Wickramasinghe.

⁷⁷ The government also mobilised some of the army's 'volunteer' Regiments for duty. See *The Times (London)* 5 June 1981, 'Emergency declared after Sri Lanka polling'. The 'Volunteer' Regiments are the Sri Lankan army's equivalents of the British Army's 'territorial army' Regiments. Many of these units – along with other new Battalions and units created over the subsequent years – continued to be mobilised till 2009.

⁷⁸ *The Times (London)* 6 Jun 1981, 'Sri Lanka rulers win'. On earlier dates the UNP had won control of 7 Councils. Consequently the UNP government ended by controlling 18 of the 24 DDCs in the country.

⁷⁹ Government of Sri Lanka, 2002:27, Report of the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence (1981-1984).

⁸⁰ For example in April 1981 the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) wrote to President Jayewardene highlighting the death of an elderly Tamil man consequent to assault by army personnel, and, the lack of any information of 30 Tamils detained after an armed robbery. Those arrested had not been produced in front of a Magistrate, their whereabouts were unknown and they had had no access to Lawyers or families (See Civil Rights Movement (CRM), 1981a, 'Violence in Jaffna and Secret Detention', letter to President JR Jayewardene, 23 April 1981). In May 1981 the CRM wrote to the Deputy Minister for Defence. This letter reminded Mr Werapitiya of the earlier letter dated 23 April 1981 and gave the names of 24 Tamils who had been detained but whose whereabouts were unknown. (see Civil Rights Movement (CRM), 1981b, 'Violence in Jaffna and Secret Detention', letter to Mr. T.B. Werapitiya, Deputy Minister, Defence, 7 May 1981). (Source: CRM Archives, Colombo.)

⁸¹ 'Relative' when compared with the rioting of 1977 and the pogrom-riots of July 1983.

⁸² By 12 August the government had placed the army on alert and deployed them to assist the police (see *The Times (London)*, 12 August 1981, 'Colombo army alert'). On the night of 15 August army personnel shot and killed one man in Gampaha when a mob were setting fire to a shop. The government deployed extra police personnel in those areas to maintain order. There were riots against Tamils in the Negombo area (North of Colombo, on the west coast) and Ratnapura (towards the centre of the country, renown for its gems). Personnel of the army's Sri Lanka Light Infantry were deployed in Ratnapura's Rubber plantations to protect Tamil estate workers and more than 300 persons were arrested (see *The Times (London)*, 20 August 1981, 'Sri Lanka arrests total 300'). The TULF's Leader Mr Amirthalingam complained to President Jayewardene in writing that four Tamils had been killed in the recent riots and that a great deal of Tamil property had been looted or destroyed (see *The Times (London)*, 17 August 1981, 'Sri Lanka Troops Open Fire').

deaths, 196 acts of arson, 35 instances of looting, and 15 robberies had occurred from 7 August onwards. Government announced that the death penalty would be imposed for arson and looting.⁸³

The sole Minister in the Cabinet from the Indian Tamil ethnic group – of whom a majority were estate workers - made a very significant statement in parliament. This was Minister S. Thondaman, leader of the CWC (Ceylon Workers Congress), Minister of Rural Industrial Development. He urged President Jayewardene to take measures to stop the violence and stated:

Plantation workers innocent of any political crimes have been singled out for murder and mayhem. *The mob rule* which seems to be *the order of the day in many parts of the country* should be brought to an end without any further delay as it has already resulted in the loss of many valuable lives and millions of rupees' worth of properties(sic) [emphases added].⁸⁴

As a Minister in the UNP government, Mr. Thondaman would have had access to information from a wide range of information from his supporters, contacts and friends. The above statement gives a useful contemporaneous insight into deterioration of law and order in some areas of the country.

On 15 October 1981 Tamil insurgents deliberately killed the first army soldier.⁸⁵ In November 1981 one more army soldiers was killed by Tamil insurgents.⁸⁶ Both soldiers were ethnic Sinhalese. With the gradual increase in Tamil insurgent activity in 1981 the army was again deployed to assist the police in the North. By this time the meagre progress the army had achieved through its July to December 1979 deployment in Jaffna had eroded away. According data released by the government between 1976 and July 1983 secessionist insurgents killed 73 persons, and from 1978 to 1983 insurgents were responsible for more than 265 bombings, robberies, and assaults.⁸⁷

⁸³ *The Times (London)*, 18 August 1981, 'State of emergency for Sri Lanka after unrest'. The reader needs to be aware that these figures could have been considerably underreported by the government due to political considerations such as: (a) to convey to the public and the international community that the government was in control of the situation; (b) to lessen anxiety and fear amongst the Tamils'; (c) to prevent similar 'copycat' crimes by Sinhalese rioters. As press censorship was in force throughout Sri Lanka at that time most ordinary civilians did not know and could not know what was happening in other parts of the country. Further, no independent verification of these government figures could be made at that time as reporters were apprehensive of travelling to the troubled areas due to concerns about their own safety and security. A scholar wrote that about 200 buildings were torched and at least seven people were killed. This is close to the government's data (see Meyer 1984:142, 'Seeking the Roots of the Tragedy').

⁸⁴ *The Times (London)*, 18 August 1981, 'State of emergency for Sri Lanka after unrest'.

⁸⁵ 'Official Roll of Honour-1977-2003', 2005: 873.

⁸⁶ 'Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003', 2005: 873

⁸⁷ Kearney 1985:906, 'Ethnic Conflict and the Tamil Separatist Movement in Sri Lanka'.

Although these numbers are relatively small these killings created a considerable amount of agitation within the government and majority Sinhala people because, first, none of the perpetrators were prosecuted and convicted. Very little information came forth from within the Tamil community. Any Tamil who gave information ran the risk of assassination by the insurgents. Second, the killing of police and especially army personnel in the course of a long drawn-out *political* campaign was entirely new. Police personnel were occasionally killed by criminals during the course of their normal duties. But the last time army personnel had been killed was in 1971 during the JVP's insurrection. Up to 1982 the navy and the air force had not suffered any casualties.

3.6: Increased Tamil Insurgent Attacks & Anti-Tamil mini Riots by Sinhalese Mobs: President's Threat to introduce Martial Law, mid-May & mid-July 1983

In the first seven months of 1983 four army soldiers were killed on four separate occasions, one each in April and May and two in early July. One was killed in Kilinochchi and all the others in Jaffna. In February 1983 two policemen, both Sinhalese, were killed in Jaffna District.⁸⁸ It was around this time that sporadic anti-Tamil direct actions by Sinhalese began to take place in different parts of the country: in May 1983 Tamil students at Peradeniya University, Kandy, were harassed – but no student was killed – and the University became unmanageable and was closed in mid-July by the government; beginning in the first week of June there were mini-riots in Vavuniya, Colombo, Trincomalee and other parts of the country and in these incidents there were some deaths and injury.⁸⁹ It needs to be noted that these direct actions began *more than 1½ months prior to the anti-Tamil pogrom-riots of July 1983*. In literature on the conflict in Sri Lanka this fact is overlooked.

With the gradual escalation of the Tamil insurrection President Jayewardene and the government came under increasing pressure by the Opposition and the public to end the insurgency and restore public order. Each insurgent attack offered the Opposition an opportunity to score points against the government. In mid-May 1983 President Jayewardene publicly stated that he would consider introducing Martial Law to eliminate the secessionist insurgency.⁹⁰ President and the government was in a crisis due to the escalating guerrilla-type attacks carried out by small, mobile groups – which, as is well known, are very difficult for

⁸⁸ 'Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003', 2005: 873 and 1660.

⁸⁹ See Annexure 3.1 for incidents and tactical details.

⁹⁰ *Sun*, 14 May 1983, 'President vows to eliminate terrorism: Martial Law if necessary'. He said this at political rallies in Eheliyagoda, Maharagama and Kesbawa, Colombo and Ratnapura Districts, where the vast majority of the population were Sinhalese.

even an army with experience in counterinsurgency warfare to deal with. At the time Sri Lankan forces and police had virtually none. The President and Cabinet decided that harsh countermeasures were needed. The President asked the Sinhalese people to be patient and *that he was reading books* and studying terrorist movements. He said that he had a strategy to tackle the secessionist insurgents. It is insightful to quote him at some length:

Be patient. Though some accuse me of being too weak and lenient with the terrorists who have adopted dangerous tactics to divide the country, *I have my strategy to tackle them*" he said. President Jayewardene said he could not fight terrorism alone. On behalf of the government, he called upon the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the people of Sri Lanka to assist him in the fight against subversives and terrorists. "I am *reading books about various terrorist movements in the world*. First I will try to understand their objectives, their tactics and means of achieving their goals. *When I know more details about them and their activities, I will act decisively to eliminate the terrorist movement before the end of the term of my office*. [...] It is a difficult task and cannot be solved overnight. [...] it took more than ten years for Italy and over 15 years for Germany to solve the terrorism problem in those countries. Still terrorism is causing problems for India, Ireland and a host of other countries [Emphases added].⁹¹

In early July 1983 the President gave an interview to Britain's *Daily Telegraph*. He again publicly revealed that he was contemplating the introduction of Martial Law.⁹² This statement was given wide publicity by Sri Lankan newspapers, a few days later the entire interview was reprinted in the government's most prestigious English newspaper.⁹³ The state-owned radio station – at that time the only radio station in existence in the country – quoted this *Daily Telegraph* interview at length and the possibility of government introducing Martial Law and broadcast it to the whole island.⁹⁴ This was a high powered government publicity campaign which had to have had the direction of the President and the Cabinet.

Killing of a Soldier & two Airmen, and beginning of mini Anti Tamil Riots, May 1983 onwards. On the day on which local government elections were held in Jaffna, 18 May 1983, insurgents attacked a polling booth located just two miles from Jaffna city and killed one army corporal and injured another corporal and four police constables.⁹⁵ The insurgents escaped. That night soldiers of that battalion rioted against commercial establishments and residences in the area including Jaffna's new market.⁹⁶

⁹¹ *Sun*, 14 May 1983, 'President vows to eliminate terrorism: Martial Law if necessary'.

⁹² *Ceylon Daily News*, 12 July 1983, 'President announces anti-terrorist crunch: Martial Law in the North?'

⁹³ *The Sunday Observer*, 17 July 1983, 'Stricter measures to combat terrorism', reprinted the full text of the *Daily Telegraph* interview.

⁹⁴ *Sun*, 12 July 1983, 'Martial Law in North not Ruled Out: All Party Conference to tackle Terrorism'. The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) broadcasted this information via radio.

⁹⁵ *Sun*, 19 May 1983, 'Turmoil in the North: Terrorists Raid Polling Booth: Soldier Killed, Fire in Town'. The booth was located at Kandaramadam, very close to Jaffna city centre.

⁹⁶ Around 150 houses were damaged by fire, vehicles were set on fire and around 500 people fled their homes. It is useful to recall that this was two months prior to the anti-Tamil pogrom-riots of July 1983. At that time this was the most serious incident of army personnel behaving in this fashion. These were among the first Tamil

On 1 June 1983 Tamil insurgents killed two and injured one airman of the Sri Lanka Air Force in Tamil majority Vavuniya town's main market area.⁹⁷ These were the first air force personnel to be killed by the insurgents and both of them were Sinhalese. A couple of hours after this incident arsonists set fire to many shops in Vavuniya market area and caused widespread damage.⁹⁸ The government quickly stated that it would compensate Vavuniya town's residents who had suffered loss of property. President Jayewardene hurriedly said that Vavuniya town would be rebuilt.⁹⁹

The funerals of the dead airmen were held a few days later and more than 5,000 people attended one funeral held in the Kandy area and nearly 10,000 persons were reported as having visited his mother's house in a remote village in the area.¹⁰⁰ Such numbers of mourners was unusual for the funerals of Other Ranks. These unprecedented numbers are indicators of significant numbers of the Sinhala electorate becoming politically agitated at the deaths of armed forces personnel.¹⁰¹ After the killing of the two airmen on 1st June, anti-Tamil mini-riots began to occur in widespread areas of the country. This is circumstantial evidence of the existence of a significant number of Sinhala rioters in Sinhala predominant areas who were prepared to use violence on Tamils living amidst them.

These mini-riots which began in early-June 1983 and never entirely subsided but continued intermittently up to the riots of July 1983 riots.¹⁰² Colombo¹⁰³ and Trincomalee¹⁰⁴ are

civilians to be affected in this manner. See *Sun*, 19 May 1983, 'Turmoil in the North: Terrorists Raid Polling Booth: Soldier Killed, Fire in Town'.

⁹⁷ *The Island*, 2 June 1983, 'New market ablaze: Two Airmen shot dead, 2 terrorists captured: Curfew in Vavuniya'.

⁹⁸ Nobody was arrested or prosecuted. It was widely believed that the arsonists were air force personnel from the nearby Vavuniya air force base. But this information could not be published in the press due to censorship. The conciliatory gestures by the government to make good the damage caused by the rioting is an indicator that the government (and the air force authorities) knew who the arsonists were. From the next day onwards the town was placed under a night-time curfew, see *The Island*, 2 June 1983, 'New market ablaze: Two Airmen shot dead, 2 terrorists captured: Curfew in Vavuniya'. About 100 buildings were damaged of which 35 were completely destroyed. The damage caused to Vavuniya town was estimated at around Rupees 3.3 million. See *Ceylon Daily News*, 4 June 1983, 'Damage toll taken as Vavuniya returns to normal'.

⁹⁹ *The Island*, 4 June 1983, 'Victims to be compensated: President to discuss Vavuniya report with Cabinet'.

¹⁰⁰ *The Island*, 7 June 1983, '5000 at Airmen's funeral'. Such large numbers of mourners were very unusual for the death of two air force Other Ranks. These large numbers signify the agitation amongst the Sinhala voters and also anger at the government for 'allowing' these deaths to occur (although the government did not in any way 'allow' these killings to happen).

¹⁰¹ Some amount of organised agitation by both UNP hardliners and anti-government elements cannot be excluded, although very difficult to substantiate. As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, according to former senior civil servant Dr. Nesiiah President Jayewardene had revealed in 1980 the existence of a plan to carry-out anti-Tamil riots. This planning and organising work would have continued over the subsequent years along with the bolder and more violent attacks of the Tamil insurgents. The present author continues to research this period for more corroborative evidence.

¹⁰² See Annexure 3.1 for the tactical details.

described in separate Tables due to the higher level of disorder which occurred in each of them and their strategic significance. The widespread geographical spread of these mini-riots have been forgotten or over-looked by most researchers due to the pogrom-riots of July. Significantly, even the Presidential Commission which investigated ethnic violence during 1981-1984 made no mention of these mini-riots.¹⁰⁵

Government Takes Security Measures in the Face of Widespread Disorder, early-June 1983. By early June the government decided to take strong actions to try to stem the insurrection and also to stop mob actions by Sinhalese gangs. By early June the Police had already arrested over 100 persons in Kurunegala, Trincomalee, Negombo, Mt. Lavinia and Panadura for arson and looting. Police had also opened fire at rioting mobs in Kurunegala.¹⁰⁶ The National Security Council (NSC) of the government adopted a range of proactive security measures. Some of the measures were aimed at containing and stopping the anti-Tamil disorder and rioting by Sinhalese mobs, while others were aimed at eliminating insurgents.¹⁰⁷ (a) the establishment of a police command centre which linked-up with the operations rooms of the three armed forces headquarters in Colombo; (b) preventive arrest of known criminals and thugs around the country; (c) a contingency plan to deal with disorder & rioting in Colombo; and (d) police, army, and navy command rooms in Trincomalee were linked together. Curfews and the deployment of army, navy and air force personnel 'in aid of the civil power' was underway throughout the country.¹⁰⁸ Table 3D (see Annexure 3.1) is proof that the armed forces were in action 'in aid of the civil power' *seven weeks before* the July 1983 riots.

¹⁰³ During this same period (relatively) low-scale anti-Tamil disorder also began to occur in specific parts of Colombo where a high concentration of Tamils lived intermixed with Sinhalese and Muslims. Colombo is a very sensitive if not *the* most politically and security sensitive location in Sri Lanka. This is due to many criteria: Colombo is where all ethnic groups live in close proximity with each other; it is the largest and most important urban centre on the island; it is where numerous Ministries, businesses, government offices, parliament, the president's Office and residence, Hotels and the headquarters of all the armed forces and police are located. Any inter-ethnic tension and disorder in Colombo very quickly gets known internationally and also throughout the island and can serve to encourage rioting elsewhere.

¹⁰⁴ Anti-Tamil disorder and rioting also began in Trincomalee during this time. Trincomalee town has a population almost equally divided between all three ethnic groups, and the relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils was tense and wary. Trincomalee is also a 'naval town' because the Sri Lanka navy's largest and most important base is located in Trincomalee harbour. Many thousands of navy personnel were based in Trincomalee. Anti-Tamil rioting which began in early-June 1983 was at its worst and most sustained in Trincomalee. The police were tasked by government to maintain order and navy personnel too were deployed on an internal security 'aid to the civil authority' to assist the police.

¹⁰⁵ *Report of the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence (1981-1983)*, Sessional Paper No.III-2003, Dept of Government Printing, Sri Lanka.

¹⁰⁶ *Ceylon Daily News*, 8 June 1983, 'Over hundred arrested'.

¹⁰⁷ *The Island*, 4 June 1983, 'Security Council to meet on Monday'.

¹⁰⁸ *Sun*, 9 June 1983, 'Police keep close tabs on situation'; *Ceylon Daily News*, 6 June 1983, 'Round up criminal elements - Actg IGP'; *The Sunday Observer*, 6 June 1983, 'Army, Navy keep order'; *Ceylon Daily News*, 8 June 1983, 'Over hundred arrested'; *Sun*, 7 June 1983, 'Sporadic incidents'; *Sun*, 10 June 1983, 'Trinco returns to normal'; *The Island*, 4 June 1983, 'More powers to armed forces to fight terrorism'.

While the above measures were primarily aimed at curtailing Sinhalese mobs, if the police and the armed forces had come across Tamil insurgents during the course of implementing these measures then these tough measures would have been used against them too. It is in this context that the second set of policies need to be seen. The activation of the Emergency Regulations' provision for the 'Disposal of Dead Bodies' was one of these.¹⁰⁹ This was a policy aimed specifically at the Tamil insurgents and applied only to the Northern Province.

On 3rd June - two days after the killing of the two airmen in Vavuniya and the beginning of widespread disorder in the country - several provisions of the Emergency Regulations were gazetted by the government. These provisions applied only to the Northern Province and gave wide powers to the armed forces and police. One of the provisions related to the disposal of dead bodies. It suspended the need for a Coroner's investigation with regard to persons killed by the armed forces and police.

It shall be lawful for any police officer of a rank not below that of Assistant Superintendent or for the officer in charge of a police station *or any other officer or person authorised by him* in that behalf to take with the approval of the Secretary to the Ministry of Defence all such measures as may be necessary *for the taking possession and burial or cremation of any dead body*, and to determine in his discretion the persons who may be permitted to be present at any assembly for the purpose of or in connection with any such burial or cremation. [...] *It shall not be necessary* for any officer or person taking measures relating to the possession and burial or cremation of a dead body under this regulation *to comply with the provisions of any other written law relating to the inquest of death or to burial or cremation* [emphases added].¹¹⁰

As is evident from the above although the decision as to whether or not to hold an inquest was supposedly to be taken by the Secretary to the MoD, in fact this power was delegated downwards to the Officer in Charge (OIC) of *any* police station or *any* other police officer delegated by such an OIC.¹¹¹ Within Sri Lanka's post-colonial political culture, however, *these regulations have a particular notoriety*. It was under the provisions of these Regulations that thousands of JVP insurgents and insurgent suspects were killed and their bodies disposed-off during the 1971 insurrection.

In 1971, a group of citizens came together and lobbied the then government to get these Regulations revoked. This was how Sri Lanka's oldest civil rights organisation - the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) - came into being: "Revocation of this horrifying regulation was one of [the] main demands of CRM at its inception in 1971".¹¹² In 1971 these Regulation

¹⁰⁹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 6 June 1983, 'Rules governing disposal of bodies gazetted'.

¹¹⁰ *Ceylon Daily News*, 6 June 1983, 'Rules governing disposal of bodies gazetted'.

¹¹¹ *The Island*, 4 June 1983, 'More powers to armed forces to fight terrorism'.

¹¹² Civil Rights Movement (CRM), 1983a, 'Disposal of Dead Bodies without Postmortem', 5 June 1983, 'Telegram to President J.R. Jayewardene'.

were used as virtually a 'licence to kill' by the police and armed forces. Adult political leaders, political party members and adult civilians who had lived through the 1971 insurrection were aware of this fact. In 1983 there was no public discussion of these matters due to press censorship, the on-going (albeit low intensity) insurgency and the general sense of insecurity.

President Jayewardene's position was that these harsh provisions were necessary to protect police and armed forces personnel from legal action being taken against them.¹¹³ The CRM sent a very firmly worded telegram to the President (this one of the few contemporaneous documents of 1983 which it has been possible to locate).¹¹⁴

By activating this Regulation in June 1983 the government sent 'messages' to several 'constituencies' both Tamil and Sinhalese: the message to Tamil insurgents was that 'the gloves were off' and that the government had authorised the armed forces to use deadly force against Tamil insurgents and to destroy the bodies. Any armed actions against government institutions such as police stations, post offices, buses and trains would be severely dealt-with. Tamil politicians and citizens were on notice that the government's intention of using deadly force had been ratcheted upwards several dozen notches in one move and that they would be well advised to rein-in the insurgent groups.

¹¹³ *Ceylon Daily News*, 4 June 1983, 'Anti-terrorist emergency regulations: Security men to get more protection'.

¹¹⁴ See Civil Rights Movement (CRM), 1983a, 'Disposal of Dead Bodies without Postmortem', 5 June 1983, 'Telegram to President J.R. Jayewardene'.

Disposal of Dead Bodies without Postmortems

The Press reports today, 4 June 1983, that *Emergency Regulation are being promulgated to permit disposal of dead bodies by armed forces in the North without Postmortem Inquiry*. According to one report a government spokesman said the morale of service and police personnel is low because under normal circumstances if they shoot down a terrorist they have to face an inquest, remand and other constraints. Another report says that the government wishes to ensure that servicemen and policemen doing their duty under difficult circumstances are "in no way harassed by the Law".

Working committee of Civil Rights Movement which met today *expressed deep alarm* at these reports. It recognizes that government has serious problem of maintenance law and Order in the North and is not unmindful of fact there have been killings of servicemen, policemen, politicians and innocent bystanders with which it is the responsibility of any government to deal. It is however precisely at such times that excesses are likely to be committed by *security forces who have already demonstrated their propensity to retaliate indiscriminately against civilian population*. Granting of such powers will create again *the excesses of 1971* when *similar powers resulted in deaths under torture, indiscriminate killings and executions without trial by the security forces* which usurp functions of Courts in determining who is a terrorist and who is not and leading to *slaughter* of many [who were] never established to have been involved in insurgent activities. *Revocation of this horrifying regulation was one of [the] main demands of CRM at its inception in 1971*. As CRM wrote to then Prime Minister Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike at that time "Just as much as a democratic government has certain obligations in exercising its powers in relation to the general body of citizens it also has certain obligations even in dealing with persons who have broken the Law or are alleged to have broken it. It must guarantee that all such persons are dealt with by due process of law and in keeping with fundamental principals of Justice ... for otherwise a government would be flouting the principles of Justice that are vital to democracy in the very act of claiming to defend democratic institutions." Working Committee also points out that [the] International Covenant of civil and Political Rights which your Excellency's government has signed specifically provides that the Right to Life and Right to Protection from Torture cannot be derogated from even at time[s] of Emergency threatening the life of the Nation [emphases added].

Along with the PTA (Prevention of Terrorism Act) enacted in 1979 these Emergency Regulations gave the police and armed forces' a formidable array of powers.¹¹⁵ In spite of objections by CRM and a few others, the government did not withdraw these Emergency Regulations. Here we have an instance where a government was caught in a typical dilemma of counterinsurgency warfare: how to balance civil rights and human rights while at the same time *trying* to deal with dispersed guerrilla warfare.

President Jayewardene Tells Senior Army Officers that he had increased their powers. And that he expected them to enforce Discipline. On 10 June just prior to travelling overseas President Jayewardene addressed a large gathering of senior army officers in Colombo. This was a very important address where he laid out the broad contours of his policy and what he expected from the armed forces and the police. He said that he was addressing them not only as the Minister of Defence but also as Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. He said that serious terrorist acts had occurred in the recent past and that he expected the armed forces and the police to deal with the threat. He said that since 1977 a total of 37 police and armed forces personnel, 9 UNP politicians and 14 civilians had been killed. Emergency laws had been introduced "so as to give those in charge of the government a chance to see that terrorism was wiped out completely in this country".¹¹⁶ *Significantly, the President specifically mentioned the fact that the requirement for coroners' inquests had been changed and the powers of the police and the armed forces had been significantly increased.*¹¹⁷ But then he said that he also expected the Officers to enforce discipline among the armed forces. He called upon the Commanders of the armed forces and the senior officers to convey to their subordinate officers and men that maintaining discipline was a matter of the highest importance.

It is the assessment of the present author that in this address the President conveyed two important messages to the army. First, he made it clear that he had allowed them to 'take the gloves off', so to speak. He had increased the powers of the armed forces and the police, including the power to dispose off dead bodies without inquest. Every armed forces and police officer knew what that meant. Second, he wanted the senior officers to ensure that discipline was maintained in the armed forces: the events of the very recent past such as the rioting of soldiers in Jaffna and the arson and disorder in Vavuniya which followed the killing of the two air force personnel would have been fresh on the minds of both the President and the senior officers in the

¹¹⁵ This falls within the purview of our Research Question no.6 and will be analysed in due course.

¹¹⁶ *Weekend*, 12 June 1983, 'President Stresses Need for Discipline'.

¹¹⁷ *The Sunday Times*, 12 June 1983, 'President tells senior officers: Discipline a must for Armed Services', and *Weekend*, 12 June 1983, 'President Stresses Need for Discipline'.

audience. It is significant that many of the newspapers which reported this speech had 'discipline in the armed forces' prominently included in their headlines: 'President tells senior officers: Discipline a must for Armed Services' and 'President Stresses Need for Discipline'.¹¹⁸

Tamil Insurgents' Concerted Guerrilla Attacks on Government Property and Transport Infrastructure, 1 July 1983 onwards. On 1 July 1983 the Tamil insurgents began a concerted campaign of dispersed guerrilla style attacks in both the Northern and Eastern Provinces targeted at destroying government property – trains, buses, other types of vehicles, equipment, and buildings. The government found these 'Strategic Defensive' type guerrilla tactics very difficult to cope with as the police and army had never before experienced geographically dispersed guerrilla attacks. This had an immediate negative impact on the transport of goods and fuel supplies to and from Jaffna. On some days there were attacks in five of the eight districts which constituted the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

On 1 July in a well-planned operation insurgents set fire and destroyed ten of the Colombo-Jaffna-Colombo main passenger train at Kondavil railway station located a few miles north of Jaffna City.¹¹⁹ The government immediately stopped Colombo-Jaffna train services till it made an assessment of the security situation. The government warned Jaffna civilians that such attacks would compel the government to restrict train services and that this would affect the supply of fuel and goods to Jaffna and affect Jaffna's civilian population, which was precisely what happened.¹²⁰

The insurgents however continued with their attacks on government property. On 5 July a group of 20 insurgents arrived at Jaffna's main post-office at noon, told the employees that they would not be harmed and destroyed all the equipment. On 6 July a sub-post office in Tinnaveli, Jaffna was attacked and equipment destroyed. On the same day six insurgents

¹¹⁸ *The Sunday Times*, 12 June 1983, 'President tells senior officers: Discipline a must for Armed Services', and *Weekend*, 12 June 1983, 'President Stresses Need for Discipline'.

¹¹⁹ *Sun*, 12 July 1983, 'Ministry curtails services in the North: No buses in the night'. This train is named the *Yal Devi*. It was an icon of the railway system and known throughout the country. *Yal* was the ancient Tamil name for Jaffna and *devi* meant 'Goddess'. The damage to the train was estimated at Rupees 50 million, see *Ceylon Daily News*, 2 July 1983, 'Terrorists set fire to Yal Devi'.

¹²⁰ *Ceylon Daily News*, 11 July 1983, 'Terrorist attacks can hamper smooth flow of goods to Jaffna -Lalith'; *The Island*, 11 July 1983, 'Terrorism may disrupt flow of goods to Jaffna-Lalith'. From the perspective of the Tamil insurgents this was what they wanted as the civilians blamed the government for their inconveniences.

attacked and damaged equipment in the Nallur Assistant Government Agent's (AGA) Office located just outside Jaffna City area.¹²¹

Shortly after midnight on 6 July a 10 member groups of insurgents dressed in army type uniforms masqueraded as army personnel and gained entry to the premises of the large government-owned Kankesanturai Cement Factory. Then at gun point they stole detonators, drills and other equipment. While government newspapers said that only equipment such as drills had been stolen, a non-government newspaper said that three crates of explosives too had been stolen.¹²²

On 7 July the government had announced that train services to Jaffna would resume the next day. On 8 July three insurgents attacked the Cheddikulam railway station, Vavuniya District, robbed it of cash, seriously damaged equipment and set fire to a government bus parked in the station premises. This was a week after the burning of the *Yal Devi* train's carriages in Jaffna. Consequent to the Cheddikulam attack the government continued to stop all train services between Jaffna and Colombo.¹²³ This, of course, was precisely the strategic aim of the secessionist insurgents' attacks on the railway.¹²⁴ By mid-July there were acute fuel shortages in Jaffna filling stations which compelled them to ration supplies.¹²⁵ By the third week of July the government completely stopped sending any fuel north of Anuradhapura city. The Government Agent of Jaffna was instructed to obtain fuel from Anuradhapura using hired civilian-owned fuel trucks.¹²⁶ The insurgents did not attack these trucks as they were the private property of Jaffna Tamil businessmen.

¹²¹ *Sun*, 7 July 1983, 'Attack on another AGA's Office'.

¹²² The main government owned newspaper, *Ceylon Daily News*, 7 July 1983, 'Terrorists in army uniforms: explosives raid on KKS factory' said that only two detonators, a drill and 200 yards of fuse wire had been stolen. However, the non-government owned *The Island* said that the insurgents had removed 3 crates of explosives worth over Rupees 100,000/-, a drill and other equipment. See *The Island*, 7 July 1983, 'From KKS cement factory: Armed terrorists hijack explosive'. The present author's assessment is that the government deliberately reduced - when it could be plausibly done - the significance of any insurgent attack. This was a 'damage limitation' policy of the government because the series of dispersed guerrilla style attacks from 1 July onwards - as outlined in this section- was extremely worrisome to the government and the Sinhala majority. In this instance admitting that explosives had been stolen would have worsened this apprehension.

¹²³ *Sun*, 9 July 1983, 'Railway station attacked'; *Sun*, 12 July 1983, 'Ministry curtails services in the North: No buses in the night'.

¹²⁴ But the government had no option but to take this decision because it did not have the security personnel or technical resources to protect every kilometre of rail track, carriage and engine. But this decision negatively affected the bulk supply to Jaffna of fuels essential to the day-to-day lives of Jaffna's civilians - petrol, kerosene and diesel and this greatly inconvenienced Jaffna civilians.

¹²⁵ *Ceylon Daily News*, 16 July 1983, 'In Jaffna too'.

¹²⁶ *Sun*, 19 July 1983, 'No fuel supplies by govt. in the North'; *The Island*, 20 July 1983, 'Jaffna bowsers to collect fuel from A'pura'. The Government Agent of a District is the head of that District's civil administration.

On 9 July armed gangs attacked three sub-post offices in Jaffna District and destroyed telephone and other equipment.¹²⁷ On 11 July ten insurgents attacked the Jaffna AGA Office, asked the employees to leave and destroyed its equipment; another group set fire to a bus on Jaffna's airport road.¹²⁸ Further, on 11 July night insurgents set fire and destroyed a government owned bus in Batticaloa, a police jeep of the Trincomalee station parked at the Irrigation Department premises, an anti-Malaria campaign jeep parked at the Mannar Hospital, and a Fisheries Corporation vehicle in Kalmunai (Ampara District).¹²⁹

It is significant to note that the above six attacks occurred on the same day in five different Districts – Jaffna, Mannar, Batticaloa, Trincomalee, and Ampara – i.e. three attacks in the Northern Province (Jaffna & Mannar Districts) and three in the Eastern Province (Trincomalee, Batticaloa & Ampara Districts). This revealed that the insurgents had active cells in all these Districts and *with these attacks they deliberately advertised this fact*. The insurgents would have known that both the police and army would have reported these attacks in their 'situation-reports (i.e. 'SITREPS) to Colombo and that the President and the MoD would be made aware of these attacks. The purpose of advertising can be deduced: the attacks revealed to the government, Tamil civilians and Sinhala civilians that the insurgents had cells in the territory from which they wanted to create the separate state of Tamil Eelam; the attacks revealed that they could carry out attacks in five Districts on a single day. These attacks were a part of a protracted campaign to weaken the government's resolve against secession. The message to the Tamil civilians was to encourage recruitment and/or support and to warn them of the dire consequences of cooperating with the government. It is the assessment of the present author that all these attacks from 1 July onwards were manifestations of the Tamil insurgents' increasing the tempo of the 'strategic defensive' phase of their insurrection.

As government owned buses continued to be burnt and destroyed¹³⁰ the Minister of Transport was compelled to withdraw 55 brand new buses which had very recently been allocated to the Northern Province by the government. The government decided to terminate all bus services in the Northern Province at 4pm each day.¹³¹ By 18 July the government also decided that no

¹²⁷ *The Island*, 11 July 1983, '3 SPOs attacked in north'.

¹²⁸ *Sun*, 12 July 1983, 'Two more attacks'; *The Island*, 13 July 1983, 'Army quit Batticaloa grounds on politico's orders'.

¹²⁹ *Sun*, 12 July 1983, 'Two more attacks'; *Ceylon Daily News*, 12 July 1983, 'Who opened fire?'; *Sun*, 13 July 1983, 'Curtailed bus services in other vulnerable areas: Ministry to decide soon'.

¹³⁰ By mid-July 1983 eleven buses had been burnt and destroyed.

¹³¹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 12 July 1983, 'New buses withdrawn: No buses to ply in Jaffna after 4 pm'. The Minister said that he had received numerous letters, telegrams and messages from Tamil civilians requesting that the bus service be resumed. He stated that he was discussing the situation with the TULF's Leader and would try to do the best for the people. This vignette illustrates the dilemma faced by any government faced by an insurgency:

trains would operate to Jaffna until the security of the Engines¹³², carriages and their crews could be ensured.¹³³ These two measures created huge inconveniences to the Tamil civilians living in the affected areas.

While the insurgents' campaign of destruction of government property was underway the armed forces and police were not just standing by. They arrested suspects and harsh methods were probably used, as has occurred in most insurgency/counterinsurgency situations. Amnesty International accused the government of human rights violations, which were denied by the government.¹³⁴ On infrequent occasions armed fights also occurred between the army and insurgents. The insurgents did not initiate these skirmishes because their tactics from 1 July onwards was the destruction of government property. The fights occurred inadvertently due to information given by from informants. For example, on 15 July the army received information that some insurgents were in a coconut estate in Meesalai, about 15 km east of Jaffna City. Troops rushed to the location and a gun battle occurred between the group of insurgents and troops.¹³⁵

Concurrent with the above direct armed actions by the insurgents, 'front organisations' of the insurgents and those sympathetic to the insurgents' cause too were busy organising marches, demonstrations and boycotts.¹³⁶ In early-July organisations in Trincomalee agitated students to boycott their schools. Posters appeared on walls near schools in Trincomalee calling the students to boycott school.¹³⁷ By mid-July the boycott of Trincomalee schools had spread outside the city into Tamil villages outside the city. The police reported that attendance was

the government was damned if it did and damned if it didn't. It was the insurgents who destroyed the buses and trains which then compelled the government to curtail services. This policy in turn impacted negatively on Tamil civilians, who, in most instances directed their ire towards the government. The stoppage of the bus and train service was a very serious inconvenience to ordinary Tamil civilians as only a relatively small minority owned private cars. The vast majority used bicycles for short distances and public transport for all other travel.

¹³² Each train engine was worth many dozens of millions of Rupees depending on its manufacturer and age. Each carriage cost millions of Rupees (exact values cannot be given as they were of diverse origins and ages). The Railways Department (100% owned by the government) could not afford to lose any Engines of which there was already a shortage. So, when the government had to choose between protecting railway engines versus inconveniencing tens of thousands of Tamil civilians, it chose the former. This is yet another example of the dilemmas faced by a (relatively poor) economically underdeveloped country like Sri Lanka faced with a protracted insurrection.

¹³³ *Ceylon Daily News*, 19 July 1983, 'No trains to Jaffna till safety is ensured'.

¹³⁴ *The Times (London)*, 7 July 1983, 'Sri Lanka denies torture charges'. This pattern of accusations by international human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and subsequent government denials were to become a frequent pattern in the years and decades ahead. In its retort the government said that from 1977 the insurgents had killed 37 police and armed forces personnel, 13 police informants, 14 civilians and 9 politicians. Of course from a coherent counterinsurgency perspective this is neither here nor there. Incidentally these statistics give an indication of the still relatively low military intensity of the insurrection.

¹³⁵ *The Island*, 16 July 1983, '2 terrorists shot dead in C'kachcheri: in gun battle with Army personnel'. C'kachcheri means Chavakachcheri. It's a well known town in Jaffna peninsula and Meesalai is located a little distance north of it.

¹³⁶ *The Island*, 6 April 1983, 'Eelam marchers teargassed: Hartal in Jaffna today'. The word *Hartal* means a general stoppage of all work, trade and originates from the independence movement in India.

¹³⁷ *Ceylon Daily News*, 7 July 1983, 'Mischievous makers obstruct schools'.

close to zero in Tamil schools.¹³⁸ By mid-July the school boycott had spread to Jaffna.¹³⁹ These activities are reminiscent of the *Satyagraha* civil disobedience campaign of 1961 and added to the general political ferment in the northern and eastern provinces.

Government faced by Typical Dilemmas of Dispersed Guerrilla Warfare. By mid-July 1983 the insurgents' dispersed guerrilla style attacks on government infrastructure and transport system were having a serious impact on the government's ability to administer and maintain Law & Order in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The government's very credibility in the eyes of the Sinhala electorate was at stake.

The *Sun's* defence correspondent wrote an article in mid-July which gave a rare glimpse into the dilemmas then facing the government.¹⁴⁰ The National Security Council (NSC) was faced with several dilemmas: first, whether to continue with the existing limitations on bus and train services. The serious inconvenience caused to the Tamil civilians was recognised and also that the blame for the inconvenience was being placed on the government. A second issue was whether to provide blanket security for all possible insurgent targets. This would include guards for all forms of rail and road transport, guards for all major installations (such as electricity transmitting stations, railway stations, government offices, government vehicle parks, etc). The cost of implementing such a programme would be very high and would also require the need to requisition vehicles for use by the armed forces from government-owned Corporation and Departments for the armed forces' use. This measure would in-turn cripple the civil administration of these and Districts. What this clearly reveals is that by mid-July 1983 the government was caught in the grip of one of the oldest dilemmas of fighting guerrillas, namely whether to (try and) guard every possible guerrilla target – a task for which the government did not have the resources (personnel, vehicles, funds). Or to guard only the essential locations and restrict public services to civilians become unpopular with them.

In mid-July President Jayewardene attempted to form a broad political coalition with the Opposition parties to assist the government to defeat the insurgency. He invited all the political parties in parliament for 'All-Party Talks' and the *only subject of the Conference was*

¹³⁸ *Ceylon Daily News*, 16 July 1983, 'Boycott of schools in Trincomalee'.

¹³⁹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 16 July 1983, 'In Jaffna too'.

¹⁴⁰ *Sun*, 13 July 1983, 'New military strategy in North and East: Security council will decide today'. As noted elsewhere the *Sun's* defence correspondent Ranil Weerasinghe's articles revealed that he had very good sources and contacts within the highest levels of government including the Cabinet, police and the military. The details and nuances are very insightful.

to decide on how to eliminate terrorism.¹⁴¹ But the pogrom-riots occurred and the Conference never took place.

President Jayewardene divulges harsh new policies which would impact severely on the Tamil People, 11 July 1983. With the escalation of guerrilla attacks the Sinhala electorate, Opposition parties, Buddhist monks and many community organisations were critical of the government because of the break down of law & order in the North and East. It was in this context that President Jayewardene publicly revealed that he was going to adopt harsh new strategies against the insurgents *and when he openly said that he would not be able to give consideration to the security and lives of Tamil people.*

This new policy began with a *strategically* significant media campaign on 11 July when the President gave an interview, in Colombo, to London's *Daily Telegraph*. In this interview he outlined how he assessed the situation and also the new policies that he planned to adopt to deal with the Tamil insurrection.¹⁴² He described the guerrilla style attacks on trains, buses and government property which had taken place during the previous 5 weeks and the consequent near standstill of government administration in the Northern Province. He described his frustration and disappointment with the TULF's parliamentarians. Then the President described the broad contours of his new strategy. This interview is extremely valuable as it gives a great deal of insight into President Jayewardene's strategic conceptualisations of mid-July 1983.¹⁴³ It is a candid and very revealing contemporaneous account and took place *before* the pogrom-riots later that month, and the devoid of the misinformation and attempts at obfuscation which came after the riots. There were veiled and overt threats in the President's interview which most discerning analysts – Tamils, Sinhalese, Indian government – took note of. Relevant sections of this interview are quoted below as they give a very rare and unique glimpse of the strategic decisions which the President and Cabinet had arrived at by early-July 1983.

Referring to the role played by [...] the Tamil United Liberation Front which is seeking separation of the Northern Provinces (sic), President Jayewardene said that his ruling party *once*

¹⁴¹ *Sun*, 13 July 1983, 'New move to settle northern crisis gains wide approval: All-Party Talks on July 20'. *The Times (London)*, 16 July 1983, 'Jayewardene seeks opposition help on rebels'. While some opposition parties released statements cautiously welcoming the idea they said they had to discuss amongst themselves and did not respond immediately to the President. In the event the meeting scheduled for 20 July 1983 did not take place and with the riots which began a few days later the whole initiative fizzled out.

¹⁴² *The Sunday Observer*, 17 July 1983, 'Stricter measures to combat terrorism', which was a reprint of the full text of the interview with the *Daily Telegraph*. He did not use the phrase 'Tamil insurrection' but 'Tamil terrorism'.

¹⁴³ These interviews and newspaper accounts are very valuable for researchers such as the present author as they give contemporaneous accounts without the *post facto* justifications and selective exclusions of later publications, and, they also give a glimpse of the strategy formulations which had occurred within the Cabinet which of course were- and are – inaccessible to those outside the innermost circles of the government.

held dialogues with them. "They used to speak on *behalf of the terrorists*. But now *all that is going to cease*". [...] as long as the Tamil Front remained in Parliament its members would be consulted on political issues. "*But on terrorist issues we are going to deal with ourselves without any quarter being given*". [...]

[The TULF leaders] are *in fear of their lives*. They say one thing to me and another to somebody else. I am sorry for them". He said that the terrorist bands now operating in the North were breakaway groups from the [Tamil United Liberation] Front. [...] He confirmed that legislation was being drafted whereby all new candidates for Parliamentary seats would be *required to pledge* in an affidavit attached to their nomination papers that they would *not advocate separatism*. The President disclosed that in the next two or three weeks he would be calling a round table conference of party leaders, *excluding* the Liberation Front, but including the former Prime Minister Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike [...] The primary object of this meeting would be to *discuss how to eliminate terrorism*. "*Terrorism is killing people, destroying the whole economy, destroying the State*" said the President [emphases added].¹⁴⁴

Several important policy changes stand out in the above. First, President Jayewardene referred to the negotiations with the TULF in the *past* tense. This was not an accident or a typographical error but an expression of government policy. It was reiterated a few days later by Prime Minister R. Premadasa and a government spokesman went on to give even greater details. The spokesman said that the government had decided that it would not dialogue with any party which in any way supported secession and that the government "would not pursue a path of finding a political solution with this party [i.e. the TULF], as long as it upheld the cry for a separate state. [...] the government was adamant that it would not give a hearing to the militant views expressed by the terrorists even by proxy".¹⁴⁵

This was a major policy change as it was with the TULF that the government had been negotiating various formulations of political power devolution from the 1977 onwards.¹⁴⁶ The only tangible results were the DDCs but, as discussed above, this too was finally opposed by both the Tamil insurgents and the TULF and did not bear fruit. It is the assessment of the present author that President Jayewardene had come to the conclusions that (a) discussions with the TULF were ineffective in bringing a negotiated settlement to the Tamil insurrection as the TULF could not control the Tamil insurgents, and (b) the TULF itself was under threat by the Tamil insurgents.¹⁴⁷

The second policy was that the Tamil insurgents were to be 'dealt with' by the government "*without any quarter being given*", i.e. very harshly by the military and the police. By

¹⁴⁴ *The Sunday Observer*, 17 July 1983, 'Stricter measures to combat terrorism', which was a reprint of the full text of the interview with the *Daily Telegraph* on 11 July 1983.

¹⁴⁵ *Sun*, 13 July 1983, 'New move to settle northern crisis gains wide approval: All-Party talks on July 20'. The Prime Minister said that all parties which supported the stamping out of terrorism would be invited.

¹⁴⁶ As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, these were the discussions where Professor A.J. Wilson and Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam gave their advise to the President.

¹⁴⁷ Both these conclusions proved to be accurate as proved by the events of the subsequent years: the Tamil insurgents rapidly surpassed the TULF in the subsequent years and many of the TULF's leaders and parliamentarians including the Leader of the Opposition Mr. Amirthalingam were assassinated by Tamil insurgents – primarily the LTTE – in the subsequent years.

implication this meant that in *his* assessment his government *had* up to that time utilised the armed forces and the police with restraint.

The third policy was that legislation would be enacted which required a signed affidavit eschewing secession from every parliamentary candidate. If this was not given then any parliamentarian would automatically be guilty of an offence if he or she advocated or supported secession and would face expulsion from parliament and prosecution. This was a measure which had been advocated by anti-secessionist Sinhala politicians – both in the government and in the Opposition – for a long time but had not been implemented by the President in deference to the TULF as he realised that such a measure would create difficulties with their constituents, and, the insurgents. (A week later the President had relented on this policy and postponed enacting it saying that it would await the outcome of the ‘all-party talks on countering terrorism’ (see below) before enacting this legislation.¹⁴⁸)

In the final section of the *Daily Telegraph* interview President Jayewardene made a series of policy statements which indicated a very high degree of harshness towards the Jaffna Tamil people and also on the severe measures he planned to take. It is instructive to quote him in full:

[President Jayewardene] made it clear that whether the other party leaders chose to attend the [anti-terrorist] conference or not, or whether they agreed with his proposals or not, he would still go ahead with the new anti-terrorist measures. Speaking on the effectiveness of government measures he said: “I have tried to be effective for some time, but cannot. ***I am not worried about the opinion of the Jaffna people now.***” He said that ***at one time*** his party had ***been anxious to apply policies*** in the Northern regions in such a way as ***to attract popular support*** there.

“***Now we can’t think of them. Not about their lives or of their opinions of us.*** Nothing will happen in our favour ***until the terrorists are wiped out.*** Just that. You cannot cure an appendix patient until you remove the appendix [emphases added].¹⁴⁹”

In the above quote the aspects that stand out are, first, that the President would apply anti-terrorist measures unilaterally regardless of whether any other political party – such as the SLFP – supported him or not.

Second, that he and his party had earlier been keen to attract the support of the Jaffna Tamil people and had even been anxious to tailor government policies as a means to obtain that support. The phrasing of these sentences are in complete consonance with British and US counterinsurgency doctrine and could have been a result of the reading and studying of

¹⁴⁸ *The Island*, 17 July 1983, ‘President awaits outcome of all-party talks: Government shelves constitutional sixth amendment’.

¹⁴⁹ *The Sunday Observer*, 17 July 1983, ‘Stricter measures to combat terrorism’, which was a reprint of the full text of the interview with the *Daily Telegraph* on 11 July 1983.

insurgencies that the President had been doing over the previous months and maybe years (as he had publicly revealed in May).¹⁵⁰ Although 'counterinsurgency' has never been mentioned in any publicly available government document or statement up to that time, nor mentioned in subsequent years, what the President said was tantamount to saying that his government tried to implement a counterinsurgency strategy during the previous years.

Third, the President said that he had abandoned this counterinsurgency approach. He said that his government was (a) not interested in the opinion of the Jaffna people; (b) could not (or would not) take into consideration their opinion of the government; (c) could not (or would not) "think" about the *lives* of the Jaffna people.

The most menacing and ominous statement was (c), above, where the President implied that he would not consider the *lives* of the Tamil people when implementing his future anti-terrorist policies. President Jayewardene used the word "think" but did not explain what he meant by this word. It can be argued that it could have had any number of meanings including 'government cannot take into consideration'; 'government cannot consider'; 'government cannot be concerned about the security of'; 'government cannot be worried about the security of', etc. Whatever the President meant, when we consider this word's use in the context of entire interview then the implications were ominous. *When the last two paragraphs of the above quote are closely examined there can be little doubt that the President had come to the conclusion that he had to take some actions which would have very serious impact on Jaffna Tamil civilians.* It is the assessment of the present author that its acceptable for a country's President, when faced with an insurrection, to tell his people that his anti-terrorist policies entailed harsh measures such as arrests, detentions, curfews and also that sometimes 'collateral damage' could inadvertently occur. However, in a counterinsurgency campaign it is impolitic, and a violation of counterinsurgency doctrine and strategy for the Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Police to say that his government was not interested in the lives of the civilian population base of the insurrection.

Fourth, the President said that he had come to the conclusion that nothing would happen to benefit the government until the Tamil insurgents had been "wiped out". Therefore, of course, the government's strategy would be to catch and destroy the insurgents. Catching and destroying insurgents in an insurrection where (a) the insurgents have a significant amount of popular support and (b) are implementing mobile guerrilla warfare tactics similar to Maoist protracted warfare (as the Tamil insurgents were doing at that time) was no easy task.

¹⁵⁰ *Sun*, 14 May 1983, 'President vows to eliminate terrorism: Martial Law if necessary'.

Whether President Jayewardene, the Cabinet and the armed forces and police fully realised this at that time is not known – it needs to be recalled that this was the *first* time that any Sri Lankan government had faced such protracted warfare tactics. In any event the President stated that this was going to be the policy of his government. From this interview it can be deduced that he realised that this policy would result in injury and death to some number of Tamil civilians, specially in Jaffna, but he had concluded that this was inevitable.

Immediate Diplomatic Protest by Indian Government. Shortly after President Jayewardene's statements about his government's harsh new policies, the Indian central government made a formal diplomatic protest expressing its concern regarding the escalating violence in North Sri Lanka, to which the Sri Lanka government reacted with annoyance.¹⁵¹ This was a premonition of what was to come in the aftermath of the pogrom-riots. It is highly probable that the President had not made a comprehensive assessment of the impact of his new policies on India, or, decided to take the risk as he had concluded he had no option. This was a serious mistake for which President Jayewardene and Sri Lanka would have to pay dearly, in the years ahead.¹⁵² The total range of policies – covert, overt, military, political, diplomatic – that the Indian government *could* adopt vis-à-vis Sri Lanka were formidable. Of course he knew of the agitation in Tamil Nadu, the pressure by Tamil Nadu on the central government in Delhi, the apprehensions that Sri Lankan politicians had had regarding India from Independence (1948) onwards. But, given the insurrection he faced, President Jayewardene decision was to adopt this hard line.¹⁵³ This seemingly small diplomatic spat was a foreshadow of very serious inter-State conflicts in the next 4 years future and is evidence of rising tensions between the Indian central government and Sri Lanka *before* the July pogrom-riots which occurred a few days later. Subsequent to the pogrom-riots the relations between the two countries deteriorated drastically.

3.7: The Pogrom-riots of July 1983

It was in the context of the growing Tamil insurgent attacks and mini riots by Sinhala civilians from April 1983 onwards that the pogrom-riots of July 1983 occurred. This pogrom-riot is widely recognised as a turning point in postcolonial Sri Lanka history. Its impact had consequences in the political, military, and international relations spheres which can be witnessed to the present day. On the night of 23 July 1983 LTTE insurgents ambushed a

¹⁵¹ *The Times (London)*, 22 July 1983, 'Colombo Anger'.

¹⁵² Questions like this cut to the core of the highest levels of government.

¹⁵³ That is the prerogative of any Executive President and any government. However, they should also be prepared for the consequences that may follow.

mobile patrol of the 1st Battalion, Sri Lanka Light Infantry on a street in Jaffna.¹⁵⁴ One 2nd Lieutenant and twelve other ranks were killed in the explosion and the ensuing firelight while two other soldiers escaped with injuries.¹⁵⁵ All the soldiers killed were Sinhalese. Up till that day this was the single largest number of fatal (or non-fatal) casualties any branch of the armed forces or police had suffered in any single incident from 1948 onwards.

A few hours after the incident, on the morning of 24 July, large numbers of other ranks from the same Battalion broke-out of their camps in Jaffna and rampaged through some areas of Jaffna and indiscriminately killed Tamil civilians.¹⁵⁶ The accurate number of Tamils killed in Jaffna was 51.¹⁵⁷ On the same day navy personnel broke-out of their Trincomalee base and rioted in Trincomalee and killed at least one person, injured ten, and set fire to more than 125 houses and shops.¹⁵⁸ The Navy Commander himself who was the 'Coordinating Officer' of Trincomalee could not stop this from taking place. The TULF's leader said that at least 40 Tamils had been killed by the army in Jaffna, and that in Trincomalee Sinhalese rioters and army and navy personnel had burnt nearly 200 shops.

Army personnel actively encouraged arson and looting of business establishments and homes in Colombo and took absolutely no action to apprehend or prevent the criminal elements involved in these activities. In many instances army personnel participated in the looting of shops. [...] We strongly believe that the violence could have been contained if the government had taken prompt action to deal with the rioters and looters.¹⁵⁹

The funerals of the 13 soldiers were scheduled to be held at the main Kanatte Cemetery in Colombo during the early afternoon of 24 July. There was considerable delay in the arrival of the coffins and when they finally arrived several hours late at the cemetery dusk was already

¹⁵⁴ The insurgents first exploded an IED (Improvised Explosive Device) and then there was a shoot-out between the soldiers and the insurgents. The 1st Battalion, Sri Lanka Light Infantry (1 SLLI) was the senior-most infantry battalion in the Sri Lanka army. Some of the Battalion's publications trace its origins back to the colonial 'Ceylon Light Infantry' raised by the British in 1881. The 1st Battalion was raised in 1949 with the inception of the Ceylon Army and had an established *esprit de corps*. 1 SLLI saw combat during the 1971 insurrection and had experienced a large number of 'aid to the civil power' deployments. But of course by 1983 the Other Ranks and Officers of 1971 had long since retired. In terms of combat experience and the ability to absorb casualties the 1 SLLI Other Ranks and officers were as inexperienced as the rest of the armed forces and police.

¹⁵⁵ *The Times (London)*, 25 July 1983, 'Ambush kills 13 soldiers in Sri Lanka'.

¹⁵⁶ *The Times (London)*, 8 August 1983, 'Sri Lanka troops went on rampage'. "There are reports of Sri Lankan troops killing non-combatant Tamils in Jaffna on 24 July, the day after the previous night's ambush. The official spokesman for the government admitted that 20 civilians were killed by soldiers, but reports from Jaffna suggest that the number killed was higher."

¹⁵⁷ Report of the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence (1981-1984), Sessional Paper No.III-2003, published in September 2002: 34.

¹⁵⁸ US State Department 1984: 1419, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1983*.

¹⁵⁹ *The Times (London)* 5 August 1983, 'Tamils shot by soldiers, says leader'.

falling. By this time a restive and angry crowd had gathered at the cemetery. Some groups of people in the crowd deliberately fanned anti-Tamil hostility.¹⁶⁰

Inflammatory speeches were made and the crowd had become more and more agitated. As dusk drew nearer the families of the dead soldiers were informed by the authorities that the coffins would be handed over to the next-of-kin at army headquarters. The families of the dead soldiers then departed from the cemetery. Then the large and boisterous crowd dispersed in a disorderly manner.¹⁶¹ Groups amongst the crowd then began to attack Tamil stores and residences in the vicinity of the Cemetery. By about 8 pm on 24 July rioting and arson was underway in the commercial and residential areas of Borella, a quarter mile from the cemetery.¹⁶² President Jayewardene's private residence where he lived was located less than half a mile from this cemetery. Gradually rioting and arson spread to other parts of the inner city during the night. By the morning of 25 July widespread mob attacks were taking place in diverse areas of Colombo city, with houses, shops and vehicles being set on fire.¹⁶³ British tourists staying in Colombo were eye witnesses to assaults, looting and arson.¹⁶⁴ Others staying in Negombo, a town north of Colombo close to the international airport were eyewitnesses to violence and property destruction.¹⁶⁵

On 25 and 27 July a total of 53 Tamil political prisoners in Colombo's main jail were killed by Sinhala prisoners. Although the government did not hold a comprehensive inquiry at that time or later, over the subsequent years researchers have found a great deal of information to show the collusion of government authorities at the highest levels, some prison officials and army officers in allowing these killings to take place.¹⁶⁶ Kandy City in the central hills was greatly affected

¹⁶⁰ The two best empirical sources for the July 1983 riots are Hoole, 2001, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power-Myths, Decadence & Murder* and Government of Sri Lanka, 2002 *Report of the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence (1981-1984)*. Of these two texts, Hoole has exhaustive empirical information published nowhere else. He has gathered and combined information of eye witness accounts of retired and serving police officers, army officers, civil service officers, Christian clergy, academics, journalists, and numerous other individuals. He devotes four chapters to the July 1983 riots: Chapter.9: 'Sri Lanka's Black July', (pp.101-123); Chapter.10: 'The Welikade Prison Massacres' (pp.124-143); Chapter.11: 'July 1983: Planned by the State or Spontaneous Mob Action?' (pp.124-170); Chapter.12: 'Some Missing Threads', (pp.171-180). This is a total of 80 pages. The present Thesis can utilise only a small percentage of this material. Chapters 9 and 11 include a great deal of empirical information and analyses of whether the government had a role in the riots and is utilised in this Thesis. This specific issue has to be, and is, examined in this Thesis due to its great relevance to the Thesis. The Presidential Truth Commission Report also has a great deal of valuable testimony from eyewitnesses and Tamils who experienced violence.

¹⁶¹ See Hoole, 2001:105-108 for a detailed account.

¹⁶² *Report of the Presidential Truth Commission*, 2002:35.

¹⁶³ *The Times (London)*, 26 July 1983, 'Mobs burn shops in Sri Lanka'.

¹⁶⁴ *The Times (London)*, 28 July 1983, 'Britons tell of violence in Colombo'.

¹⁶⁵ *The Times (London)*, 2 August 1983, 'Britons tell of holiday terror in Sri Lanka'. Negombo is north of Colombo, close to the country's international airport.

¹⁶⁶ See Hoole, 2001: 124-143, and *Report of the Presidential Truth Commission*, 2002: 48-62 for comprehensive accounts of the incidents and the analysis of responsibility. On 27 July *The Times (London)* reported that up to 37 Tamil prisoners had been killed, but that was a preliminary report (the comprehensive account could be researched only later) *The Times (London)*, 27 July 1983, '37 die in Colombo prison attack'.

by anti-Tamil violence. In the town there were rows of burnt shops and 6,000 Tamils were in refugee camps.¹⁶⁷ Rioting and killings continued in many parts of the country, including Colombo, Kalutara, Matale, Deniyaya, Chilaw and Nuwara Eliya throughout these days including the 30 and 31 July which was a weekend. This was in spite of a curfew imposed by the government which lasted nearly 60 hours.¹⁶⁸ The destruction of many food wholesale establishments which were Tamil owned and the imposition of long periods of curfew impacted on the country's food distribution system.¹⁶⁹

The pogrom-riots resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Tamils. Given the scale of the rioting, a reasonable estimation would be between 800 to 1400 Tamils killed.¹⁷⁰ Between 100,000-150,000 Tamils were made homeless, and of them 80,000 were from around Colombo.¹⁷¹

Modus Operandi of the rioters. The gangs which came at the inception of the riots were well organised and went about their activities in an organised manner. Hoole gives a great deal of circumstantial and eye witness evidence of the role played by the UNP's Trade Union organisation the *Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya* (JSS) in the organised rioting and destruction of property.¹⁷² These gangs carried electoral lists which enabled them to identify Tamil residences and apartments. There are many eye witness accounts from different parts of Colombo of gang leaders carrying electoral lists. For example, one of the earliest attacks began at 5 a.m. on 25 July, when organised gangs entered an apartment block in Colombo and using lists identified the

¹⁶⁷ *The Times* (London), 30 July 1983, 'Hill town scarred by orgy of violence'.

¹⁶⁸ *The Times* (London), 1 August 1983, 'Killings continue despite curfew in Sri Lanka'.

¹⁶⁹ *The Times* (London), 2 August 2013, 'Shortage of food and jobs as Sri Lanka hope lies in ruins'.

¹⁷⁰ The Government chose not to hold a public inquiry after the riots and hence it is impossible to give accurate figures of casualties and material loss. The official casualty figure was 387 deaths, mostly Tamils. This figure included 53 Tamils killed in two prison riots in Colombo, and also 34 individuals, most of whom were Sinhalese, killed by the armed forces and police in the course of restoring order (see US Department of State 1984:1418, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1983*). According to Dissanayaka, an official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time, the riots resulted in 471 deaths. According to him the highest number, 227, occurred in Colombo (see Dissanayaka 1983:93, *The Agony of Sri Lanka: An in-depth account of the racial riots of 1983*). According to James Manor, on the basis of eyewitnesses and press reports the Government's estimate of just under 400 deaths was an underestimation, the World Council of Churches' estimate was 1000 and the claim of 2000 by some Tamils was an overestimation (see Manor, James, 1984:30, fn.33, *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis*).

¹⁷¹ About 70,000 of these internally displaced persons (IDPs) later moved to the Tamil populated regions of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. (see Zolberg, Suhrke and Aguayo 1989:146, *Escape from Violence: Conflict and the Refugee Crisis in the Developing World*). In early reports government officials were quoted as saying that 20,000 Tamil owned businesses had been attacked (see *The Times* (London), 28 July 1983, 'Colombo rioting wrecks 20,000 Tamil businesses'). Later on the government revised these figures – the bases on which these revisions were done and their accuracy are not transparent. The government informed the US State Department that 116 Tamil or Indian-Tamil owned large businesses had been damaged out of which 38 were completely destroyed; that at least 3,100 Tamil retail shops were damaged or destroyed and thousands of Tamil-owned or occupied homes were burnt or looted; and that around 4,000 vehicles were burned or destroyed (see US Department of State 1984:1418-19, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1983*). Dissanayaka wrote that 8,077 acts of arson, 3,835 cases of looting, and 3,769 cases of mischief had occurred throughout the island. (see Dissanayaka 1983:93, *The Agony of Sri Lanka: An in-depth account of the racial riots of 1983*). Unlike after the 1977 riots the government did not hold a public inquiry, most likely because the government did not wish evidence to be recorded for posterity.

¹⁷² See Hoole, 2001: 100, 102, 110, 152-161, and 179, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

specific apartments in which Tamils lived. They then destroyed household items and threw refrigerators and such like over balconies. They did not physically injure the Tamil residents if they did not resist.¹⁷³ Such electoral lists are government administrative documents kept in formal administrative offices of the government and also in the offices of registered political parties. The general public have the right to come to such administrative offices and check whether their names are on the lists. But the general public does not have the right to possess copies of such electoral lists. Many eye witnesses who gave evidence to the Presidential Commission of 2002 mentioned seeing organised gangs with lists which identified Tamil homes.¹⁷⁴ As anthropologist Tambiah notes:

More than any other previous ethnic riot, the eruption showed *organized mob violence at work*. Gangs armed with weapons such as metal rods and knives and carrying gasoline (frequently confiscated from passing motor vehicles) and, *most intriguing of all, because it indicates prior intent and planning, carrying voter lists and addresses of Tamil owners and occupants of houses, shops, and other property*, descended in waves to drive out Tamils, loot and burn their property, and sometimes kill them in bestial fashion [emphases added].¹⁷⁵

There is evidence that there was a separate list of the residences of well-known Tamil journalists. This was not a part of the electoral lists but a separate one. Gangs were specifically tasked to destroy these properties. A Tamil journalist's Sinhalese neighbour who tried to protect his friend's house was shown such a list by one of the gang leaders.

[...] This was the case of a special list of prominent Tamils [...] the gang attacking these houses was one delegated to work on this list. It was not part of the general sweep based on electoral lists. *This special list had undoubtedly been prepared well in advance* [emphasis added].¹⁷⁶

The fact that many of the organised riot gangs had electoral lists and other lists in their possession is compelling evidence of prior planning and preparation of the pogrom-cum-riot. A very respectable former senior Civil Servant and later the pioneer of a research organisation gave evidence at the Presidential Commission and stated that:

He saw a gang of people who came in a lorry. They were well organized and proceeded down the lane. "There was no question in my mind that *it was orchestrated*, later when we made some inquiries, it proved to be true. Thereafter they looted [...] the conduct of the political parties, *particularly of the ruling party*, created the environment for the perpetrators to act with impunity [emphases added]."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Hoole, 2001: 152, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

¹⁷⁴ Government of Sri Lanka, 2002: 39 & 43, *Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence 1981-1984*.

¹⁷⁵ Tambiah, S.J., 1986: 21, *Sri Lanka - Ethnic Fratricide and the Dismantling of Democracy*.

¹⁷⁶ Hoole, 2001: 152, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

¹⁷⁷ Government of Sri Lanka, 2002: 39, *Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence 1981-1984*. The former senior Civil Servant is Mr Godfrey Gunatilleke, who served in senior positions in several Ministries. He took early retirement and in 1972 started the MARGA Institute (Sri Lanka Centre for Development Studies). He is the author of several articles and book chapters. He was conferred with D.Litt by the University of Colombo in 1996.

Hoole records a consistent pattern of how the gangs travelled and moved from area to area in Colombo. Thugs from one area were sent to other areas of Colombo, and vice-versa so that they could not be recognised by the victims or their Sinhala neighbours:

The general pattern of the violence is clear. *Gangs were often, but not always, bussed to different areas where they would not be identified.* [...]The local representatives [i.e. Members of Parliament] kept away and remained inaccessible or arranged for distress messages to be taken from important Tamils in their circle. *It was not the sort of violence, given its uniform modus operandi, that mushroomed in a fraction of a day* [emphases added].¹⁷⁸

Most of the gangs of rioters travelled in vehicles commandeered from well-known government owned corporations and departments.¹⁷⁹ These organised 'vanguard' gangs did not loot but burnt and destroyed Tamil residences and property. Tamils living in houses rented from Sinhalese had their furniture and other possessions pulled out of the house and burnt, leaving the house intact.¹⁸⁰ Tamil commercial and trading establishments were already well known, and were systematically attacked. Government supporters and members of the UNP's powerful trade union the JSS (*Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya*, National Workers Union) were deeply involved in the organised rioting.¹⁸¹ The use of Government vehicles was widespread. The possibility that such large numbers of vehicles could have been commandeered by spontaneous neighbourhood Sinhala civilian gangs was not credible as such vehicles are routinely garaged under the authority of responsible personnel and their drivers. Ordinary gangs of civilians would not have had the audacity to seize government vehicles in such numbers nor would they have had heavy vehicle drivers needed to drive these large trucks and buses. Most of these Government vehicles were owned by Corporations which came under the purview of the Ministry of Industries Cyril Matthew, the most overtly harsh anti-Tamil Cabinet Minister: "Cyril Matthew is well-known as a very hard man and is the most outspoken and virulent racist against the Tamils".¹⁸² Matthew was also the Chairman of the JSS. The government never explained how these vehicles came to be used by the rioters in such large numbers. Spontaneous mobs did emerge later and took part in the rioting, but they moved around on foot.

3.8: Were sections of the government involved in starting the riots?

When the rioting began around 8pm on 24 July, a large number of police and army officers and other ranks were present in and around the immediate locality. Information of the rioting

¹⁷⁸ Hoole, 2001: 158, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

¹⁷⁹ Trucks of the (STC) State Timber Corporation, CWE (Cooperative Wholesale Establishment), CEB (Ceylon Electricity Board) and busses of the CTB (Ceylon Transport Board).

¹⁸⁰ Hoole, 2001: 152, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

¹⁸¹ Hoole, 2001: 152-161 *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder* gives detailed information regarding the growth and activities of the JSS before and during the riots. Hoole pp.152-161 is the most comprehensive published account of the activities of the UNP's Trade Union arm during the pogrom-riots.

¹⁸² Hoole, 2001: 154, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

would have been conveyed to the Minister of Defence, i.e. President Jayewardene, in a very short time. Furthermore, his residence was located less than 1 mile from the cemetery.

The country was under Emergency Rule at this time and the MoD should (and could have) taken very rapid and determined action to stop the disorder. From early-June onwards the government had adopted a range of 'law & order' maintenance Internal Security policies in the face of then prevalent disorder and mini-riots. These measures were supposed to be in place. In some areas, eg Trincomalee and even in some parts of Colombo, they had already been implemented. These Internal Security measures should have been rapidly and efficiently implemented by the government. However, the government was extremely remiss in its actions. Let us consider the following questions which arise.

First, why was a curfew encompassing the entirety of Colombo was not declared on 24 July night?¹⁸³ This question has been asked by many analysts including Hoole and was also asked during the Presidential Truth Commission of 2002¹⁸⁴. During the month prior to the pogrom-riot many curfews had been effectively enforced in diverse parts of the country including Trincomalee, Kurunegala and Panadura. In Trincomalee, a daily night curfews were in operation for many weeks. On one occasion in Trincomalee a curfew was imposed for an uninterrupted period of 65-hours. However, when the rioting began in Colombo on 24 July night, the government did not declare a curfew. The IGP (Inspector General of Police), Mr Rudra Rajasingham had, early on 24 July night, requested President Jayewardene to declare a curfew but the President had said that he would "think about it".¹⁸⁵ Dr. Ariyaratne, the pioneer of the Sarvodaya Movement had asked President Jayewardene on the morning of 25 July to immediately declare a curfew. The President had said that he would do so but Dr Ariyaratne gave evidence that "when he declared the curfew it was too late".¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ When faced with widespread rioting one of the most effective measures that any government can take is to declare a curfew which must then be firmly enforced. The mere declaration of a curfew alone will not suffice to quell disorder. When curfew is not declared the public thoroughfares are full of curious on-lookers, rioters and looters. The police and the armed forces cannot easily distinguish the rioters from innocent bystanders. A curfew clears roads, markets, by-lanes and all public thoroughfares of all lawfully engaged citizens. The only persons who violate curfew and move around public spaces are those intent on rioting. This is an enormous benefit to the police and armed forces as it is then possible to clearly identify rioters.

¹⁸⁴ Hoole, 2001: 108, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder* and Government of Sri Lanka, 2002: 35, *Report of the Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence (1981-1984)*.

¹⁸⁵ Hoole, 2001: 149, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*. It needs to be noted that Mr Rajasingham was a Tamil.

¹⁸⁶ Government of Sri Lanka, 2002: 39, *Presidential Truth Commission on Ethnic Violence 1981-1984*, Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne is its founder. *Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement* began in 1958 and has grown to be the largest non-governmental development organisation in Sri Lanka, and one of the largest in Asia.

The government eventually declared a curfew effective from 2pm the following day, 25 July.¹⁸⁷ This was approximately 16 hours after the rioting began in the vicinity of the cemetery around 8pm the previous day. This curfew was announced via broadcasts over government owned radio and television stations. By this time, however, the rioting and disorder had developed a momentum and rioting continued unabated. Even at 5pm many roads in Colombo were crowded with rioters and sight-seers milling around. It was only by nightfall of 25 July that most ordinary people left the streets; this was 24 hours after the rioting had begun the previous night. But by this time the breakdown of order had gained momentum and many gangs of rioters and looters were active throughout 25 July night.

The question that arises was why did a government that had the capability to enforce a 65-hour curfew in Trincomalee a month earlier (27-30 June 1983), delay the declaration of curfew for 16-hours after rioting began at 8pm on 24 July 1983 in Colombo? This delay in the declaration of a curfew was not, and has never been explained by the UNP government in the subsequent years. The lack of a rigorously enforced curfew on the night of 24 July was the single most important factor for the unrestrained rioting in Colombo.

The second question is what happened to the four proactive internal security measures that were adopted in early-June 1983? One, the linking the main police command centre in Colombo with the operations rooms of the three armed forces' headquarters in Colombo.¹⁸⁸ Two, the preventive arrest of known violent criminals and thugs around the country.¹⁸⁹ Three,

¹⁸⁷ *The Times (London)*, 28 July 1983, 'Colombo rioting wrecks 20,000 Tamil businesses'. "Curfew imposed at 2pm on Monday, 25th July". Also, personally heard by the present author broadcast on the government radio.

¹⁸⁸ *Sun*, 9 June 1983, 'Police keep close tabs on situation'. This Command Centre was tasked to monitor and record incidents of rioting and disorder taking place throughout the country. The police operation rooms in each of the other 22 Districts of the police were instructed to send reports of any acts of violence at six-hourly intervals to the main command centre in Colombo. This command centre was linked to the armed forces' command rooms to facilitate the deployment of troops into areas where disorder was likely or was taking place. Each of the 22 district operations rooms would in turn be linked to all the police stations in their respective Districts. In this manner any rioting or disorder in any part of the country would have reached the Colombo centre in 6 hours or less. Creating this Centre was an important and significant measure and shows significant forward thinking by some Tamil officers in the police. Timely information of imminent or actual rioting was the most important factor in any effort by the police and armed forces to maintain order.

¹⁸⁹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 6 June 1983, 'Round up criminal elements - Actg IGP'; *Sunday Observer*, 5 June 1983, 'Army, Navy keep order'. *The Island*, 6 June 1983, 'Special police squads to round up trouble makers - Hunt on for wanted criminals'. In early June the then Acting IGP, Mr. S.S. Joseph - significantly a Tamil - instructed all divisional senior police officers and Officers-in-Charge of the 335 Police Stations throughout the island to strictly enforce the law on any criminal activity such as arson, looting and incitement. The police were instructed to arrest known criminals and keep them in preventive detention. There was information that criminal elements were attempting to arouse communal feelings with the aim of looting. By 5 June police had already begun to arrest known criminals. By the end of the first week of June over one hundred persons had already been arrested. This preventive detention measure reveals that the security concerns of some government and police officers were in the right direction - they were apprehensive of the disorder which had begun to occur and wanted to take proactive measures. However, this measure was only a partial solution to the problem because it did not, appreciate the anti-Tamil feelings building up among significant sections of the Sinhala people - eg. supporters of the government, opponents of the government, and even in sections within the armed forces. Such people were not known criminals and arresting all or a majority of them was not an option. Merely arresting known

a contingency plan specifically designed to deal with rioting in Colombo.¹⁹⁰ Four, the police, army and navy command rooms in Trincomalee were linked together via telecommunications.¹⁹¹ Why were these contingency plans ineffective?

The third question is why were the army, navy and air force personnel who had already been mobilised throughout the country to assist police on 'aid to the civil power' ineffective?¹⁹² This deployment was already underway from early-June onwards under 'Emergency Regulations'. On the contrary the police and the armed forces did not act against the rioters but merely watched or moved around in vehicles and on a number of occasions were seen abetting the rioters.¹⁹³ In any event under Sri Lankan Law neither the police nor the armed forces need specific orders from the Ministry of Defence to stop the causing of death, injury, damage to property, looting and arson. These are serious crimes under any circumstances and the police and the armed forces are duty bound under all circumstances to stop such acts. While the guards at Ministry buildings, Ministers' residences, police and armed forces' headquarters and police stations were strengthened, it was widely observed that during the first 48 hours of the rioting the police and the armed forces did not act against the rioters. Once information of the rioting was received the police and the armed forces should have been immediately brought to the Borella area and firm action used to stop the rioting on the night of 24 July itself. Then, using the radio and television services, curfew should have been declared for the entirety of Colombo that night itself. If the rioting did not subside then curfew should have been extended for the entirety of the next day. It was only after the first 48 hours that police efforts to quell the rioting began to be seen. But public order was finally restored only after a week had passed.

criminals could not completely pre-empt the potential for violence that were building-up within the anti-Tamil sections in the government, and, among other sections of the Sinhala people at that time.

¹⁹⁰ *Sun*, 7 June 1983, 'Sporadic incidents'. As a contingency plan for the security of Colombo and its suburbs, Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) were placed in charge of different sections within Colombo and its suburbs. The government was well aware that the disorder experienced throughout the country had also been experienced – albeit sporadically – in Colombo suburbs such as Wellawatte, Bambalapitiya, Dehiwela and Ratmalana. These were areas which had relatively large numbers of Tamil residencies. Many government personnel and police officers (both Tamil and Sinhalese) would have been able to recall the anti-Tamil riots of August 1977 when these same areas of Colombo were grievously affected. This measure is evidence of foresight by *some* in the government and senior police officers, whose Chief, the IGP Mr. Rudra Rajasingham, was a Tamil.

¹⁹¹ *Sun*, 10 June 1983, 'Trinco returns to normal'. As discussed earlier, the rioting in Trincomalee during June 1983 was so serious that it warranted the linking together of the command rooms of the police, navy and air force in the Trincomalee area. This was meant to enable co-ordinated and rapid action. The police command room would have been in the main Trincomalee police station while the navy command room would have been in the navy base in Trincomalee harbour and the air force's command room would have been at the air base in China Bay. This is a measure that should definitely have enhanced the communication and coordination of 'internal security' measures adopted to ensure order in Trincomalee.

¹⁹² *Ceylon Daily News*, 8 June 1983, 'Over hundred arrested'. *Sunday Observer*, 5 June 1983, 'Army, Navy keep order'.

¹⁹³ Hoole documents the army's lack of action and on occasions aiding the rioters. See Hoole, 2001: 150-152, *Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder*.

As already discussed in earlier in this Chapter a strong case can be made that some sections in the UNP government were planning a pogrom-type attack from 1980 onwards.¹⁹⁴ Information regarding the government's role have gradually emerged in books and newspapers published many years after 1983. Hoole says in a section of his book (published 18 years after 1983) under the heading 'Planned Violence and its Significance':

In discussing the violence of July 1983 we have adduced *four* different kinds of testimony. The *first* are testimonies consistent with the violence being planned by the Government, but do not imply it, however tantalisingly close to doing so they may seem. [...] [these include] Jayawardene's attitudes to declaring curfew, the Government's inaction regarding stopping the violence, [...] and so on. A *second* kind points to Government complicity in the violence once it started. Testimony of this kind is *damagingly plentiful*. A *third* kind of testimony tells us that the Government was driving towards a violent blow up. A number of statements and actions [prior to the July riots] indicate that the Government's thinking on the Tamil problem was to *place the Law in abeyance* and *teach the Tamils a lesson*. The attack on the students at Peradeniya University and Jayewardene's *Daily Telegraph* interview belong to this category. [...] The *fourth* kind point to *definite evidence of planning*. The instances are few but crucial. One is the mobs in Colombo on the 25th going street by street not just with *electoral lists*, but also *processed and assigned lists* [...] in the professional sectors – e.g. the media. Another is the arrangement of transport and assignment of mobs to other areas where they could not be identified. [...] *Such actions did not come from a few hours of planning or from a spontaneous telepathic resonance among UNP members* [emphases added].¹⁹⁵

The phrase 'teach the Tamils a lesson' is quite significant. It was a recurring phrase which appeared in many publications. Eric Meyer too mentions it in his research work on the riots.¹⁹⁶ Hoole published the above in 2001. Eleven years later, in May 2012 a very knowledgeable and experienced political leader who has served as a Minister in both UNP and SLFP governments publicly admitted the role played by the UNP government in the pogrom-riots. In May 2012, he wrote that:

the state sponsored pogrom which was launched by the J.R. Jayewardene regime through Cyril Mathew and his followers [...] was encouraged by the government which felt that a "surgical strike" by Cyril Mathew's goons would warn off the Tamils of Colombo who were not unaware of what the "boys" were doing in the North [emphases added].¹⁹⁷

The fact that Minister Amunugama used the phrase 'state sponsored pogrom' is extremely significant. As already discussed, Cyril Mathew was the Minister of Industries and the leader of the UNP's trade union organisation, the JSS. Through both offices Mathew – along with his close supporters – could mobilise hundreds of toughs who were UNP supporters.

¹⁹⁴ Refer discussion of Dr. Nesiiah's, Minister Sarath Amunugama's, and other evidence earlier in this Chapter.

¹⁹⁵ See Hoole, 2001: 179, Sri Lanka: the Arrogance of Power- Myths, Decadence & Murder.

¹⁹⁶ Meyer, Eric 1984: 142, 'Seeking the Roots of the Tragedy', in James Manor (ed), *Sri Lanka in Change and Crisis*.

¹⁹⁷ Minister Dr. Sarath Amunugama, *The Island*, 19 May 2012, book review, 'When you read the book "Gota's War" you learn that it does not means Gota won the war single-handedly'. Dr. Sarath Amunugama is a Minister from 2005 onwards and is a former very senior government bureaucrat who has worked at senior levels in several capacities including as a Ministry Secretary before becoming a parliamentarian.

Horowitz says that according to his research both the 1977 and 1983 anti-Tamil riots were "organised, at least in substantial part, by activists associated with the UNP."¹⁹⁸

From all of the above we can conclude that there is a great deal of evidence which points to sections of the government being involved in starting the riots. In the years prior to the riots there were instances where government forces indiscriminately targeted Tamil civilians in the aftermath of the death of a soldier or airman. Each such act by government forces alienated more Tamils from the government and created more recruits for the guerrilla groups. In effect, these actions of government forces were winning the 'hearts and minds' of Tamils on *behalf* of the secessionist insurgents. The July pogrom-riots multiplied this trend by several magnitudes. By initiating the pogrom-riots *the government was in effect attacking its own Tamil Centre of Gravity. From the perspective of developing and implementing a coherent counterinsurgency campaign this was the very opposite of what the government should have done.*

Table 3F: Armed Forces & Police Casualties, from July 1977 to 29 July 1983

Year	Killed-in-Action				Wounded -in-Action			
	Army	Navy	Air Force	Police	Army	Navy	Air Force	Police
1977	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
1978	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0
1979	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0
1980	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1981	2			6				
1982	3	0	0	8	0	0	0	0
1983 (to July)	16	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
Total	21	0	2	29	0	0	0	0

(Source: 'Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003'. Note: in 1980 there were no casualties at all. This is due to the Tamil insurgents' tactical withdrawal to Tamil Nadu when the President placed Jaffna under army rule from July to December 1979, under the command of Brigadier Weeratunga. 1980 was a year of total absence of insurgent *military* activity against government personnel (although *political* activities towards secession would have continued. But as these would have constituted of secret discussion and meetings and as there was no violence involved, they would not have come to the attention of the government). The government assumed that the insurrection had declined. It is highly probable that insurgents would have intimidated and on occasion assaulted and may even have killed Tamils who refused to support secession or whom they determined were informants or government supporters. Empirical information regarding such incidents is difficult to locate as the victims would have been frightened to report them to the police as the revenge from the insurgents would have been prompt; such incidents did not reach newspapers; and now, 30 years later, it is difficult to locate and interview witnesses or victims as they may have migrated abroad or may have died.)

Table 3F summarises the total armed forces and police casualties from 1977 to July 1983, including, the ambush of the army patrol in Jaffna. As can be seen the casualties of this period were miniscule compared to what occurred in later years. This Table needs to be assessed correctly and carefully as it depicts only the casualties of State personnel. As far as

¹⁹⁸ Horowitz, 1989: 7-8, *Incentives and Behaviour in the Ethnic Politics of Sri Lanka and Malaysia*.

the State was concerned that was the data important to it and also this is the data collected and preserved by routine bureaucratic processes of the State and therefore available to researchers. This Table does not give any indication of the most important acts of the insurrectionary process, i.e. the subversive processes underway in Tamil society.¹⁹⁹

3.9: Conclusions: 1977 to July 1983 period

When we assess the UNP government's 1977 to July 1983 policies, firstly it needs to be stated that the UNP's 1977 Election Manifesto encompassed a balanced and nuanced counterinsurgency perspective. The Manifesto acknowledged that the Tamil people had grievances and that when the party came to power these grievances would be addressed. It acknowledged that a campaign to create a separate state of Tamil Eelam had already begun. Once the UNP came to power it was faced with continuous low-intensity Tamil insurgents attacks which gradually escalated. Consequently the government's approach gravitated to anti-Terrorist type actions using the police and the military.

1. Did the Sri Lanka government have Political Purposes?

Yes, it did. The government stated clearly that a separate Tamil state was not going to be allowed to be formed in Sri Lanka. This was a non-negotiable political objective. At the same time the government offered District-level devolution and de-centralisation of power. But the Tamil parliamentarians and the Tamil insurgents refused this offer.

2. Did the Sri Lanka government give security to the Tamil population?

Yes, at the beginning of its tenure, from 1977 to approximately 1980. But there is evidence that around 1980 two policy trends had emerged within the government, one which was for negotiations with the Tamils. But the other was a sinister 'Pogrom against Tamils' trend. There is very substantial evidence that this trend existed. President Jayewardene should have

¹⁹⁹ During these years numerous acts of subversion would have been carried out by the secessionist insurgents and their supporters within the Tamil population. These would have constituted of numerous acts of *persuasion* – i.e. thousands of political discussions conducted in secrecy by Tamil secessionists at work places, gathering of friends and in homes - and *coercion* – i.e. the numerous acts of intimidation, threats, beatings, and even murder by secessionist against fellow Tamils who disagreed with them. This is a dimension of any insurrection which researchers need to constantly kept in the forefront of their minds because (a) these are processes which are essential for the growth and progress of the insurrection, (b) these processes don't get mentioned or reflected in the press because these are not public or violent acts, and (c) because the number and nature of these very important processes can never be known by researchers as those who conduct the discussions and their audiences cannot be located and even if located will be reluctant to admit these. And, due to the long-drawn-out nature of many insurgencies – including the Sri Lankan case – individuals die, move abroad as refugees or leave political activism altogether and refuse to discuss these earlier events in their lives.

shown far more foresight and leadership and nipped this trend in the bud. But he did not, and this trend manifested itself in the pogrom-riots of July 1983. Therefore, it has to be said that by June-July 1983 the government was not giving adequate security to the Tamil population.

3. Did the Sri Lanka government neutralize the Tamil insurgents?

No. Although the government tried to apprehend the (still) quite small number of Tamil insurgents, it was unable to do so. During July- December 1979 when the army was placed in charge of Jaffna District, Tamil insurgents made a tactical retreat to Tamil Nadu and thereby completely escaped the government.

4. Did the Sri Lanka government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?

By and large, no. Although there were some Tamils who supported the government, on the whole most Tamils were neutral towards the government or tacit supporters of the TULF or Tamil insurgents.

5. Did the Sri Lanka government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base?

No. The Tamil insurgents lived amongst the Tamil people and they were well protected and hardly any were captured by the government.

6. What were the relationships the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?

In early June 1983, after the killing of two airmen by Tamil insurgents, several very harsh provisions of the Emergency Regulations were brought into force by the government. These provisions applied only to the Northern Province and gave wide powers to the armed forces and police. These provisions suspended the need for a Coroner's investigation with regard to persons killed by the armed forces and police.

Within Sri Lanka's post-colonial political culture, however, these regulations have a particular notoriety. It was under these Regulations that thousands of JVP insurgents and insurgent suspects were killed and their bodies disposed-off during the 1971 insurrection. All adult Sri Lankan citizens – Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims – knew what these regulations meant that the armed forces and police could use deadly force and destroy the bodies without any magisterial enquiry.

President Jayewardene's position was that these harsh provisions were necessary to protect police and armed forces personnel from legal action being taken against them. From this time onwards, as the Tamil insurrection escalated, legal provisions became increasingly more and harsher

7. Did the Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection?

Yes, but at a relatively mild level. During July-December 1979 the Tamil Nadu state government and the Indian central government turned a blind eye to the 'illicit immigration' of Sri Lankan Tamil insurgents into Tamil Nadu, escaping from the Sri Lanka army in Jaffna. Sri Lankan Tamil secessionists conducted political work amongst the Tamil Nadu population and began creating support networks. (Of course these networks increased immensely in the next phase of the insurrection, after the pogrom-riots of July 1983)

Chapter. 4

The Tamil Secessionist Insurrection, from July 1983 to March 1990: President Jayewardene, President Premadasa & the UNP Governments' Policies

Introduction

This Chapter deals with the 7 year period from the pogrom-riots of 1983 to the exit of the armed forces, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), in March 1990. These seven years were a period of immense political and military instability within the country. During a specific 2½ year period there were two separate insurgencies underway in the country at the same time. These 7 years were a period of high complexity: insurgent attacks; government counter attacks; small group military operations; conventional type military operations; use of IEDs with the explicit intension of killing large numbers of civilians; Tamil Nadu and Indian central government political pressure; arrival of Indian armed forces; ceasefires and many periods of overt (and covert) political lobbying and negotiations.¹

In spite of the complexity, however, it is possible to discern the action of five distinct entities, each competing and manoeuvring against one another. These five 'entities' were: (1) the 5 major Tamil insurgent groups; (2) the TULF; (3) the Sri Lanka Government; (4) the Indian central government and (5) the Tamil Nadu state government and Tamil Nadu politicians. None of these entities were singular, monolithic entities. Each had proponents of 'hard' and 'soft' lines within them, many dozens of leaders, and were composed of many thousands of members, officials, and supporters as the case may be.

¹ Two caveats relevant at this point: first, from the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 up to the exit of the IPKF in March 1990 the Sri Lankan armed forces were not involved in countering the Tamil insurrection as that responsibility fell upon the IPKF. The IPKF's attempts at countering the LTTE fall outside the ambit of this Thesis and therefore are not discussed in this text. The arrival of the IPKF precipitated a separate anti-Sri Lanka government insurrection by the JVP (*Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna*) which arose from within the majority Sinhala ethnic group. This is the second caveat. This insurrection falls outside the ambit of this Thesis and is therefore mentioned only as and when needed. The primary slogan of the JVP's insurrection was against the presence of Indian troops on Sri Lankan soil for which President Jayewardene's government was condemned as a 'traitorous' regime. During the 7 year period discussed this Chapter, within a specific 2½ year period (July 1987-November 1989) two separate insurrections (i.e. the Tamil insurrection against the IPKF and Sri Lanka Government, and, the JVP's 2nd insurrection against the Sri Lanka government) were simultaneously underway in the country. The JVP insurrection ended when the JVP's top leadership were destroyed in November 1989.¹ It was then that this unprecedented 2½ year period ended. However, the Tamil secessionist insurrection continued.

In historical retrospect it is clear that these seven years can be divided into two distinct parts: Part.I is from the pogrom-riots of July 1983, the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and the LTTE getting involved in fighting each other. Part.II is from early-1989 to March 1990 when President Premadasa and the LTTE came together in a tactical alliance which resulted in the IPKF having to leave Sri Lanka.

Part I was a period brimming-over with overt and covert strategies, tactics and negotiations between the five 'entities'. These negotiations were occasionally 4-party², sometimes 3-party³ and at other times 2-party negotiations.⁴ While some instances of negotiation occurred with the knowledge of the public, and, there are documents and news reports to attest to them, the reader needs to keep in mind that the vast majority were *conversations* which left no permanent record - i.e. a continuous process underway behind closed-doors and behind-the-scene lobbying, attempts to persuade, attempts to coerce and threaten, cajoling and requests to compromise, and critiques of the other sides demands and proposals.⁵

An Essential Overview of the Context within which the Sri Lanka Government tried to Counter the Tamil Insurrection: Political Negotiations and Manoeuvring July 1983-July 1987. The following overview is an essential overview of the manoeuvres of the five 'entities' during this crucial 4 year period. This overview is meant to assist the reader to understand the complex political (and sometimes military) context within which the Sri Lanka Government tried - *to the best of its ability*⁶ - to counter the Tamil Insurrection. The empirical evidence for this overview is footnoted and also expanded in the rest of this Chapter (below). This should enable the reader to understand the tortuous pushing, pulling, threatening, cajoling, and lobbying underway at this time:

- **Indian central government** asserted that as the Regional Power it now - i.e. after the pogrom-riots of July 1983, the influx of refugees in to Tamil Nadu, the uproar in Tamil Nadu - had to play a role in *facilitating* a negotiated solution to the conflict between the Tamil secessionists and the Sri Lankan State.⁷ India also implemented a 'two-track' policy where it applied diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka while concurrently trained and built-up the military capabilities of Tamil insurgents.⁸ As

² For example, Tamil Insurgents & Sri Lanka government & TULF & Indian Government.

³ For example, Tamil Insurgents & Sri Lanka government & Indian Government. Or the Sri Lanka government & TULF & the Indian government. Or Tamil insurgents & TULF & the Indian government.

⁴ For example Tamil Insurgents & Sri Lanka government. Or Tamil Insurgents & Indian Government. Or Sri Lanka government & Indian government.

⁵ All these processes cannot be dealt-with in this Thesis. A great deal is still not in the public realm. We will concentrate only on the issues directly related to this Thesis and the seven Research Questions which concern us.

⁶ This is a significant point which needs to be flagged. All governments don't always make the best policies they could have done. The Sri Lanka government is no exemption. Furthermore, the Sri Lanka government's capabilities left a great deal to be desired.

⁷ *The Guardian*, 3 June 1985, 'Security dominates India and Sri Lanka talks on Tamils'. Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene had discussed without any aides the political and security aspects of the conflict between the minority Tamils and majority Sinhalese. See also *The Guardian*, 28 February 1986, 'India issues warning to Sri Lanka: Demand for political solution to Tamil ethnic conflict'.

⁸ Singh, Major General Harkirat, 2006: 22-24, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold*.

time passed the Indian government's role underwent a subtle change and it began to demand increased devolution from the Sri Lanka government. By July 1987 the Indian government had changed in to an *enforcer*: it *compelled* a 'solution' on both the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil secessionists. Both 'entities' did not get what each wanted. And both had to compromise: (i) the Sri Lanka government had to give-in to the extent of reforming its Constitution and establishing an entirely new layer of governance – the Provincial Councils system. This is encapsulated in the 13th Amendment to the Constitution.⁹ (ii) the Tamil insurgents were told that they must agree to the Provincial Councils system and agree to resolve their grievances within an undivided Sri Lanka. All the insurgent groups, except the LTTE, agreed to this.

- **Indian Central government was very clear that it did not want to create a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka** (due to a variety of reasons including concerns related to its own unity). Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said this clearly.¹⁰ Rajiv Gandhi too reiterated this. He once said that if he were to allow Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka he would have "15 Tamil Eelams on his hands in India".¹¹ This position was a great disappointment to secessionist Tamils from Sri Lanka and in the Tamil Diaspora. However, the Indian government exerted pressure on both parties: pressurising the Tamil insurgents and TULF to accept the Sri Lanka government's proposals while concurrently cajoling and pushing the Sri Lanka government to concede the maximum amount of devolution.
- **However Tamils never stopped lobbying India to partition Sri Lanka.** But many Tamils – i.e. insurgents from Sri Lanka, refugees from Sri Lanka, from Tamil Nadu, from elsewhere in the world – continuously lobbied Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Ministers and officials in Delhi to militarily intervene and partition Sri Lanka¹² (as had been done in the case of Bangladesh). This lobbying was a continuous process.¹³
- **Geopolitical objectives of the Indian Central government.** These were also a set of geopolitical issues on India's Agenda which had nothing to do with the secessionist insurrection. But India was concerned about the possible entry of the USA, Pakistan and Israel – to all of whom the Sri Lanka government had appealed for various types of assistance to cope with the guerrilla warfare of the Tamil insurgents. These geopolitical concerns officially manifested themselves in the text of the letter from Prime Minister Gandhi to President Jayewardene.¹⁴ The Trincomalee harbour's future and the (alleged) intelligence gathering activities of other countries from Sri Lankan soil were among India's concerns.
- **The Tamil Nadu government and politicians** promoted and supported the secessionist project in numerous ways – safe sanctuary, maintenance of training camps, smuggling of weapons to Sri Lanka via Tamil Nadu and giving financial

⁹ Government of Sri Lanka, 1978, *The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka*, 13th Amendment, certified on 14 November 1987, Colombo: Dept of Government Printing, Sri Lanka.

¹⁰ *The Times (London)*, 13 August 1983, 'India opposes partition of Sri Lanka'.

¹¹ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 6 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka makes new peace push: President Jayewardene proposes early election in effort to end Civil War'. Minister of National Security Lalith Athulathmudali said that Rajiv Gandhi had said this to him in a conversation.

¹² *The Guardian*, 15 January 1985, 'Why the Tamils are looking to Rajiv for their salvation: Sri Lankan separatists are convinced it is only a matter of time before India intervenes'.

¹³ *The Times (London)*, 25 March 1986, 'Tamil exiles ask Gandhi to intervene'.

¹⁴ See Annexures 4.4 and 4.5 to this Chapter. The 'Exchange of Letters' are a part of the set of documents which accompanied the Indo-Lanka Accord. See, items 2(ii) and 2(iv) of the letter from Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to President Jayewardene.

assistance.¹⁵ The Indian central government turned a blind eye to this as it suited its own 'two-track' policy. The danger to India's own security was fully realised only after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi (in 1991), subsequent to which the Indian central government's policy towards the Tamil insurgency and to involving itself with the insurrection completely changed.

- **President Javewardene and the Sri Lankan government tried hard to negotiate the devolution of power to the level of the District.**¹⁶ The government was apprehensive of devolution of power to a larger Unit. Eventually, after making the disastrous mistake of trying to militarily capture Jaffna (in May-June 1987) and thereby inadvertently creating an opening for direct Indian intervention, the Sri Lanka government was compelled, in July 1987, to agree to a fusion of the Northern and Eastern Provinces via the Indo-Lanka Accord. The Sri Lanka government's apprehensions were proven correct when the LTTE rejected the Indo-Lanka Accord and re-ignited the insurrection from October 1987.
- **Tamil insurgents that the Northern and Eastern Provinces had to be joined together.** The Tamil insurgents and the TULF turned down every proposal of the Sri Lanka government which did not include a fusion of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.¹⁷
- **Tamil insurgents carried-out very effective guerrilla attacks¹⁸ on the Sri Lanka armed forces and police.** These attacks in turn (a) increased the insurgents' belief that they could, eventually, attain their objective of a separate state. In the case of the LTTE this led to the assessment that it could somehow create a separate Tamil state even *against* the wishes of the Indian Central government; (b) the insurgents 'converted' these tactical achievements into strategic bargaining chips to the detriment of the Sri Lankan government's position.
- **The TULF's Difficult 'Balancing Act'.** The TULF was compelled to play a very complicated role trying to strike a 'balance' between the Tamil insurgents' uncompromising campaign for a separate state on one side, and the cajoling, pressurising and persuasion by the Indian and Sri Lankan governments to agree to a solution within a united Sri Lanka, on the other side. The TULF parliamentarians had 'legitimacy' in the eyes of the international community and India and thereby they could exert an influence out of all proportion to their small numbers. The Tamil insurgents – especially the LTTE – knew this and made it clear to the TULF leaders that their lives were at stake and they must not 'betray' the campaign to create a separate state to either the Indian and/or Sri Lankan governments. In any event the LTTE assassinated the Leader of the TULF and another TULF leader in 1989¹⁹ and

¹⁵ See *The Guardian*, 10 November 1986, 'Sri Lanka's rebel leaders held in India' and Subramanian, Narendra, 1999: 302-304, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India*.

¹⁶ See *The Guardian*, 25 July 1984, 'Sri Lanka week of mourning disrupted by Tamil militants', and *The Guardian*, 28 July 1984, 'Tamils reject offer of 'second chamber' solution: Sri Lanka'.

¹⁷ *The Times (London)*, 13 July 1985, 'Delhi's envoy tries to end Sri Lanka-Tamil impasse: Romesh Bhandari, senior Indian official goes to Bhutan'.

¹⁸ See Annexures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 for the tactical achievements of the Tamil insurgents. These tactical accomplishments had an aggregate effect and are very much a part of the story. No amount of excellent strategic plans would have any political-military profit for the insurgents if they were not tactically implemented on the guerrilla battlefields in Sri Lanka. These tactical accounts are in Annexures due to the need for brevity of this Thesis.

¹⁹ *The Times (London)*, 14 July 1989, 'Gunmen kill two Tamil moderates in Colombo'. Mr A. Amirthalingam and Mr V. Yogeswaran, two leaders of the TULF were assassinated in Colombo on 13 July 1989. *The Times (London)* called it "one of the most stunning blows since the anti-Tamil carnage of July 1983 plunged Sri Lanka into fierce ethnic warfare."

- also killed numerous other TULF and other Tamil community and political leaders whom they judged to be 'traitors'.

I

4.1: Tamil Guerrilla Attacks, Indian Mediation & Sri Lanka Government Eventually Forced to Concede, July 1983-1989: Political and Military Processes

The clearest and most effective method to enable the reader to understand and analyse this complex period is to present the material in a chronological framework. This is because the processes, events and policies of 1983 impacted on 1984; processes and policies of 1984 impacted on 1985, the negotiations and military processes of 1985 impacted upon those of 1986 ... and so on and so forth. Simultaneously, the present author will periodically flag at relevant junctures the dilemmas faced by the Sri Lanka government when formulating or implementing counterinsurgency policy.

This chronological framework will be divided into two segments, one devoted to political processes such as negotiations and mobilisations, and the second will be devoted to military processes. *The reader needs, however, keep in mind that these political and military processes and events occurred sandwiched together, one closely following the other and sometimes occurring simultaneously.*²⁰ It is useful to make this separation into these two categories to facilitate the analysis of a very complex and complicated arena with multiple actors. For the period from April 1987 onwards when a series of inextricably intertwined political and military events led to the direct intervention of India, political and military processes have to be dealt-with as one complex phenomenon.

Political Processes, July 1983 to December 1984. The period after the July 1983 pogrom-riots witnessed a definite quantitative and qualitative increase in the insurrection. Thousands of Tamil youth joined the various guerrilla groups in the immediate aftermath of the pogrom-riots. Many of these youths underwent training in India and also in remote locations in the North and East of Sri Lanka. By April 1984 it was reliably reported that "nearly 2,000 armed Tamil insurgents are ready for action as a result of training in India and

²⁰ The empirical details of the military attacks are in Annexures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

that 2,000 to 3,000 more are trained and awaiting arms".²¹ Although in the months immediately following the riots there were not many insurgent attacks, by late-1983 the guerrilla attacks began. From then onwards the military intensity of the Tamil secessionist insurgency *never* declined to its pre-July 1983 level. The insurgent groups progressively become stronger and their strategies and tactics bolder and more sophisticated. The government too increased the size of the armed forces and conducted military operations of increasingly larger size.

Before the pogrom-riots the number of trained guerrillas was estimated at a total of approximately 200 cadres. Within one year after the pogrom-riots it was estimated that the number had mushroomed to about 5,000, and by 1986 the total number of trained cadres was estimated as 10,000.²² All five major insurgent groups - LTTE, PLOT, TELO, EROS, and EPRLF - became larger and stronger as a consequence of increased Tamil popular support, influx of new recruits, increased funds, increased supply of weapons, and support from India.

Concurrent to the mass political radicalisation of Tamil youth the pogrom-riot also catalysed an explosive growth of many new Tamil guerrilla groups.²³ The birth of these new groups was an expression of the volatile political mobilisation which swept through the Tamil people. A bewildering number of new organisations emerged and one writer mentions a "veritable alphabet soup of initials".²⁴ Including the five main groups which existed from the mid-1980s onwards, Marshall Singer mentions 35 groups while Tom Marks refers to a total of 42 groups at one stage of the insurrection.²⁵ Internecine fighting eventually destroyed all these new groups, leaving the original 5 insurgent groups.

The Pogrom-Riots Cause Very High Unrest in Tamil Nadu and Impact on the Indian Central Government. The pogrom-riots inflamed the people and politicians in

²¹ *New York Times*, 29 April 1984, 'Sri Lanka's Crisis Hurts Indian Ties'.

²² Marks 1986:73, "Peoples War" in Sri Lanka: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency'.

²³ Some of the new groups which emerged were: TEA (Tamil Eelam Army); TELA (Tamil Eelam Liberation Army); TERO (Tamil Eelam Revolutionary Organisation); TERPLA (Tamil Eelam Revolutionary Peoples Liberation Army); RFTE (Red Front of Tamil Eelam); NLFTE (National Liberation Front of Tamil Eelam); IFTA (Illankai Free Tamil Army); TENA (Tamil Eelam National Army); TEC (Tamil Eelam Commandos); TEEF (Tamil Eelam Eagles Front); RELO (Revolutionary Eelam Liberation Organisation); TELC (Tamil Eelam Liberation Cobras). Some of these new groups were mere money-making schemes while others were hurried attempts at replicate the successful mobilisation of the original five major insurgent groups. Others were attempts at capitalising on the explosive increase in potential Tamil recruits, and yet others were break-away factions from older groups. None of these post-July 1983 groups were successful. Most of these groups were attacked, particularly by the LTTE, and their cadres absorbed by the initial five groups. The remainder disintegrated by themselves due to various reasons and ceased to exist.

²⁴ Marks 1986:70, "Peoples War" in Sri Lanka: Insurgency and Counterinsurgency'.

²⁵ See Singer 1986:14, 'Report on the Pressures and Opportunities for a Peaceful Solution to the Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka'. And Marks 1987:41, 'Counter-Insurgency in Sri Lanka: Asia's Dirty Little War'.

Tamil Nadu immediately they happened.²⁶ This in-turn impacted on Mrs Indira Gandhi's Congress Party dominated coalition government in Delhi.²⁷ In early August 1983, a few days after the pogrom-riots, there occurred in Tamil Nadu the first of many dozens of mass agitation campaigns on behalf of Sri Lanka Tamils. Many of these demonstrations agitated for direct Indian military intervention in the North and East of the island. This first campaign was a 14-hour General Strike *organised by the Tamil Nadu state government itself* and led by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M.G.Ramachandran, leader of the AIADMK party.²⁸ All government activity, trade, education and travel came to a complete halt.²⁹ In early August a group of 5,000 Tamil Nadu 'volunteers' signed a pledge with their blood and marched towards the Tamil Nadu coast with the intention of crossing the Palk Strait, landing in Jaffna and fighting along with the Sri Lanka Tamil insurgent groups. While the Indian central government prevented them from crossing over to Jaffna Peninsula, this very act was an ominous foreshadow of events to come and also increased the anxiety of Sinhalese people.³⁰

Mrs Indira Gandhi's Central Government in Delhi came under severe pressure by Tamil Nadu politicians to directly militarily intervene in Sri Lanka. This was not the first or last time this request was made. The lobbying for this measure continued over the subsequent years.³¹ In August 1983 Mrs Indira Gandhi's Congress Party-led coalition government in Delhi needed the support of the Tamil Nadu politicians to maintain its power in the Indian parliament.³²

²⁶ Over the subsequent decades Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers and political parties in power in Tamil Nadu changed. M.G. Ramachandran died in December 1987, Mrs. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards in October 1984, and Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by the LTTE in May 1991. The state governments in Tamil Nadu and the central government in Delhi changed on many occasions but the political agitation and the radicalisation of Tamil Nadu politicians and its people on behalf of Sri Lanka Tamils' continued unabated.

²⁷ *The Times (London)*, 12 August 1983, 'Gandhi under pressure over Indian Tamil hostility to Sri Lanka'.

²⁸ Well known as 'MGR' in Tamil Nadu, India and amongst Indians living overseas, M.G. Ramachandran was a former film actor with a huge popular support base in Tamil Nadu. AIADMK was the political party he led (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, which means All India Dravidian Progress Federation).

²⁹ *The Times (London)*, 3 August 1983, 'General strike halts Tamil Nadu'.

³⁰ *The Times (London)*, 12 August 1983, 'Gandhi under pressure over Indian Tamil hostility to Sri Lanka'. In all probability this march was just a symbolic gesture, a political stunt the likes of which Tamil Nadu politicians are well known for. However, it did convey a powerful signal to the Sinhalese people and reminded them of the many dozens of invasions which had originated from India over the previous two millennia.

³¹ *The Guardian*, 15 January 1985, 'Why the Tamils are looking to Rajiv for their salvation: Sri Lankan separatists are convinced it is only a matter of time before India intervenes'.

³² See *The Times (London)*, 12 August 1983, 'Gandhi under pressure over Indian Tamil hostility to Sri Lanka', and *The Guardian*, 5 May 1987, 'Tamil links feud grows as Colombo hits out at India'. It is useful to flag here that this vulnerability of any Prime Minister of India was (and is) a continuously active *systemic* and weak characteristic of the Indian central government. According to the Indian Constitution the head of the Executive of the Indian Central government is the Prime Minister. And he or she can govern India as long as the political party or the coalition of parties of which he/she is the leader has a majority in Parliament. If this majority is lost then the Indian parliament must be dissolved and fresh parliamentary elections held. During the years under review in this Chapter this particular aspect of the Indian system of government had a very large impact on the Sri Lanka government and the counterinsurgency policies it could adopt or implement. It was only after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991 (discussed in the next Chapter) that this situation changed. It changed

India's 'two-track' policy: (1) diplomatic and political pressure on Sri Lanka Government, and, (2) military training for Tamil insurgents on Indian territory.

In mid-August 1983 President Jayewardene sent an emissary to Mrs. Gandhi to convey his concerns regarding Tamil insurgents using Tamil Nadu as a base and also obtaining military training.³³ The Sri Lankan intelligence agencies had information that Tamil insurgents were being given sanctuary and training in Tamil Nadu.³⁴ Mrs Gandhi blandly denied these claims. A few days later in the Indian Parliament Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated that India did not support the demand to create an independent state for Tamils in Sri Lanka, made by both Sri Lanka Tamils and Tamils in Tamil Nadu.³⁵ While this statement was literally accurate, it made no mention of what Mrs Gandhi had already begun to implement: namely, a 'two-track' policy of pressurising the Sri Lanka government via diplomatic means while simultaneously allowing Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran and the Tamil Nadu state government to give Tamil insurgents safe sanctuary and military training.

Mrs Gandhi also ordered India's intelligence service RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) to organise military training for Tamil insurgents. Eventually RAW was training TELO, LTTE, PLOTE, EPRLF and EROS cadres.³⁶ Military weapons were allowed to be stockpiled in Tamil Nadu and later smuggled into Jaffna as and when the insurgents chose to do so. The LTTE was especially favoured by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran. Much of the monetary aid he gave was utilised by the LTTE to purchase weapons from Singapore and ferry them to the Northern and Eastern coasts of Sri Lanka.³⁷

Mrs Gandhi's plan was to use the Tamil insurgents as proxies to bring military pressure to bear upon Colombo as and when her government thought it necessary to do so.³⁸ This type of 'two-track' statecraft could 'work' provided the proxies obeyed Delhi. However, one of the

because after May 1991 the Indian central government adopted a policy of total non-interference in the Tamil insurgency.

³³ *The Times (London)*, 11 August 1983, 'Sri Lanka updates riot death toll to 350'.

³⁴ *The Times (London)*, 12 August 1983, 'Gandhi under pressure over Indian Tamil hostility to Sri Lanka'. This included medical treatment for wounded cadres and the purchase of goods stolen in Sri Lanka to raise funds for their insurgent organizations.

³⁵ *The Times (London)*, 13 August 1983, 'India opposes partition of Sri Lanka'.

³⁶ Singh, Major General Harkirat, 2006: 22-24, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold*.

³⁷ Singh, Major General Harkirat, 2006: 21-22, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold*.

³⁸ This was a part of Delhi's 'two-track policy' which was candidly admitted by Indian officials a few years later, and, also admitted in the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 (discussed later in this Chapter). See *The Guardian*, 16 June 1986, 'Jayawardene will explain peace plan: Proposals to end Sri Lankan conflict' where Indian officials acknowledge that Tamil insurgents were operating from Tamil Nadu. See Singh, Major General Harkirat, 2006: 22-24, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold* for details of how RAW coordinated the training and the Tamil insurgent groups given training.

Tamil insurgent groups, the LTTE, chafed against Delhi's policy, and, later, went on to fight (from Oct 1987-September 1989) the Indian armed forces sent to Sri Lanka to implement the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987. And went on to assassinate Mrs Gandhi's sole surviving son Rajiv Gandhi in May 1991.

It can be argued that Mrs Gandhi and her strategic advisors could not have been expected to anticipate all these in mid-1983. But it can be argued that the dangers posed to India's own security by militarily strengthening secessionist insurgents of a neighbouring country should have been thought-out at greater depth.³⁹ In any event Mrs Gandhi herself was assassinated on 31 October 1984 by Sikh secessionists who were members of her own bodyguard. Her son Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister and he too continued with the 'two-track' strategy of his mother's administration, with the same expectation that the Tamil insurgents would behave like good proxies and obey Delhi. Except for the LTTE all the other Tamil insurgent groups did so. Although the Indian central government's official position from August 1983 was to deny that it was assisting Tamil insurgents, in 1986 its own policies made this public knowledge.⁴⁰ In the text of the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 the Indian government accepted that it had given such training and that in deference to the Accord's clauses this policy would cease.⁴¹

Turning our attention back to insurrectionary actions in Sri Lanka, Tamil insurgent attacks in Sri Lanka increased in intensity throughout 1984.⁴² The Sri Lankan armed forces and police tried to counter the burgeoning insurgency as best as they knew how but could not make any meaningful headway. Gradually the Tamil insurgents acquired the upper hand.⁴³ At least some Tamil civilians would have been killed and property destroyed. This in turn politically impacted on Tamil Nadu and the Indian Central Government. In August 1984 Mr.

³⁹ Especially as this was what India was accusing Pakistan of doing in Kashmir.

⁴⁰ *The Times (London)*, 10 November 1986, 'Indian state police act to seize 1,000 Tamils and arms in dawn raids'. Police in Tamil Nadu arrested more 1000 Tamil guerrillas sheltering around Madras, the state capital. A large amount of weapons were reported seized. *The Guardian*, 10 November 1986, 'Sri Lanka's rebel leaders held in India'. The leaders of three Tamil insurgent groups were placed under house arrest on 9 November 1986 in Madras. *The Times (London)*, 2 May 1986, 'Possible expulsion of guerrillas from Indian state of Tamil Nadu'. On 1 May 1986, India's Minister of State Mr Chidambaram told Sri Lanka's Leader of the Opposition that it was not possible to expel Tamil guerrillas from Tamil Nadu because of the public sympathy they enjoy in that State. Mr Chidambaram had said that it would have been possible four years ago but not in 1986. Also see Singh, Major General Harkirat, 2006, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold*, 2006: 22-24, for detailed information of training given to Tamil insurgents.

⁴¹ See Annexure-1 to this Chapter, *Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka*, Annexure to the Agreement, and the two letters between President Jayewardene and Rajiv Gandhi.

⁴² See Annexure 4.1, Tables 4A, 4B and 4C.

⁴³ As discussed elsewhere in this Chapter, from late-1983 and 1984 onwards increasingly large amounts of territory and Tamil population came under the sway of the insurgents. By 1985 only the camps directly occupied were under the control of the armed forces. See *The Guardian*, 29 May 1985, 'Northern Sri Lanka threatened with collapse: Civil war between government troops and the Tamil separatists'. *The Times (London)*, 29 October 1985, 'Tamil guerrillas armed to teeth but out of step on political tactics'.

Karunanidhi, President of the Tamil regional party, *Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam* (DMK)⁴⁴ called upon Tamils in Tamil Nadu to observe India's Independence Day, 15 August 1984, as a day of mourning for Sri Lankan Tamils killed by Sri Lankan security forces. He said "how can we celebrate Independence Day when our brothers and sisters are being killed in Sri Lanka?"⁴⁵ On 13 August 1984 Members of the DMK shouted in India's Parliament in Delhi "*Why is the Indian Government deaf to the death cries of Tamils in Sri Lanka and not intervening to save them from being slaughtered [emphases added]?*"⁴⁶ It is very significant that parliamentarians in Delhi of *both* the Opposition as well as the governing Congress Party *unanimously* condemned the killings of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Such pro-Sri Lanka Tamil political mobilisation in Tamil Nadu *and* Delhi inevitably impacted on India's central government. As the fighting between the insurgents and the government forces in Sri Lanka continued, the Indian central government ratcheted-up its pressure on the Sri Lanka government. In December 1984 Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi made a very strong critique of the Sri Lanka government. The Sri Lanka government was very displeased and stated that it:

expressed its 'regret and dismay' at a statement attributed to the Indian Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, on the latest escalation in the level of violence in Sri Lanka. '*Its language, tone, and substance*,' the Sri Lanka Foreign Ministry said, '*can only encourage the terrorists and their supporters, both in India and Sri Lanka*, to pursue further their nefarious activities'. [Emphases added]⁴⁷

These were among the initial signs of the Indian central government's direct entry as a negotiator into the Sri Lankan conflict.

President Jayewardene's Reform Proposals, 24 July 1984. On 24 July 1984, President Jayewardene presented a new set of peace proposals to the TULF (and by implication to the Tamil insurgents as well). One of the aspects of the new Proposals was a new 2nd Chamber to the Parliament of Sri Lanka. This 2nd Chamber would combine the regional characteristics of the US Senate and the limited powers of the House of Lords.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ The DMK was the arch rival of the then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran's party the AIADMK. In addition to agitating on behalf of Sri Lanka Tamils, intra-Tamil Nadu political rivalries also entered the scene. See Subramanian, Narendra, 1999: 300-304, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India*.

⁴⁵ *The Guardian*, 14 August 1984, 'Anger grows in India at Sri Lanka suppression: Crackdown on Tamil groups by security forces.' Here the Tamil Nadu politicians were politicising the Sri Lankan Tamils' secessionist movement and relating it to India's independence from British colonial rule.

⁴⁶ *The Guardian*, 14 August 1984, 'Anger grows in India at Sri Lanka suppression: Crackdown on Tamil groups by security forces.'

⁴⁷ *The Guardian*, 14 Dec 1984, 'Sri Lanka holds 725: Suspected guerrillas arrested'.

⁴⁸ *The Guardian*, 25 July 1984, 'Sri Lanka week of mourning disrupted by Tamil militants'.

With these proposals President Jayewardene tried to break the stalemate between his government and the TULF and the Tamil insurgents. In the government's proposals the 'Unit of Devolution' was the District.⁴⁹ This was the 'Unit of Devolution' that he and the Cabinet assessed the government could offer the Tamils – especially in the context of the increased secessionist tendencies within Tamils. And, what he and the UNP leadership assessed that they could 'sell' to the Sinhala majority. But the TULF and the Tamil insurgent groups lobbied for was a 'Unit of Devolution' which was composed of the entire Northern and Eastern Provinces combined into one Regional Council, with one elected body and with one Chief Minister. But President Jayewardene persisted with his proposals and attempted to:

"break the deadlock between the Tamils' insistence on '*regional councils and no less*' and the government's offer of '*district councils and no more*' by redefining the terms of the argument [emphases added]."⁵⁰

As a further concession to the Tamils President Jayewardene said that a mechanism would be devised to allow contiguous Districts to coordinate on issues which affected more than one District. But President Jayewardene's initiatives were unsuccessful. Three days after presenting them to the TULF, the TULF rejected the proposals as being insufficient.⁵¹

Insurgent Attacks and Government Counter Efforts, July 1983 to December 1984. Let us now examine the Tamil insurgents' military strategies and tactics. For obvious reasons the insurgents did not publicly reveal their strategies. If they had done so that would have helped the government and the military. Therefore we have to *deduce* the insurgents' strategies by analysing the actions of the five major guerrilla groups militarily active at this time - EPRLF, EROS, LTTE, PLOTE and TELO.⁵²

From August-1983 onwards insurgent attacks steadily increased. The primary objective of the Tamil insurgents' was to weaken - and when and where possible, completely dismantle - the presence of all Sri Lanka government or State agencies and institutions in the Northern and

⁴⁹ See Introduction, Chapter-1 and Chapter-3 for sections where the unresolved problem of 'Unit of Devolution' are discussed.

⁵⁰ *The Guardian*, 25 July 1984, 'Sri Lanka week of mourning disrupted by Tamil militants'.

⁵¹ *The Guardian*, 28 July 1984, 'Tamils reject offer of 'second chamber' solution: Sri Lanka'. As will be seen, this problem arises over and over again during the numerous political negotiations of the next four years. But, ironically, even after this demand was granted via the Indo-Lanka Accord, the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection and fought against the Indian forces from October 1987 onwards till the IPKF departed in March 1990. And then re-started the insurrection against the Sri Lanka government June 1990 onwards. The point being that although this was *supposed* to be a negotiating juncture, as far the LTTE was concerned it was not. For the LTTE it was a tactic on the way to a separate state. Agitating for the joining together of the North and the East was a very useful *tactic* for stalling negotiations and for misdirecting both the Sri Lanka and Indian central governments.

⁵² The phrase 'Tamil insurgents' is used generically to refer to all of these groups as all of them were militarily active up to July 1987, after which it was only the LTTE which persisted with the insurrection.

Eastern Provinces. The aim was to bring the largest possible number of Tamil people under their control.

The initial targets of the insurgents were government owned banks and government civil administration offices.⁵³ These were soft targets and easy to attack and brought funds to the fast-growing insurgent groups. These attacks also gave the insurgent cadres some tactical experience. These attacks compelled the government to abandon most government offices and this led to civil administration in significant areas of the Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni ceasing to exist. When this happened only police stations and armed forces camps remained as manifestations of the government's presence.

The Banks which were targeted were the government-owned People's Bank and the Bank of Ceylon. In the face of these robberies the government had two possible courses of action: one was to protect all Bank branches. This would have needed the deployment of large numbers of scarce police and/or army personnel. The second was to close down bank branches. The government chose the second option. In February and March 1984 twelve branches of the People's Bank were closed.⁵⁴ Gold and jewellery from People's Bank branches were initially moved to army camps in the area and subsequently brought to the People's Bank Headquarters in Colombo.⁵⁵ By August 1984 the Bank of Ceylon and the People's Bank ceased operations in the North.⁵⁶ Consequent to the closure of state banks there was a dearth of cash in the North. Traders and businessmen faced difficulty in cashing cheques, carry on with business and stocking their stores and markets with provisions.⁵⁷

Beginning in mid-1984 Tamil insurgent groups were strong and trained well enough and began attacks on police stations.⁵⁸ This was in addition to ambushes using IEDs and landmines which killed many dozens of army and police personnel.⁵⁹ Attacks against the railway system also began in 1984 and continued till 1987 when the rail link between Jaffna

⁵³ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4A: Insurgent Robberies (primarily targeting Government Banks) in the North & East, Oct. 1983 to December 1984.

⁵⁴ *The Island*, 21 February 1984, 'In areas vulnerable to robberies: 12 People's Bank branches to close'.

⁵⁵ *Weekend*, 26 February 1984, 'Rapid response to robberies at People's Bank branches in North and East: Gold and Jewellery moved into Army camps'.

⁵⁶ *The Ceylon Daily News*, 11 August 1984, 'North banks closed'.

⁵⁷ *The Island*, 13 August 1984, 'Sequel to closure of State banks: Jaffna may be paralysed by cash flow crisis'.

⁵⁸ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4B: Insurgents Attacks on Police Stations, 1984.

⁵⁹ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4C: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1984. These IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) were of differing weights and ranged from 10kg to some of even 60kg in weight. They were fabricated from high-explosives or industrial grade explosives smuggled from India, or even from low-intensity explosives manufactured locally by the insurgents using fertiliser and other chemicals. The use of landmines hindered the vehicular mobility of the armed forces and police and disrupted their tactics.

and Colombo was completely severed.⁶⁰ Along with the other tactics such as the attacks on police stations and army camps, the landmine attacks served to corral the government forces within their camps and bases and gradually severed the link between the government forces and the Tamil population.

Except for Armed Forces Camps Jaffna Peninsula Under Insurgent Domination, September 1984. By September 1984 *The Guardian* reported that the armed forces and police were effectively corralled within their camps. This had been achieved by Tamil insurgents who had mined almost all the roads used by military convoys in the Peninsula. As a result the Tamil insurgents were able to move freely in the peninsula and, very significantly, the entire civilian population came under their control.⁶¹ Foreign correspondents reported that normal life in the Peninsula had been completely disrupted. An unofficial 24-hour curfew was being observed, schools were closed, shops were open for one or two hours a day and the streets were deserted.⁶² From 1984 onwards the insurgents demonstrated increasing tactical expertise in the use of many types of IEDs, claymore mines, and electrically and pressure activated explosive devices. Neither the Sri Lankan army nor police had ever experienced these types of attacks before and nor suffered casualties like this and their military effectiveness was severely degraded.

4.2: Year 1985

Political Processes 1985. In January 1985 the Indian coastguard seized a Sri Lanka navy gunboat.⁶³ While the dispute was quickly settled, it was a subtle warning of a hardening of the Indian government's attitude towards Sri Lanka. Concurrently, Sri Lanka Tamils in Madras continued to lobby the Indian government to militarily intervene in Sri Lanka. "Tamil separatists exiled in Madras, are convinced that their intensified campaign is bringing the day of Indian military intervention nearer - and with it, partition of Sri Lanka".⁶⁴ In August 1985

⁶⁰ See Annexure 4.2, Table 4J: Insurgent Attacks against the Colombo-Jaffna Railway link, 1984-1987.

⁶¹ *The Guardian*, 4 September 1984, 'Tamil guerrillas control north: New offensive feared in Sri Lanka'. The reporting by foreign correspondents was invaluable in areas where the insurgency was underway as local newspaper reporters of Sinhalese ethnicity were looked upon with suspicion by the insurgents and risked death if they ventured into such areas.

⁶² *The Guardian*, 4 September 1984, 'Tamil guerrillas control north: New offensive feared in Sri Lanka'. The reporting by foreign correspondents was invaluable in areas where the insurgency was underway as local newspaper reporters of Sinhalese ethnicity were looked upon with suspicion by the insurgents and risked death if they ventured into such areas.

⁶³ *The Guardian*, 12 January 1985, 'Indians seize Sri Lankan gunboat: Sri Lankan President Jayewardene calls on Tamils to join elections and end violence'.

⁶⁴ *The Guardian*, 15 January 1985, 'Why the Tamils are looking to Rajiv for their salvation: Sri Lankan separatists are convinced it is only a matter of time before India intervenes'.

"Mr S.C. Chandrasekaran predicted yesterday that Mr Gandhi would eventually have to intervene to prevent a bloodbath and impose partition."⁶⁵

The Sri Lanka government was aware of the assistance being given to Tamil insurgents by India. In his speech at the opening of Sri Lanka's parliament on 20 February 1985 President Jayewardene accused India of fomenting and encouraging terrorism in Sri Lanka.

The Government of Sri Lanka has *made representations on several occasions to the Government of India that there is evidence that terrorists operating in Sri Lanka are being trained in camps situated in India*, he said. We have also complained that the leaders of this movement *live in India, and meet and conduct illegal activities in India* [emphases added].⁶⁶

By late-May 1985 the foreign ministries of the Indian and Sri Lanka governments had worked together outside the glare of publicity and prepared the ground for a summit meeting between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene.⁶⁷

Summit Meeting between President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, 2 June 1985. The first talks took place on 2 June 1985. India's stance was that *it would intervene to resolve the dispute only if President Jayewardene went beyond his previous offer of District based autonomy for the Tamils in Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka* [emphases added].⁶⁸ The TULF and the Tamil insurgent groups kept on insisting that power be devolved to a single entity which was composed of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. The Indian government kept on exerting pressure on President Jayewardene to concede to this demand. The Sri Lanka government, maintaining a clear political objective – i.e. our Research Question no. 1 - kept insisting that it was prepared to devolve power to the level of the District and maintained its efforts to convince Rajiv Gandhi to support its position.

On the other hand the Gandhi government's reading of the situation was classic counterinsurgency – i.e. redress the grievance; then the insurgents would lose popular support; then they will begin to wither away; then offer amnesty to the mass of the cadres; if any hardliners (i.e. some in the top leadership) still kept on fighting then arrest them or

⁶⁵ *The Guardian*, 31 August 1985, 'Jayewardene to propose major reform for Tamils: Indians force concessions from Sri Lankan President'.

⁶⁶ *The Guardian*, 21 February 1985, 'Jayewardene gets tough with India: Sri Lanka's President alleges Tamil terrorist links'.

⁶⁷ *The Guardian*, 30 May 1985, 'Gandhi ready for talks on Tamil crisis: Indian premier to meet President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka'.

⁶⁸ *The Guardian*, 3 June 1985, 'Security dominates India and Sri Lanka talks on Tamils'. It was reported that Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayewardene had begun with a 50-minute discussion without any aides and discussed the political and security aspects of the conflict between the unrest between the minority Tamils and majority Sinhalese. Then their security advisers, Mr Narasimha Rao (Indian Minister for Defence) and Mr Lalith Athulathmudali (Minister of National Security in Sri Lanka) had been called for a further one hour of talks.

destroy them with the military and police. Gandhi's assumption was that if the Northern and Eastern Provinces were fused together then the Tamil secessionist insurrection would reduce and eventually wither away.⁶⁹

At the end of the Summit meeting a joint communiqué issued by the two governments stated that it had been agreed that "immediate steps should be taken to defuse the situation and create a proper climate for progress towards a political settlement which would be acceptable to all concerned *within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka* [emphases added]."⁷⁰ This commitment to an undivided Sri Lanka was a stance that the Indian central government adopted and continued to maintain. India also took the initiative to organise direct negotiations between the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil insurgents and TULF.

Direct Negotiations between Sri Lanka government and Tamil insurgents groups – the Thimpu Talks', July and August 1985.

- *8-13 July 1985, 1st Round.*

Soon after this summit meeting the Indian government began to prepare the ground for direct negotiations between the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil insurgent groups and the TULF. The first task was to obtain a ceasefire. This was necessary to allow the Tamils and President Jayewardene to prepare themselves for negotiations.⁷¹ This Indian effort was successful and on 18 June 1985 the five major insurgent groups and the Sri Lanka government agreed to a 3-month ceasefire, i.e. from 18 June to 18 September 1985.⁷²

The two delegations met in Thimpu, Bhutan for six days from 8 to 13 July 1985. The government delegation was composed primarily of lawyers and was led by President Jayewardene's brother, H.W. Jayewardene, QC. The Tamil delegation was led by TULF's President and Secretary-General.⁷³ The objectives of the talks were to discuss various

⁶⁹ This sequence was correct regarding TELO, EPRLF, EROS and PLOTE. But the LTTE chose to defy India and did not accept the Provincial Councils system. The LTTE did not allow the Provincial Councils system to function and, furthermore, fought a guerrilla campaign against the Indians, and, with a tactical alliance with President Premadasa compelled the IPKF to leave Sri Lanka (see discussion later in this Chapter).

⁷⁰ *The Guardian*, 4 June 1985, 'Colombo and Delhi agree to defuse Tamil issue: Indo-Sri Lankan summit on Tamil separatist conflict'.

⁷¹ *The Guardian*, 7 June 1985, 'India seeks Tamil agreement to Sri Lanka truce: Indian government attempts to persuade Madras-based rebel leaders to accept ceasefire'.

⁷² *The Guardian*, 19 June 1985, 'Talks hope as Tamils agree to a ceasefire: Sri Lanka'.

⁷³ The total Tamil delegation comprised of representatives from the Tamil insurgents groups LTTE, TELO, EPRLF and EROS. In a ceremonial and official sense it was led by TULF President, M.Sivasithamparam and Secretary-General, A. Amirthalingam, see *The Times (London)*, 6 July 1985, 'All Tamil rebel groups for Bhutan: Efforts to solve Sri Lanka's ethnic problems'. But the actual strength of the delegation was with the Tamil insurgents. This became very clear during the two rounds of talks. When the Sri Lanka government presented

proposals on devolution. The Indian Government played a crucial role of mediator but did not participate directly in the talks. But Indian officials were continuously present behind the scene, cajoling, persuading, and talking with both sides and trying to push them together to an Agreement.⁷⁴ During the six days of discussions the Sri Lanka government made several good will gestures towards the Tamils.⁷⁵ These were significant conciliatory gestures.

The Sri Lanka government proposed greater devolution of powers with the District as the Unit of Devolution. These District Councils would have wider powers than earlier proposals. But the Tamil delegation refused to discuss any of the Sri Lankan government's proposals.⁷⁶ The Tamil delegation rejected all the Sri Lanka government's proposals saying that they "did not satisfy the hopes and aspirations of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka".⁷⁷ *Here again one of the constant thematic threads in the Sri Lanka's counterinsurgency manifested itself: the government offered reforms that it assessed that it could offer while, concurrently, maintaining the support of the majority Sinhala population.*⁷⁸ *But the insurgent groups rejected the reforms and wanted much more than the government assessed that it could give.* The Talks became deadlocked. Prime Minister Gandhi sent very senior Ministry of External Affairs official and more Indian personnel to Bhutan to try and coax the two parties to break the deadlock.⁷⁹

proposals for devolution of power, the Tamil insurgent groups rejected all discussion of all such substantive issues and instead focussed their attention on drawing up a 'Liberation Charter'.

⁷⁴ *The Times (London)*, 8 July 1985, 'Colombo draws the line on devolution: Exploratory talks open between Sri Lanka and Tamil guerrilla organizations'.

⁷⁵ It released 643 insurgent suspects who were under arrest at that time. The curfew in the five Districts of the Northern Province which had been in effect from November 1984 was lifted. *The Times (London)*, 11 July 1985, 'Sri Lanka frees 643 suspects'.

⁷⁶ Loganathan, K. *Sri Lanka: Lost Opportunities. Past Attempts at Resolving the Ethnic Conflict* 1996: 104. Loganathan was a member of the EPRLF delegation at Thimpu and was present during both - the first in July 1985 and the second in August - series of talks.

⁷⁷ *The Times (London)*, 13 July 1985, 'Delhi's envoy tries to end Sri Lanka-Tamil impasse: Romesh Bhandari, senior Indian official goes to Bhutan'.

⁷⁸ It is useful to reflect on these Thimpu talks as they give deep insight in to dilemmas of the Sri Lanka case as well as insurgency & counterinsurgency in general. Would the 'the hopes and aspirations' of the Tamil people' have been satisfied with *any* reform suggested by the Sri Lankan government? If the 'the hopes and aspirations of the Tamil people' meant a separate state, that was not a reform that the Sri Lankan government could agree to. The government would definitely not have been able to obtain the support of the Sinhala people for such a measure. But the question arises would anything less than a separate state have sufficed? Tamil insurgents should have taken this into account but insisted on pitching their demand at the maximum level. On the other hand, the Sri Lankan government too could have offered greater devolution but seems to have assessed that what it offered was the best it was prudent to give, at that time. If both sides compromised then an Agreement *may* have been reached. But they did not. Consequently, there was a gap between the reforms that the government could offer and what changes the Tamils would accept. This meant that, sooner or later, the 'dialogue' of military conflict would come into play and the gap be closed or made redundant.

⁷⁹ *The Times (London)*, 13 July 1985, 'Delhi's envoy tries to end Sri Lanka-Tamil impasse: Romesh Bhandari, senior Indian official goes to Bhutan'.

However, instead of discussing pragmatic devolution proposals which could be practically implemented on the ground, the Tamil delegation placed before the Sri Lanka delegation an extremely provocative document which, if it had been accepted by Sri Lanka, would have facilitated the creation of a separate Tamil state. The Tamils said that these were the 'four principals' upon which they based their negotiations and requested Sri Lanka to accept these 'principals':

(1) Recognition of the Tamils of Sri Lanka as a **distinct nationality**; (2) Recognition of an identified **Tamil homeland** and the guarantee of its territorial integrity; (3) Based on the above, recognition of the inalienable **right of self-determination** of the **Tamil nation**; (4) Recognition of the right to full citizenship and other fundamental democratic rights of all Tamils, who look upon the Island as their country [emphases added].⁸⁰

Item (4) was already being implemented by the Sri Lanka government at that time and was not a problem. The Sri Lanka delegation did not give an immediate reply – obviously President Jayewardene and the Cabinet had to deliberate these. Despite strenuous efforts by Indian officials the talks remained deadlocked and they were adjourned for one month with both sides agreeing to meet again on 12 August.⁸¹

Soon after the end of the first round of talks at Thimpu, the insurgents demonstrated their influence over the Tamil people in Jaffna and the Eastern Province by holding a 3-day general strike which was completely successful.⁸² Concurrently, preparations for the 2nd round of talks scheduled to begin on 12 August continued behind the scenes in all three camps – i.e. Sri Lanka government, the Tamil groups and the Indian government. Some members of the Sri Lanka government were not hopeful of a negotiated settlement.

Pessimists in the [Sri Lanka] government, however, *believe the guerrillas will be satisfied with nothing short of an independent state carved out of the Tamil-dominated northern and eastern provinces*. At the last talk, the five main guerrilla groups demanded that any deal should recognise the Tamils of Sri Lanka as a distinct nationality with a right to self-determination [emphases added].⁸³

As events turned out, this was not a pessimistic assessment but a realistic one. In any event prior to the 2nd Round of talks, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi exerted a great deal of pressure on the insurgent groups. If not for this pressure the Tamil groups would have boycotted the second round. Gandhi "threatened the guerrillas with arrest and the closure of their bases in

⁸⁰ Loganathan, K. *Sri Lanka: Lost Opportunities. Past Attempts at Resolving the Ethnic Conflict*, 1996: 104-105 and 116, fn.34. Joint Statement by the Tamil Delegation at Thimpu Talks on 13 July 1985.

⁸¹ *The Times (London)*, 15 July 1985, 'Fragile Sri Lanka peace at risk as Tamil talks adjourn: Talks to end communal and ethnic violence'.

⁸² *The Times (London)*, 26 July 1985, 'Guerrillas halt trains as part of Tamil protest: Sri Lankan minority problems'. This was during the days on which the 2nd Anniversary of the pogrom-riots of July 1983 fell. The train service to Colombo was completely stopped and all educational, trade and other activities came to a standstill.

⁸³ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 28 July 1985, 'New hope of deal by Tamils: Sri Lankan conflict talks in Bhutan'. Although the Reporter characterises them as "pessimists" over the subsequent years they proved to be correct.

the Indian state of Tamil Nadu unless they agreed to attend the peace talks".⁸⁴ These were very strong and firm actions. However, at the same time both President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Gandhi were opposed and criticised by constituencies in their own countries.⁸⁵

In the meantime the Tamil insurgent leaders in Madras focussed on drafting a 'Liberation Charter' which enshrined the four principals presented at the first round of talks.⁸⁶ Tamil insurgents who had borne the brunt of the fighting were not in favour of the Thimpu talks and a negotiated settlement within a united Sri Lanka. There were demonstrations in Jaffna against the talks. These demonstrations were ostensibly spontaneous but were in reality organised by the insurgent groups themselves.⁸⁷ Considering the grip that the insurgent groups had developed on the Jaffna civilian population over the previous years it is highly unlikely that these demonstrations were spontaneous.

Prime Minister Gandhi and his government were keenly interested in the success of the negotiations. He and his officials correctly assessed that complicated political forces were acting within the Tamil people and insurgent groups, the Sinhalese people and the Sri Lankan government which could negate the Thimpu negotiations.⁸⁸ Prime Minister Gandhi was reported as "exerting pressure on President Jayewardene to produce credible proposals to put to the Tamils."⁸⁹ On the other hand Jayewardene was under continuous pressure by his Sinhala constituents. Jayewardene knew that his ability to govern Sri Lanka could be

⁸⁴ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 28 July 1985, 'New hope of deal by Tamils: Sri Lankan conflict talks in Bhutan'. In 1986 Rajiv Gandhi carried out this threat when, again, he was faced with non-cooperation by Tamil insurgents. Discussed later in this Chapter.

⁸⁵ The political situation in both countries continued to be complex and full of potential pitfalls. In Sri Lanka the powerful Buddhist clergy warned Jayewardene not to decide anything without first consulting the people of Sri Lanka. In India Prime Minister Gandhi was booed in Madras when he delivered an anti-terrorism speech. See *The Sunday Times (London)*, 28 July 1985, 'New hope of deal by Tamils: Sri Lankan conflict talks in Bhutan'.

⁸⁶ *The Guardian*, 31 July 1985, 'Tamils will present united front: Peace talks with Sri Lankan government'.

⁸⁷ *The Guardian*, 31 July 1985, 'Tamils will present united front: Peace talks with Sri Lankan government'.

⁸⁸ Rajiv Gandhi wanted to maintain the momentum of the search for a negotiated solution and requested President Jayewardene to urgently formulate proposals which could be speedily implemented. See *The Times (London)*, 6 August 1985, 'Gandhi asks Sri Lanka to speed up Tamil plan: Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi's request'. The Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, D.N.Dixit, shuttled between Colombo and Delhi back and forth in early August 1985 conveying Mr Gandhi's requests and President Jayewardene's replies. A few days later the Indian Foreign Secretary arrived in Sri Lanka. See *The Times (London)*, 9 August 1985, 'Delhi envoy takes ideas to Colombo: Indian Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari visits Sri Lanka'.

⁸⁹ *The Times (London)*, 10 August 1985, 'Tamil patience stretched as time runs out in Sri Lanka: Talks on future of ethnic minority group'. What was a 'credible option'? What was a 'non-credible'? Who would/should decide: the Indian government? The Tamil insurgents? The Sri Lanka government? The Indian government kept on pressuring the Sri Lanka government to 'compromise ... compromise ... concede more...concede more' which from the perspective of the Sri Lankan government and the Sinhala majority was tantamount to weakening the foundations of the Sri Lankan State.

seriously affected if large numbers of Sinhalese opposed his policies.⁹⁰ But Rajiv Gandhi – facing electoral pressures of his own from Tamil Nadu politicians and Tamil secessionist lobbyists who wanted direct Indian military intervention – continued to exert pressure on Jayewardene.⁹¹ This complex tussle continued throughout this period and was a manifestation of the inherently difficult problems of implementing counterinsurgency against the Tamil insurrection in Sri Lanka.

• *12-17 August 1985, 2nd Round*

On 10 August, two days before the 2nd round of Thimpu talks were scheduled to begin, Tamil insurgents detonated an IED⁹² in Vavuniya town which killed 14 people including 5 police personnel. Later, unidentified men – widely suspected as being police and armed forces personnel in civilian clothes – set fire to shops in the town. This was the most serious violation of the ceasefire up to that time.⁹³ The timing of this attack had to have been deliberately chosen by Tamil insurgents to sabotage the 2nd round of Thimpu talks. And that is exactly what happened. Throughout the 2nd meeting the atmosphere was poisoned because the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil delegation exchanged accusations of ceasefire violations.

On the first day of the 2nd Round of talks the Sri Lanka government officially responded to the 'four principals' presented by the Tamils during the first set of talks. The leader of the delegation H.W. Jayewardene said that "acceptance of the militant's demands would amount to granting a separate Tamil nation".⁹⁴ He went on to state:

"[...] if the first three principles are to be taken at their face value and given their accepted legal meaning, they are wholly unacceptable to the Government. They must be rejected for the reason that they constitute a negation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, they are detrimental to a united Sri Lanka and are inimical to the interests of the several communities, ethnic and religious in our country" [emphases added].⁹⁵

⁹⁰ This is precisely what happened during 1987-1989 when the UNP government was faced with the 2nd insurrection launched by the JVP. This was when the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was in Sri Lanka and Sinhala nationalism became greatly disturbed at the possibility that the Indians would not leave, or that they may create a separate state (both of which the Indians could have chosen to do, if they so wished). The JVP enjoyed a considerable amount of cross-party support from wide sections of the Sinhala electorate, Buddhist monks, Students, Trade Unionists and others who were not party members. Discussed later in this Chapter.

⁹¹ The Tamil insurgents refused to present proposals of their own but insisted that the Sri Lankan government present new proposals. Concurrently, they kept on politically agitating in Sri Lanka and in Tamil Nadu for a separate Tamil state.

⁹² Improvised Explosive Device.

⁹³ *The Times (London)*, 12 August 1985, 'Policemen killed by bomb as Tamils break ceasefire: Communal strife in Sri Lanka'.

⁹⁴ *The Times (London)*, 13 August 1985, 'Sri Lanka turns down Tamil charter as devolution talks restart: Island's ethnic divisions'.

⁹⁵ Loganathan, K, 1996: 105, *Sri Lanka: Lost Opportunities. Past Attempts at Resolving the Ethnic Conflict*.

After three days the talks became deadlocked. The Indian Foreign Secretary, Mr. Bandari flew to Thimpu and attempted to re-start the discussions.⁹⁶ The Indian government continued with its efforts to save the talks.⁹⁷ But the talks continued to be deadlocked and finally by 23 August the Indian and Sri Lanka governments accepted that the 2nd round of Thimpu talks had collapsed.⁹⁸

With the end of the Thimpu talks the fear of renewed fighting was acutely felt by Tamils in the North and East. Hundreds of Tamils were reported as fleeing to south India in fishing boats.⁹⁹

At least one diplomat has admitted in private that **a *de facto* division of the island is slowly coming about. The Sinhalese majority suspect that the 'boys', as the Tamil Tiger rebels are universally known, have this as a policy.** If more and more Sinhalese left the Northern, Eastern and North Central provinces the Tamils could say they were in an overwhelming majority and increase demands for a separate state [emphases added].¹⁰⁰

Indian Government Further increases Pressure on Colombo: Sri Lanka Government indicates that it will concede more to Tamil Demands, August

1985. With the breakdown of the Thimpu Talks and the approach of the end of the 3-month ceasefire – 18 September – the Indian government further increased its pressure on the Sri Lanka government. In response the Sri Lanka Government indicated that it was ready to devolve executive and legislative powers to Provincial Councils which have been directly elected. This was the first time this concession was indicated after the ceasefire came into effect on 18 June 1985. “Although the detailed proposals are still secret, sources said ***the new formula goes further than any President Junius Jayewardene has been prepared to contemplate*** since autumn, 1983, to meet minimal Tamil demands [emphases added].”¹⁰¹ This change was the result of pressure from India and the Sri Lanka government’s wish to maintain the ceasefire. As the reader can see, the Sri Lanka government is compelled to concede to Tamil demands, little by little. The unrelenting pressure from India and the insurgents’ guerrilla attacks left Jayewardene with little options.

In a new set of reforms discussed between the Sri Lanka and Indian Governments, Sri Lanka agreed to devolve legislative and executive powers to elected Provincial Councils in the North

⁹⁶ *The Times (London)*, 15 August 1985, ‘Bhutan talks: Ethnic problems in Sri Lanka’.

⁹⁷ *The Guardian*, 20 August 1985, ‘Diplomats battle to save Tamil peace negotiations: Sectarian violence in Sri Lanka’. *The Guardian*, 21 August 1985, ‘Time running out for Sri Lanka: Peace negotiations to resume between government and Tamil separatists in Bhutan.’

⁹⁸ *The Times (London)*, 23 August 1985, ‘Tamil negotiations with Sri Lankan team break down’.

⁹⁹ *The Guardian*, 23 August 1985, ‘Spectre of civil war looms in Sri Lanka: Bhutan peace talks between government and Tamil separatists adjourned’.

¹⁰⁰ *The Times (London)*, 24 August 1985, ‘Rising tide of refugees deepens ethnic divide in Sri Lanka’.

¹⁰¹ *The Guardian*, 27 August 1985, ‘Colombo broadens offer as Gandhi guides Tamil talks: Indian premier’s attempt to secure peace in Sri Lanka’.

and East of the island (i.e. the 'Unit of Devolution' dispute).¹⁰² The leader of the biggest party in each provincial legislature would be asked to form a cabinet. President Jayewardene also agreed that the Provincial Council's jurisdiction would include law and order, land settlement, agriculture and education (i.e. the 'Powers of Devolution' dispute).¹⁰³

While these concessions were being got from the Sri Lanka government, at the same time the Indian government had deep concerns about the LTTE:

Indian officials are less confident about the Liberation Tigers, the group responsible for most of the recent guerrilla operations in Sri Lanka. *If they so choose, the Tigers could wreck a settlement* [emphases added].¹⁰⁴

These apprehensions were completely accurate as the history of the conflict in the years ahead were to reveal. It can be argued that India's analysis of the LTTE did not go deep enough and that India suffered a *strategic intelligence failure* in the comprehensiveness of its assessment of the LTTE.¹⁰⁵

Returning to 1985, the Indian government simultaneously put pressure on the Tamil insurgents to compromise. On 27 August it expelled from India three of the most extreme Tamil secessionist ideologues who were living in Madras. But Rajiv Gandhi immediately faced widespread opposition in Tamil Nadu.¹⁰⁶ Due to various infringements of the law the Indian government arrested another 3,500 protesters in Tamil Nadu. However, the complexity of the situation can be gauged by the fact that the *ADMK was also in an electoral alliance with the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party in the parliament in Delhi.*¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² *The Guardian*, 31 August 1985, 'Jayewardene to propose major reform for Tamils: Indians force concessions from Sri Lankan President'. This was a major concession by the Sri Lanka government on the 'Unit of Devolution' dispute.

¹⁰³ This was a major concession by the Sri Lanka government on the 'Powers of Devolution' dispute.

¹⁰⁴ *The Guardian*, 31 August 1985, 'Jayewardene to propose major reform for Tamils: Indians force concessions from Sri Lankan President'.

¹⁰⁵ The LTTE perpetrated significant violations of the ceasefire; dragged its feet in all the efforts by the Indian government to negotiate a solution during 1986 and early 1987; opposed the Indo-Lanka Accord and from 10 October 1987 till late-1989 onwards carried out military actions against the Indian government and killed 1000+ and wounded 3000+ of its soldiers. And, most serious of all, the LTTE assassinated Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 – an act which no Indian intelligence agency or government department seems to have even contemplated. RAW had close ties with all the Tamil insurgent groups including the LTTE. The inaccuracy of RAW's intelligence assessment of the LTTE in terms of the harm that the LTTE could cause to India has to be classified as an intelligence failure.

¹⁰⁶ A 3-day period of opposition agitation was immediately launched throughout Tamil Nadu from 28 August onwards. The rapidity with which this opposition campaign was launched is a good indication of the support of Tamil Nadu politicians and the people to the Sri Lankan Tamil secessionists and how 'primed for action' they were. See *The Times (London)*, 28 August 1985, 'India faces turmoil as Tamil anger rises: Ethnic minority conflict in Sri Lanka'.

¹⁰⁷ Agitation continued in Tamil Nadu throughout August and September 1985 and on most occasions the agitation was given official backing and led by the Tamil Nadu State government of the *Anna Dravida Munnetra Kagazham* (ADMK). In the third week of September, during a "24-hour official general strike was called to express the sympathy of the Tamils of Tamil Nadu with their cousins in Sri Lanka" a 57 year old Tamil man set himself on fire and killed himself (See *The Times (London)*, 25 September 1985, '57 year-old man sets himself

Rajiv Gandhi also kept pressurising President Jayewardene.¹⁰⁸ On 16 September 1985 the Sri Lanka government unilaterally declared that it would extend the ceasefire beyond 18 September, the date on which the 3-month ceasefire was due to expire. On 17 September Prime Minister Gandhi got representatives of the Tamil insurgents to meet him in Delhi and successfully pressurised the insurgents to continue with the ceasefire.¹⁰⁹ By 11 October the Indian government was able to get the Tamil insurgents to accept a new ceasefire agreement.¹¹⁰ On 12 October the Sri Lanka government immediately welcomed the decision of the Tamil insurgents and stated that it too would honour the ceasefire that it had unilaterally declared on 16 September.¹¹¹

Rajiv Gandhi made strenuous efforts to deal even-handedly with the Tamil insurgents on the one hand and the Sri Lanka government on the other. Some of the military training facilities for the Tamil insurgents were closed down but the deported Tamil secessionist ideologues were allowed to return to Tamil Nadu. Concurrently, at a press conference on 11 October Gandhi reiterated that he was searching for a negotiated solution "within the framework of a united Sri Lanka".¹¹² Gandhi and the central government of India periodically stated that the government of India did not want Sri Lanka partitioned. There was a significant amount of self-interest in this. In July 1986 a Sri Lanka Minister revealed that Rajiv Gandhi had told him that he would never encourage the partition of Sri Lanka because if that were to happen "*he would have 15 Eelams on his hand*" [emphases added].¹¹³ It was reported that Tamil insurgent groups in Madras had disappointedly concluded that India was "not going to follow the Bangladesh precedent and help them to [create] a separate state".¹¹⁴

on fire in Madras'). Such incidents are indicative of the intensity of agitation in Tamil Nadu and also served to increase the feelings of the masses of Tamil Nadu people.

¹⁰⁸ *The Guardian*, 31 August 1985, 'Jayewardene to propose major reform for Tamils: Indians force concessions from Sri Lankan President'.

¹⁰⁹ *The Guardian*, 18 September 1985, 'Gandhi meets rebels: Meeting between Indian Premier and Sri Lankan Tamil guerrilla leaders'.

¹¹⁰ *The Times (London)*, 11 October 1985, 'Tamil fighters agree to new truce: Guerrilla campaign ceasefire in north Sri Lanka'.

¹¹¹ *The Times (London)*, 12 October 1985, 'Sri Lanka welcomes decision of Tamil separatist guerrilla group'.

¹¹² *The Guardian*, 12 October 1985, 'Gandhi acts to cool Sri Lanka conflicts: India reportedly withdraws training facilities from Tamil separatist guerrillas'.

¹¹³ This statement of Gandhi's was mentioned earlier in this Chapter. It is reiterated here due to its significance. *The Sunday Times (London)*, 6 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka makes new peace push: President Jayewardene proposes early election in effort to end Civil War'. This was revealed by Minister of National Security Lalith Athulathmudali.

¹¹⁴ *The Guardian*, 12 October 1985, 'Gandhi acts to cool Sri Lanka conflicts: India reportedly withdraws training facilities from Tamil separatist guerrillas'. As the Indo-Lanka Agreement of 1987 was to illustrate this was correct. Four of the five main insurgent groups accepted India's position. But the LTTE refused to give up.

Indian Government and Tamil Insurgent Talks, 7-9 November

1985. Rajiv Gandhi got the Tamil insurgents to meet him in Delhi for discussions 7 to 9 November 1985. The Sri Lanka government was not included in the process. Clearly, the Indian central government had decided to take the lead role, drawing lessons from the collapse of the Thimpu talks. The Indian Government wanted to quickly focus attention on substantive issues included in the Sri Lanka government's proposals. But the Tamil insurgents' initial move was to loudly denounce the Sri Lanka government for ceasefire violations in the northern and eastern provinces. They presented a list of violations to the Indian Foreign Secretary Mr. Bhandari who was leading the Indian team. After listening to their complaints the Indian Government kept on reiterating the need to address the Sri Lanka government's proposals.

But the insurgents' would not respond positively. Their negotiating tactic became clear as time passed. After their initial complaints of alleged ceasefire violations, they then said that they wanted fresh proposals from the Sri Lanka government. The more moderate TULF (the older politicians who had been elected to parliament in 1977) were prepared to submit proposals which they had drafted but the insurgents would not.

The militants are *unwilling to put forward any kind of proposals of their own* for settlement of the crisis, preferring to *demand another set from the [Sri Lanka] Government which would be more in line with their demands for a homeland of their own*. However, the more moderate politicians of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) have drawn up a 20-page document of their own for discussion [emphases added].¹¹⁵

The Tamils were especially disagreeable to President Jayewardene's reluctance to merge the Northern and Eastern Provinces.¹¹⁶ The Indian government made concerted efforts to break the deadlock but could not make any progress and the talks were terminated on 9 November and the Tamil groups returned to Tamil Nadu.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ *The Times (London)*, 8 November 1985, 'Rebels say ceasefire broken: Talks to solve Sri Lanka's ethnic unrest resume'.

¹¹⁶ This, as discussed in the Introduction and already flagged on several occasions, was a crucial component of the Sri Lanka government's position. Those two Provinces, together, constituted the territory of the separate state the Tamils wished to create. There was intense opposition to such a policy from within the government and from the Opposition parties and pressure groups in Sri Lanka. The insistence of the Tamils too should be noted. As discussed in earlier Chapters, at least from 1973 the Tamils had concluded that such a fusion was essential if a separate Tamil state were to be viable. So, the Tamils kept on insisting that the Sri Lanka government give-in on this issue. The Sri Lanka government, in turn, knowing the Tamils' strategy kept at its strategy of not conceding this. However, with further deterioration of the Sri Lanka government's strength and the Indo-Lanka Accord, this merging had to be accepted by the Jayewardene government in 1987. Discussed later in this Chapter.

¹¹⁷ *The Guardian*, 9 November 1985, 'Colombo peace moves collapse: Indian efforts to revive Sri Lankan peace talks falter'.

Military Processes, 1985. Concurrent with all these efforts at a negotiated deal, Tamil insurgents kept on attacking targets in the North and East Sri Lanka and also in adjacent Districts.¹¹⁸ *These attacks and the government forces' palpable inability to negate them strengthened the Tamil insurgents' resolve to not compromise at the negotiating table. And this was a continuous process throughout this period up to July 1987.* By 1985 the armed forces were concentrated in heavily fortified camps. The Tamil guerrillas had built bunkers and strong points encircling them. The armed forces' camps were under constant surveillance. Unlike 1984, the Tamil insurgents attacked army and navy camps as well as the remaining police stations. This was a marked escalation from 1984.¹¹⁹ While the Tamil insurgents could not overrun these army and navy camps during this era, neither could the army venture out of them at will. At the hint of the army attempting move out of its camps the guerrillas would react with mortars, small arms, and heavy machine gun fire. An army patrol which did manage to venture out was incessantly harassed till it returned back to its camp. Consequently, the army remained cooped within its camps and had no direct contact with Tamil civilians.

IED and landmine attacks also intensified during 1985. These attacks had a serious impact on the vehicular mobility of all the armed forces and police.¹²⁰ The persistent attacks on police stations compelled the government to abandon them. Then the sole government presence became the army camps. Subsequently these army camps themselves were subjected to attacks. During the periods of the initial attacks soldiers ventured out of the camps on foot patrols and tried to dominate the surrounding areas. Gradually these patrols too became impossible to conduct due to constant attack by ever vigilant insurgents who were deployed in well-defended locations and buildings surrounding the camps. Then mobile patrols with armoured cars and armoured personnel carriers had to be used. These mobile patrols radiated out from these army camps, including the camp at Jaffna Fort. In due course these armoured forays, too, had to be stopped as they became too dangerous for the crews and vehicles. They were subjected to harassing fire, sniping and ambushes using IEDs. These occurred both within built-up areas of Jaffna City as well as in the small towns and rural areas of the Jaffna Peninsula. In this manner the government's connection with the Tamil people was severed as much as possible.

¹¹⁸ See Annexure 4.1.

¹¹⁹ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4D: Insurgents Attacks on Police Stations, Army & Navy Camps, 1985.

¹²⁰ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4E: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1985.

4.3: Year 1986

Political Processes 1986. In early 1986 the Indian central government decided that it had to pressurise the Sri Lanka government to grant devolution to the Tamils at least up to a quasi-Federal level. Sri Lanka was unwilling to go beyond the status of a Province in the North but the Tamils "want at least a [federal] state-like status, a pattern which India follows."¹²¹

India demands on 27 February 1986 that "Sri Lanka find a political solution to the ethnic conflict within one month" (...or else). By late February 1986 the Indian government was frustrated by the lack of progress on negotiating an agreement between the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil insurgents. The option chosen by the Indian government was to make very strong and strident demands on the Sri Lanka government to concede even more to Tamil demands. *In an unprecedented move, in February 1986 India demanded that Sri Lanka finds a political solution within one month.* Indian Foreign Minister Mr. B.R. Bhagat was reported as saying that India "would not allow any further worsening of the conflict".¹²² The wording implied a threat to Sri Lanka but the Minister gave no indication of what India would do if President Jayewardene did not respond in one month. The Indian Minister said that India would raise human rights concerns against Sri Lanka at the UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva. Rajiv Gandhi's government was under constant and relentless pressure from within parliament and from Tamil exiles. Sri Lankan Tamil exiles in India fervently lobbied Rajiv to militarily intervene in Sri Lanka.¹²³ Rajiv Gandhi rejected this option but increased pressure on the Sri Lanka government to make even further concessions to Tamil demands. From the perspective of a foreign correspondent in Delhi, Rajiv Gandhi's government "under pressure from Tamils in South India, the Indian Government seems intent on blaming the failure of its peacemaking efforts on Colombo."¹²⁴

By mid-March due to pressure from India, the Sri Lankan government's own desire to make headway on the issue, and the TULF's own reasons, secret talks had begun to take place

¹²¹ *The Times (London)*, 4 February 1986, 'India stops minister's visit to Sri Lanka'.

¹²² *The Guardian*, 28 February 1986, 'India issues warning to Sri Lanka: Demand for political solution to Tamil ethnic conflict'.

¹²³ *The Times (London)*, 25 March 1986, 'Tamil exiles ask Gandhi to intervene'. While Sri Lanka Tamils were agitating for India to militarily intervene, on that very day itself, 28 February, all the Opposition members of India's Parliament in Delhi again walked-out of the legislature in protest at the Gandhi government's handling of the Sri Lankan situation.

¹²⁴ *The Guardian*, 28 February 1986, 'India issues warning to Sri Lanka: Demand for political solution to Tamil ethnic conflict'.

between a Sri Lanka government Minister and a representative from the TULF. Both knew each other personally and both were Harvard educated lawyers.¹²⁵ The talks took place with the support of the Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka. The talks made some progress and had touched upon the 3 main issues which divided the two parties: (i) the issue of linking the Northern and Eastern Province in a devolved governmental system; (ii) the issue of government-assisted land settlement, particularly in the Eastern Province; and (iii) the extent to which police powers would be devolved to the proposed Unit.

Sri Lanka Government's Proposals of 25 April 1986. On 25 April 1986 the Sri Lanka government came-up with yet another set of proposals. The Indian government supported this initiative and wanted discussions to begin based on these proposals.¹²⁶ Behind the scene, the Indian government too had been involved in drafting the proposals.¹²⁷ A high powered Indian government delegation was scheduled to arrive in Colombo towards the end of April. From Rajiv Gandhi's perspective his increased pressure on Sri Lanka had resulted in a significant development. But, Tamil insurgents were hostile to the new Sri Lanka government initiative.¹²⁸

Insurgents Blow up Airliner and Telegraph Office, Colombo. While the new proposals were being examined and discussed in Delhi an insurgent group planted a bomb in a bus. Fortunately alert passengers informed the police and it exploded in the premises of the police station.¹²⁹ By early May 1986 the Indian delegation had arrived in Sri Lanka and negotiations had begun. During this period Tamil insurgents carried out two very serious and provocative attacks in the Colombo area – destroying an airliner and killing tourists and exploding an IED at a main telegraph office in Colombo.¹³⁰ Here we see a recurring thread in the insurrection –

¹²⁵ *The Times (London)*, 12 March 1986, 'Secret talks bring hope of end to Sri Lanka turmoil'. These were Minister for National Security Mr Lalith Athulathmudali and Dr Neelan Tiruchelvam, an ex-MP of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). Both went to the same elite Colombo school, Royal College, and both knew each other well. Ironically both were later killed by the LTTE: Athulathmudali in April 1993 and Tiruchelvam in July 1999. Incidentally, this Dr. Tiruchelvam is the same individual Dr. Nesiiah says came to meet him with Professor A.J. Wilson in 1980 (see Chapter-3).

¹²⁶ *The Guardian*, 26 April 1986, 'Tamil talks backed: India supports Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict peace plan.

¹²⁷ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 6 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka makes new peace push: President Jayewardene proposes early election in effort to end Civil War'. In fact during this 1984-1987 period it can be safely stated that there was very little of any Sri Lanka government negotiating initiative that was unknown to the Indian government. Concurrently, the Indian government agents were also continuously monitoring Tamil insurgent groups in Tamil Nadu.

¹²⁸ Most Tamil insurgents, especially the LTTE, wanted nothing less than a separate state. If the Sri Lanka government came up with proposals which India could throw its weight behind, then the secessionists' calculation was that they would be compelled to accept the proposals.

¹²⁹ *The Guardian*, 26 April 1986, 'Tamil talks backed: India supports Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict peace plan.

¹³⁰ The first, on 3 May, was detonating an IED inside an Air Lanka airliner which killed 21 foreign tourists and injured 41 other passengers. Fortuitously the aircraft was still on the ground, otherwise hundreds of passengers and the entire crew would have died. See *The Island*, 4 May 1986, 'Air Lanka explosion kills 21, injures 41'.

i.e. when any new set of proposals appeared on which serious negotiations could begin, Tamil insurgents carried-out provocative attacks or exploded bombs which in-turn agitated the Sinhala electorate and compelled the Sri Lanka government to take stronger security measures and/or harden its negotiating position.¹³¹ However, in spite of these attacks President Jayewardene said on 15 June 1986 that he had further added to his proposals and that he would reveal the details at the negotiating table.

Indian officials hope that the clarifications will be *enough to sell the peace package to the moderate Tamil United Liberation Front*. Highly placed sources in Delhi say that *if the TULF accepts the package, India will get very tough with the militant leaders*, who have their headquarters in the southern Indian city of Madras. 'We will tell them to lay down their arms, or else,' said one official [emphases added].¹³²

On 24 June the Indian government gave its official backing to the Sri Lanka government's new proposals. This was a major development. The Indian government anticipated that this would anger the Tamil insurgents who were committed to independent state and that they would try to block the negotiations. The Indian government warned Tamil insurgents that they would suffer consequences if they did so.

Indian officials, however, have given a warning that Tamil extremists, whose leaders are based in the southern Indian city of Madras, *should not try to block the peace process*. 'If they do,' an official said 'they could be *jeopardising the hospitality they enjoy of living freely on Indian soil* [emphases added].¹³³

President Jayewardene told representatives of 8 Opposition parties at a Conference in Colombo on 25 June that Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was pleased with the new proposals for devolution. He said that the unit of devolution would be the Provincial Council – i.e. not the District which had been the government's position till then – with an elected chief minister. The port of Trincomalee would be excluded from any Province's area of authority. A Political Parties' Conference (PPC) would be held daily from 15 to 18 July for the devolution proposals to be studied in detail.¹³⁴

In spite of India's threats the hard-line segment of the Tamil insurgents' gave their answer to these negotiations just a few hours before the Conference began on 25 June: they killed 16

The second was the explosion of a bomb on 7 May at the Central Telegraph Office (CTO) in Colombo which killed 11 and injured 114 persons *The Island*, 8 May 1986, 'Bomb blasts CTO: 11 dead, 114 hurt'.

¹³¹ For example, this happened just before the 2nd round of Thimpu talks and also happened in April 1987 when a massive bomb exploded in Colombo (discussed later in this Chapter).

¹³² *The Guardian*, 16 June 1986, 'Jayawardene will explain peace plan: Proposals to end Sri Lankan conflict'. This, incidentally, was an acknowledgement that Tamil insurgents were located on Indian soil.

¹³³ *The Guardian*, 25 June 1986, 'India supports Sri Lankan plan to end Tamil conflict'. But these warnings did not prevent the Tamil insurgents killing Sinhalese the very next day itself. It is the present author's assessment that the Indian intelligence services, Ministry of Defence and Prime Minister's security division itself seriously misjudged the threat that hard-line Tamil insurgents (primarily the LTTE) posed to India's security and to Indian politicians themselves. In spite of the above type of warning the hard-line insurgents wrecked the Indo-Lanka Accord, fought the Indian forces in Sri Lanka (the IPKF) and killed 1,155 of them and also, worst of all, killed Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

¹³⁴ *The Times (London)*, 26 June 1986, 'Sri Lankan peace plan backed by Gandhi: Indian Premier reportedly approves island's proposal for devolution'.

civilians and injured 57 people in three separate landmine explosions in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.¹³⁵ The purpose of these landmine attacks was to derail the talks and if possible also to trigger off retaliatory attacks against Tamil civilians by Sinhala civilians and Sri Lanka armed forces.

In these new proposals the Sri Lanka government had been compelled to, yet again, concede a bit more on the joining together of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, i.e. the perennial 'Unit of Devolution' issue.

*One of the most difficult problems during any negotiations would be the question of linking the north and the east, but the Government has made a concession in saying that 'suitable institutionalised arrangements' could be made for the provinces to 'consult with each other and act in coordination on matters of mutual interest and concern'. Tamil leaders are expected to seek detailed clarification on this clause, which is seen as some kind of step towards unity [emphases added].*¹³⁶

But the hard-line Tamil insurgents were opposed to even these improved proposals. There was deadlock between them and Sri Lanka government. But President Jayewardene declared that he would go ahead with his devolution plan regardless of "the hard-line Tamil groups fighting for a separate state."¹³⁷ The Sri Lanka government expected the Indian government to persuade the moderate TULF to attend the Conference.¹³⁸ In early July 1986 President Jayewardene concurrently made shrewd overtures to the main Sinhala opposition party, the SLFP.¹³⁹ But the SLFP would not give its support to the President and when the Political Parties Conference (PPC) took place it boycotted the Conference.¹⁴⁰

The TULF leaders responded positively to the Sri Lanka government's invitation and arrived in Colombo but the insurgent groups did not attend. A bomb was thrown at the hotel in which the TULF delegation was scheduled to stay. But the TULF persevered and said that "we hope to discuss with the government issues relating to the units of devolution and a suitable linkage

¹³⁵ *The Times (London)*, 26 June 1986, 'Sri Lankan peace plan backed by Gandhi: Indian Premier reportedly approves island's proposal for devolution'. These killings were targeted at derailing the possibility of a negotiated solution.

¹³⁶ *The Guardian*, 26 June 1986, '19 die as Colombo unveils peace plan: Sri Lanka'.

¹³⁷ *The Guardian*, 27 June 1986, 'Sri Lanka to push ahead with Tamil devolution plans'.

¹³⁸ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 6 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka makes new peace push: President Jayewardene proposes early election in effort to end Civil War'.

¹³⁹ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 6 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka makes new peace push: President Jayewardene proposes early election in effort to end Civil War'. Mrs Bandaranaike had been agitating for early elections for many years. Jayewardene knew (as did most adult Sinhalese, Tamils and the Indian government) that opposition from the Sinhalese majority too could derail any negotiated solution. The President offered to bring forward to 1988 the parliamentary elections which were scheduled to be held in 1989. In exchange President Jayewardene requested SLFP leader Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike to support his devolution proposals.

¹⁴⁰ *The Times (London)*, 21 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka plan for devolution attacked'.

of the north and east, among other matters".¹⁴¹ But the Sri Lanka government continued to remain apprehensive of the consequences of such a merger:

The Sri Lankan government has so far refused to consider merging the two provinces because of fears that they would rapidly become an independent Tamil state.¹⁴²

This apprehension of the Sri Lanka government was shared by large numbers of the Sinhala electorate as well. Simultaneously, the Indian government kept on pressing the Sri Lankan government to give more concessions to the TULF. The then Indian Foreign Minister speaking in Madras appealed to President Jayewardene to concede more at the talks. The Foreign Minister said that when President Jayewardene had originally sent his draft to India he had hinted that he would make more concessions during the negotiations. The Indian Foreign said publicly that he hoped that President Jayewardene would "honour his word".¹⁴³ This was indeed very intense pressure on President Jayewardene from India.

During this period Tamil insurgents continued with provocative attacks. They "blew up a bus killing 31 and injuring 67, most from the majority Sinhalese community".¹⁴⁴ Such attacks were clearly meant to derail the reform process and promote the hardline Tamil insurgents' claim that only a separate state would suffice. "The recent increased violence suggests that the guerrillas are intent on wrecking Jayewardene's peace proposals, which are designed to devolve some power to the Tamils."¹⁴⁵

SLFP accuses UNP Government of 'betraying' the Sinhalese. Concurrent to the opposition from the Tamils, the President faced opposition from the SLFP from a directly opposite direction – his Sinhala voters. The SLFP's claim was that the government was conceding too much to Tamil demands and betraying the Sinhalese. The SLFP refused to attend the Conference and the Leader of the Opposition at that time, Anura Bandaranaike, Mrs Bandaranaike's son, made a scathing attack on the government and stated that President Jayewardene's proposals were tantamount to "*virtually handing a separate state to the minority Tamils on a platter*" [emphases added].¹⁴⁶ This was blatantly untrue but was characteristic of the 'out-bidding' that both the SLFP and the UNP indulged-in, when in the

¹⁴¹ *The Guardian*, 12 July 1986, 'Tamil leaders not deterred by bomb: Talks to end Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict'.

¹⁴² *The Sunday Times (London)*, 13 July 1986, 'Tamils cool to talks: Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict'.

¹⁴³ *The Guardian*, 14 July 1986, 'Tamils reject Colombo deal: Sri Lankan peace talks'.

¹⁴⁴ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 27 July 1986, 'Christ' helps in talks on Tamils: Local film star asked to help end Sri Lankan civil war'.

¹⁴⁵ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 27 July 1986, 'Christ' helps in talks on Tamils: Local film star asked to help end Sri Lankan civil war'.

¹⁴⁶ *The Times (London)*, 21 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka plan for devolution attacked'. Mr Anura Bandaranaike was the Leader of the Opposition at that time.

Opposition. Anura Bandaranaike stated that the SLFP agreed that a political solution was needed but "not at any cost". He said that any solution had to have the support of the Sinhala people and the Tamil insurgents.¹⁴⁷ This last condition was impossible to attain and all Sinhala, Tamil and Indian politicians knew this. During these months Mrs Bandaranaike and her son Anura campaigned throughout the Sinhalese Districts saying that the new proposals endangered the collective interests of the Sinhala people.¹⁴⁸ Here was a manifestation of yet another systemic problem in the attempt to implement a counterinsurgency campaign in Sri Lanka, namely the main opposition party – be it the SLFP or UNP - undercutting the policies of the party which happened to be in power.

President Jayewardene was acutely aware of the need to maintain the support of at least a simple majority of the Sinhala voters if his proposed reforms were to succeed. His desperation at this time can be gauged by the fact that he asked one of the most Opposition politicians – whom he had arrested and kept in remand custody for some time in 1980 – to assist him to help negotiate a ceasefire with the Tamil insurgents. This politician was Sri Lanka's most popular and charismatic male film actor, Vijaya Kumaratunga, who was also the husband of Mrs. Bandaranaike's younger daughter, Chandrika.¹⁴⁹ But the LTTE confirmed that their policy was to disrupt the peace discussions in Colombo and vowed to keep on fighting till they won an independent Tamil state.¹⁵⁰

On 15 August President Jayewardene and the TULF began talks in Colombo.¹⁵¹ The talks made some headway but no conclusive agreement could be reached. The Indian government continued to pressurise the Sri Lanka government to concede more to the Tamil demands. It advocated the joining together of the Northern and Eastern Provinces, one of the main demands of the TULF and all the insurgent groups, and which the Sri Lanka government had resisted up to that time. As the talks progressed the Sri Lanka government proposed a boundaries commission which could re-draw the boundaries of the Northern and Eastern

¹⁴⁷ *The Times (London)*, 21 July 1986, 'Sri Lanka plan for devolution attacked'.

¹⁴⁸ *The Times (London)*, 29 August 1986, 'Sri Lanka peace talks face hostility from both sides'.

¹⁴⁹ *The Sunday Times (London)*, 27 July 1986, 'Christ' helps in talks on Tamils: Local film star asked to help end Sri Lankan civil war'. This was Vijaya Kumaranatunge (mistakenly and widely referred-to as Kumaratunga) who was married to Mrs. Bandaranaike's younger daughter, Chandrika Bandaranaike. The reason for 'Christ' in the above article's title is because he acted as Jesus Christ in a Sinhala film some years previously. Chandrika was elected as the Prime Minister and then the President of Sri Lanka in August and November 1994, respectively (mentioned in Chapter-5).

¹⁵⁰ *The Guardian*, 7 August 1986, 'Tigers' reject peace process: Tamil guerrilla group confirms it will keep fighting for independence in Sri Lanka.

¹⁵¹ *The Times (London)*, 16 August 1986, 'Tamils in peace talks: Sri Lanka'.

Provinces.¹⁵² This was a potentially major development which could have resulted in a negotiated settlement.

The Indian Government of Mr Rajiv Gandhi has, with the assistance, or at least acquiescence, of the Western friends of Sri Lanka, *been bringing pressure on the Jayewardene Government to improve its offer to the Tamils*. The new agreement, hammered out in a series of meetings with the more moderate politicians of the Tamil United Liberation Front, is *a distinct improvement on what has been suggested before* [emphases added].¹⁵³

It was vitally important that the insurgent groups, specially the LTTE, became a part of the negotiations. At this stage that the Indian government again came directly into the process and said that it would organise a meeting in India to which all the Tamil insurgent groups and the TULF would be required to attend. By this time Rajiv Gandhi was also meeting Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr. M.G. Ramachandran ('MGR', the Tamil Nadu film-actor turned politician) whose tacit consent was obtained.¹⁵⁴ This was very significant as Mr. Ramachandran was looked-up to as a Tamil leader and had a large support base within the global Tamil Diaspora. Over the previous years, especially after July 1983, MGR had also given his support and sanctuary to Tamil insurgents in Tamil Nadu, especially the LTTE.¹⁵⁵ In November 1986 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had persuaded him that the Sri Lanka government had been pressurised into making significant concessions and that the next step was to get the Tamil insurgent groups to participate in the negotiations.

On 3 November 1986 LTTE threatened that it would declare UDI on 1 January 1987. But on 3 November the LTTE still refused to accept the Indian government's policy. It is possible that the LTTE sensed that the Sri Lanka government was prepared to make significant concessions which could lead to a negotiated solution without the partition of the island. From the LTTE's perspective that was not what it wanted; it wanted a separate Tamil state. In any event the LTTE released a statement in Madras, Tamil Nadu, that it would make a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on 1 January 1987.¹⁵⁶ This threat by the LTTE was acutely embarrassing to the Indian government: the threat of UDI was made from Madras, Indian soil. If carried out it effectively meant the end of India's efforts as a negotiator. It was also a public slap in the face of the Indian central government. It would also affect India's credentials in the eyes of the international

¹⁵² *The Times (London)*, 6 October 1986, 'Delhi meeting to seek end of Tamil deadlock: Sri Lankan government and insurgents to meet in India to discuss ethnic conflict'.

¹⁵³ *The Times (London)*, 10 November 1986, 'Indian state police act to seize 1,000 Tamils and arms in dawn raids'.

¹⁵⁴ *The Times (London)*, 6 October 1986, 'Delhi meeting to seek end of Tamil deadlock: Sri Lankan government and insurgents to meet in India to discuss ethnic conflict'.

¹⁵⁵ Subramanian, Narendra, 1999: 303, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India*.

¹⁵⁶ *The Times (London)*, 3 November 1986, 'Tamil Tigers leader is expected to quit India'.

community.¹⁵⁷ The LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran was also reported as getting prepared to travel back to Sri Lanka because he anticipated being arrested by India and a crack-down on all the insurgent groups by the Indian government.¹⁵⁸ On 4 November 1986 the five main Tamil insurgent groups formally met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Mr. Ramachandran ('MGR') and formally rejected the Sri Lanka government's proposals.¹⁵⁹

Indian Government Arrests (and releases) 3,000 Tamil Insurgents and Confiscates weapons, November 1986. Rajiv Gandhi was extremely exasperated at the insurgents outright rejection of the compromises offered by the Sri Lankan government. Mr. Ramachandran too was reported as being annoyed with the insurgents. Several weeks later Mr. Gandhi publicly criticised the LTTE for its lack of cooperation.

India, for its part, appears profoundly irritated by the Tamil Tigers' outright rejection of the compromise, even as a basis for further discussion. Mr Gandhi himself directly contradicted them in public, saying the proposals were good. Even Mr M. G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, who has been sympathetic to the Sri Lankan Tamils, showed signs of impatience [emphases added].¹⁶⁰

In the face of the non-cooperation by the insurgent groups, especially the LTTE, the Indian central government and Tamil Nadu state governments decided to take resolute punitive actions to convey the power that the Indian's had over the Tamil insurgents who were on Indian soil. On 10 November many hundreds of squads of Tamil Nadu state police carried out hundreds of raids throughout Tamil Nadu and arrested about 3,000 Tamil insurgents and 100 of their leaders.¹⁶¹ The arrested cadres were identified, photographed and then released. Large amounts of weapons were also taken into custody but these were not given back. The weapons included anti-aircraft missiles, assault rifles, rocket-launchers and grenades.¹⁶²

The leaders of the insurgents were placed under informal house arrest and instructed by police to not to leave their residences. Armed police were stationed at their gates.¹⁶³ LTTE leader Prabhakaran, the LTTE's chief theoretician Anton Balasingham, EROS leader V. Balakumar

¹⁵⁷ Because if such a UDI was carried out it would have amounted to an insurgent group, operating from Indian territory, trying to officially secede from a neighbouring country. And the Indian central government either standing by (and thereby seemingly giving its tacit approval) or being unable impose its will on the insurgent group. Both actions did not show India in a good light. In any event the Indian central government was very much against a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka.

¹⁵⁸ *The Times (London)*, 3 November 1986, 'Tamil Tigers leader is expected to quit India'.

¹⁵⁹ *The Times (London)*, 4 November 1986, 'World Summary-Tamils say no: Sri Lanka'.

¹⁶⁰ *The Guardian*, 19 November 1986, 'Sri Lanka delight at Gandhi's deal: Indian Premier's solution to Sri Lankan ethnic conflict welcomed'.

¹⁶¹ *The Guardian*, 10 November 1986, 'Sri Lanka's rebel leaders held in India'.

¹⁶² *The Guardian*, 10 November 1986, 'Sri Lanka's rebel leaders held in India'.

¹⁶³ *The Guardian*, 10 November 1986, 'Sri Lanka's rebel leaders held in India'.

and A. Selvam of TELO were among those under house arrest.¹⁶⁴ Balasingham stated that "among arms seized were surface-to-air missiles¹⁶⁵ and many heavy weapons which were awaiting shipment to the shores of Sri Lanka. The long-range 50mm guns fitted to our boats have been taken".¹⁶⁶ He said that this meant that the LTTE's capacity to protect itself at sea was affected. This action of the Indian government was more a show of force by the Indian government as all those arrested were released. If they were kept under arrest then that would have been a great help to the Sri Lanka government. In any event the seized weapons were not given back to the insurgents.¹⁶⁷

During July 1983- July 1987 whether *India fully realised the dangers Tamil insurgents posed to its own security and to the security of its political leaders is doubtful*.¹⁶⁸ But the ease with which India had allowed such large numbers of heavily armed insurgents to operate from Tamil Nadu in the manner in which they did needs to be noted.¹⁶⁹ Even this 1986 November's token arrest of 3,000 insurgents and confiscation of weapons was not a serious crack-down. It

¹⁶⁴ *The Times (London)*, 10 November 1986, 'Indian state police act to seize 1,000 Tamils and arms in dawn raids', and *The Guardian*, 10 November 1986, 'Sri Lanka's rebel leaders held in India'. EROS was the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students and TELO was the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation.

¹⁶⁵ The IISS had mentioned in March 1986 that the LTTE possessed SA-7 anti-aircraft missiles (see *The Ceylon Daily News*, 22 March 1986, 'Militants armed with surface to air missiles, says IISS report'). If the IISS (International Institute for Strategic Studies, London) knew about the missiles in March 1986, the US and EU governments and the Indian government too would have known this. The fact that Mr. Balasingham of the LTTE confirmed this is significant. Mentioning this may have been a mistake on his part as such weapons had not yet been used against the Sri Lanka Air Force. Publicly confirming this information would have increased the concern of the USA and EU countries and their air travelling public as there was concern about such weapons being used against civilian airliners.

¹⁶⁶ *The Times (London)*, 10 November 1986, 'Indian state police act to seize 1,000 Tamils and arms in dawn raids'. (Author's Note: although Balasingham is reported as mentioning "50mm guns", it is highly likely that this is a mistake by either Mr Balasingham or the newspaper reporter. Guns of 50mm calibre are quite large and have a heavy recoil and can be mounted only on large sized vessels with suitably strong structures to withstand the recoil when such guns are fired. At that time the LTTE did not have such vessels. The weapons actually taken into custody were probably 0.50-inch calibre heavy machine guns. Among insurgent cadres and the Sri Lanka armed forces too (which had such 0.50-inch calibre heavy machine guns) the colloquial way of referring to them was "five-zero's", "five-zero guns" or "fifty calibre guns". The word 'fifty' may have confused either Mr Balasingham or the reporter. Mr. Balasingham was a middle-aged man in poor health who had never taken part in any LTTE guerrilla attack. He was completely proficient in English, was a UK citizen and the theoretician and spokesman of the LTTE.)

¹⁶⁷ This action had an aspect which is relevant to India's own 'state security'. Over the years the identity and whereabouts of Tamil insurgents would have been kept under close surveillance by India's different police organisations – both central government police and Tamil Nadu state police – and also India's intelligence organisations, the most well known being RAW (Research and Analysis Wing). Over the years there have been numerous Indian newspaper reports on this. As was known at that time – and admitted by India in the text of the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 – Tamil insurgents had been given military training on Indian soil for many years. Records of the insurgents would have been kept by the Indian government agencies which were involved in these activities.

¹⁶⁸ After the complicated exit of the IPKF from Sri Lanka in 1990 and the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 there was a complete change in the Indian central government's policy to the Tamil insurgency. It adopted a strict 'hands off' approach to the Tamil insurgency. But by that time significant damage had been done to the Indian national interest in the sense that India's Congress party's leader – and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru – had been assassinated by the LTTE, and damage done to India's international image.

¹⁶⁹ It needs to be noted that India did this while simultaneously complaining at numerous international meetings, and Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press briefings, that Pakistan was assisting Islamic insurgents in Kashmir.

was a ploy to pressurise Tamil insurgents, especially the LTTE, to fall in-line with Rajiv Gandhi's policies.

Initial (false) signals by the LTTE that it was ready to cooperate. From 10 November onwards Indian officials maintained pressure on the Tamil insurgents to participate in the negotiations. On 16 November 1986 the summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) began in Bangalore, India. On the side-lines of the Conference President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Gandhi met separately for talks on the Tamil insurgency and Sri Lanka's new proposals:

Mr Gandhi played a *subtle game of carrot and stick* at Bangalore. To balance the crackdown, he sent an *Indian air force plane to fly three top leaders of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [to Bangalore]* for consultations during the talks. *This virtually gave them the recognition they craved* as the chief spokesmen for Sri Lanka's Tamils [emphases added].¹⁷⁰

During the discussions the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, 'MGR' also joined Gandhi and Jayewardene and brought the information that the LTTE had agreed to participate in the negotiations if some kind of linkage between the Northern and Eastern Provinces was granted.¹⁷¹ The concept put forward by President Jayewardene was that the boundaries of the Eastern Province could be re-demarcated and the those areas with Tamil majority population (i.e. Batticaloa District) be linked to the Northern Province but the Districts with significant Sinhala and Muslim populations (i.e. Trincomalee and Ampara) be treated separately.

But the November 1986 Bangalore negotiations failed. Although the LTTE stated¹⁷² that it would abandon its demand for an independent state, it insisted on the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces.¹⁷³ But for President Jayewardene and the Sri Lanka government team this was not an option due to concerns about future secession, possible encroachments by India into Sri Lanka and also the opposition from the majority of the Sinhala electorate.

¹⁷⁰ *The Guardian*, 22 November 1986, 'Tamils stand firm against push for peace: New efforts to end Sri Lanka's ethnic violence'. Mr Gandhi had the enormous resources of the Indian state at his disposal. Sending an aircraft to ferry LTTE leader Prabhakaran was an expression of the power of the Office he held and he may have thought that he had impressed the LTTE leader. But it is doubtful that Gandhi had a correct assessment of Prabhakaran. Less than a year later, 10 October 1987 onwards, the LTTE and the IPKF were locked in battles in Sri Lanka's North and East. Eventually the IPKF suffered 1000+ killed and 3000+ wounded in action. And, in May 1991, 4½ years after this meeting in Bangalore Gandhi himself was assassinated by an LTTE female suicide bomber. This assassination itself must have needed at least one year's preparation.

¹⁷¹ *The Times (London)*, 17 November 1986, 'Step nearer to ending Sri Lanka dispute as Tamils join talks'.

¹⁷² The LTTE's statement in Bangalore was violated by it in the years ahead. It fought for a separate state with the Indian armed forces during 1987-1990 and with the Sri Lanka government up to 1994 (the end date of this Thesis). And it continued with its effort from 1995 to May 2009 (this period falls outside the perimeters of this Thesis).

¹⁷³ *The Guardian*, 22 November 1986, 'Tamils stand firm against push for peace: New efforts to end Sri Lanka's ethnic violence'.

[...] *a merger* [of the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka], even as part of Sri Lanka, is *unthinkable to the great majority of Sinhalese. It is still seen as the thin end of the wedge of Tamil separatism and, eventually, domination by India.* Despite his large majority in Parliament and his personal popularity, Mr Jayawardene could not have sold it to his own community, even if he had wanted to [emphases added].¹⁷⁴

Military Processes, 1986

By 1986 the insurrection further increased in intensity when compared to 1985. There were attacks on army camps and police stations in every month of the year.¹⁷⁵ This illustrated the insurgent's capacity for sustaining such guerrilla attacks on a continuous basis. By 1986 the Tamil insurgents had become tactically very skilful in the use of command detonated IEDs and landmines. These attacks were often combined with attacks on the survivors with small arms and grenades. The tactical mobility and operations of police and army patrols were severely affected by these attacks.¹⁷⁶

A close analysis of above insurgent tactics enables the deduction of Tamil insurgent strategy. First, in 1985-1986 police stations were consistently attacked. Priority was given to the police stations in Jaffna Peninsula. After the government was compelled to withdraw these police stations the insurgents turned their attention on the smaller army camps. These, in turn, had to be abandoned. And by April 1986 the Jaffna Peninsula was almost totally controlled by the Tamil insurgents.

The Jaffna peninsula is almost totally controlled by the militants, who mingle freely with the local population. Many were born and brought up in the neighbourhood. They walk around openly carrying sub-machineguns, collect taxes, and even direct the traffic. The troops, unable to operate in such a hostile environment, are largely confined to barracks. Outside barracks, they travel in heavily armoured convoys and are vulnerable to sniper and landmine attacks [emphases added].¹⁷⁷

It is these military victories on the ground, in the North and East which contributed to the hardline Tamil insurgents' determination to oppose both the Sri Lanka government and the Indian government, and not agree to a negotiated settlement.

¹⁷⁴ *The Guardian*, 22 November 1986, 'Tamils stand firm against push for peace: New efforts to end Sri Lanka's ethnic violence'.

¹⁷⁵ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4F: Insurgents Attacks against Police, Army, Navy and Air Force Camps, Stations & Establishments, 1986.

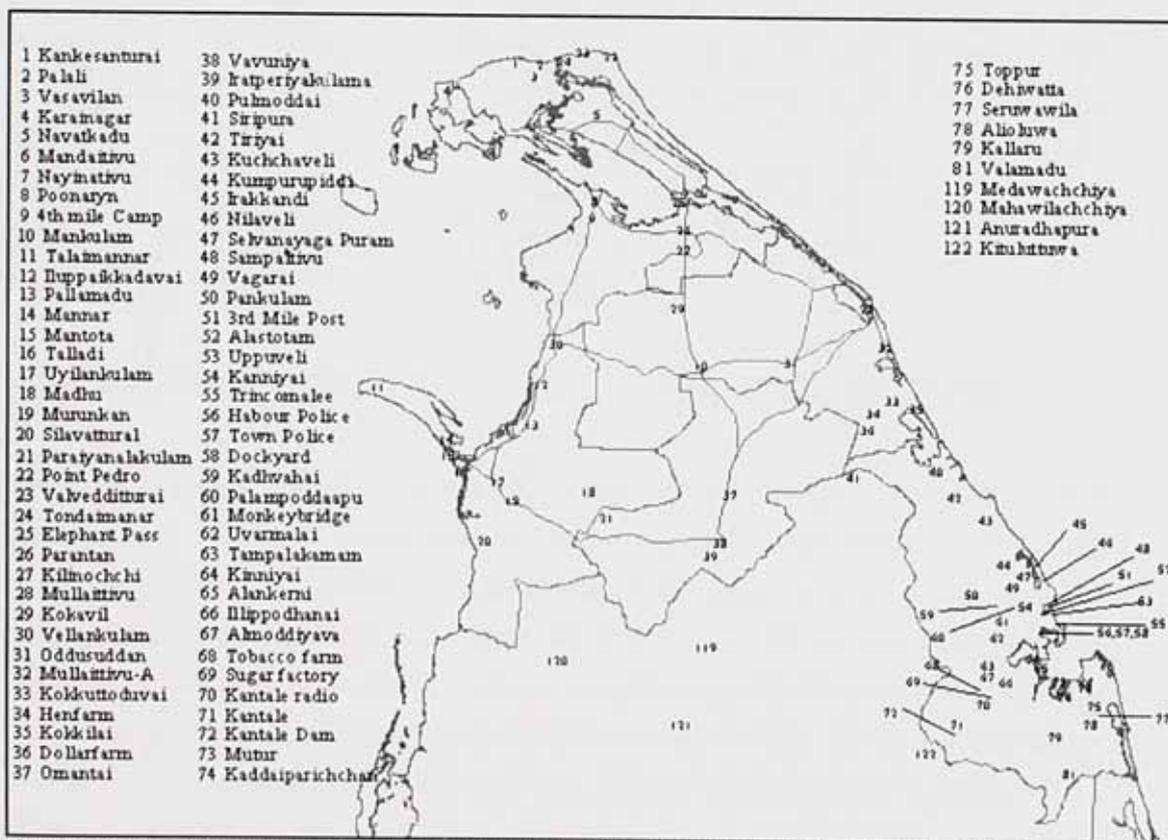
¹⁷⁶ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4G: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1986.

¹⁷⁷ *The Guardian*, 1 April 1986, 'Colombo fears rebel offensive: Tamil separatists prepare attack against Sri Lankan troops'.

Militarily, the government forces were largely on a defensive posture. One government strategy was to open a large number of army camps and man them with various numbers of personnel (see Maps 4.1 and 4.2). Patrols would radiate outwards from these camps, searching for insurgents. Initially these patrols were on foot, and then later, in areas such as the Jaffna Peninsula these patrols were in armoured vehicles. The army did not have a large number of armoured vehicles at that time and the battalions had to make do with whatever transport that was available.

Very little detailed information is available in the public realm about military operations during these years. Whatever information that has been gleaned by the present author from retired army officers reveals that the vast majority of the operations were platoon or company sized patrols or 'jungle bashing' treks into the forest in search of insurgents. Sometimes insurgents were located and fire fights occurred between the two groups. Sometimes the army and police patrols were ambushed by insurgents. In vast majority of cases there was no contact with insurgents.

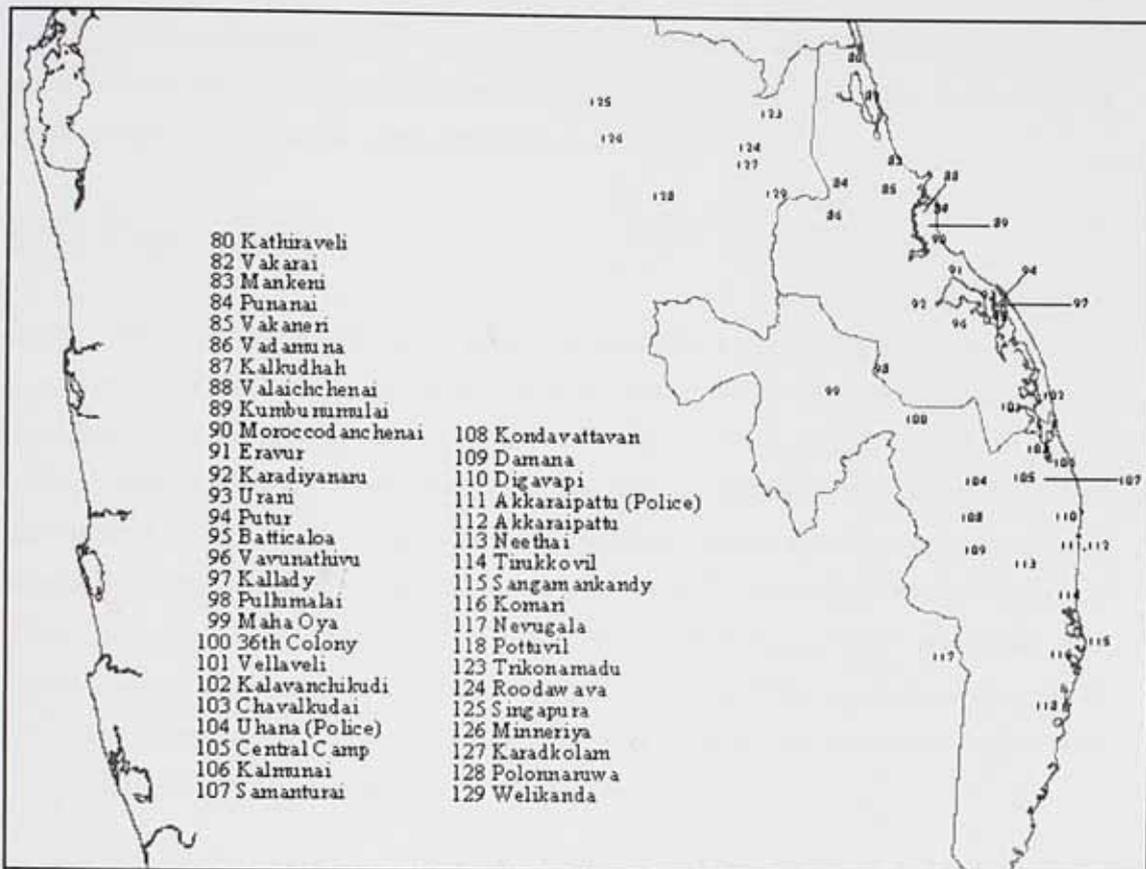
Map 4.1: Military and Police Camps, Northern Province plus Trincomalee District, circa 1986



(Source: Map in 'Militärstützpunkte in Sri Lanka', Südasiens-Info, Vol.7, Nr.3-4/87, published by Südasiensbüro, Bonn, Germany. Redrawn by author using GIS software.)

Maps 4.1 and 4.2 (see above and below) are based on a very rare map which appeared in *Südasiens-Info*, a little known Journal of a German Non Governmental Organisation named *Südasiensbüro*.

Map 4.2: Military & Police Camps, Eastern Province minus Trincomalee District, circa 1986



(Source: Map in 'Militärstützpunkte in Sri Lanka', *Südasiens-Info*, Vol.7, Nr.3-4/87, published by Südasiensbüro, Bonn.)

No similar maps were allowed to be published in Sri Lankan newspapers. This map had been prepared by a German journalist who travelled extensively in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in 1984-1985. These two maps pertain to all army, navy, air force and police establishments in the North and East that he was able to locate. While these maps pertain to 1986, by that time many of these camps and police stations *may* have been closed down and may not have been in existence. It was precisely this wide network of police stations and army camps that the Tamil guerrillas attacked and consequently compelled the government to shrink its area of control. In spite of these (possible) inaccuracies these maps are useful for us to obtain an overview of government strategy at that time.

As insurgent attacks on police stations and military camps, ambushes, and landmine attacks became numerous, the government went from one crisis to another. Troops tended to attack Tamil civilians who happened to live or work in the vicinity of an ambush. Provoking excesses by government forces is a time-tested principle in protracted guerrilla warfare. This was well understood by Tamil guerrillas who put their knowledge to deadly use.

The government merely carried out standard 'search and destroy' military operations intended to destroy as many insurgents as they could – i.e. the destruction of subversives. But, there was no programme by the government to counter-act the processes of *subversion* that were underway conducted by Tamil insurgent groups within the Tamil people.

4.4: Year- 1987

By late-1986 and early-1987 it was very clear that the military situation in Jaffna Peninsula and large parts of the Vanni had turned against the army. The army was corralled within their camps and could move out only in very strong columns with armoured cars. Obviously, in such a situation there could be no normal contact with the civilian population. The insurgent tactics had *succeeded in separating the government from the Tamil people, the exact opposite of what should have happened in a successful counterinsurgency.*¹⁷⁸ Army camps were the targets as all the police stations had ceased to exist by this time.¹⁷⁹ The attacks stopped in mid-July 1987 because of the ceasefire which came into effect with the signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord on 29 July 1987. During early 1987 the insurgent's IED and landmine attacks were as proficient as ever.¹⁸⁰ They too ceased consequent to the arrival of the Indians.¹⁸¹

In the first half of 1987 the insurrection continued unabated. The Tamil insurgents – specially the LTTE – were unyielding on the demand that they wanted the Northern and Eastern Provinces combined together and would not accept any other proposal put forward by the Sri Lanka government.¹⁸² The Indian government kept on lobbying with the LTTE and the Sri Lanka government but no compromise could be reached.

¹⁷⁸ See Chapter 6, Consolidated Conclusions.

¹⁷⁹ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4H: Insurgents Attacks on Army Camps, 1987.

¹⁸⁰ See Annexure 4.1, Table 4I: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1987.

¹⁸¹ Landmine and IED attacks began again in October 1987 with one attack in Vakara (Batticaloa District) and Kumpurupiddi (Trincomalee District). These two attacks were against Sri Lankan armed forces. By this time the LTTE had begun to re-ignite the insurrection and the ceasefire negotiated was falling apart. By early October the LTTE had begun to attack and kill large numbers of Sinhala civilians in the East and also attack Sri Lanka forces. The Indian government tried to re-establish the ceasefire but failed. On the orders of the Indian government the IPKF began full-scale military operations against the LTTE on 10 October 1987.

¹⁸² There is a great deal of circumstantial evidence that this demand was a strategic gambit on the LTTE's part and that it remained *committed to a separate state and nothing less*. This can be inferred by the fact that under the provisions of the Indo-Lanka Accord (signed on 29 July 1987) and the 13th Amendment to Sri Lanka's

IED Explosion in Colombo's main bus terminal, 21 April 1987 – the "Game Changer". During the evening rush hour of 21 April 1987 a large IED exploded in the vicinity of Colombo's main bus terminus in the *Pettah* area of the City. The explosion took place when thousands of office workers, students and self-employed workers were milling about in the area. All the victims were civilians - officially 113 were killed and 282 injured. This IED explosion can be identified as a 'Game Changer' as it resulted in the Sri Lanka government taking decisions which inadvertently precipitated direct intervention by India.¹⁸³ One initial report stated that at least 100 people had been killed, scores injured, 15 passenger vehicles and taxis and 20 shops destroyed.¹⁸⁴ Another gave graphic eyewitness details:

"Seven light, privately owned buses and three heavy Transport Board single-deckers, all of which were either full or being boarded by home-going workers, were virtually destroyed in the blast. [...] ***The bodies of the dead lay in bloody heaps among the glass and twisted metal of the ruined buses.*** [...] More than 200 injured were treated at the Colombo General Hospital which ***eventually had to close its doors to further admissions.*** Jayewardenapura Hospital, a few miles away, also treated more than 200 casualties. First estimates by the authorities were that more than a hundred people had been killed. ***But at the hospitals they soon stopped counting the dead.*** The mortuary quickly overflowed and dead bodies, men and women, were casually heaped in a garage and covered with straw mats [...] ***Scenes at the hospital were like something out of a nineteenth-century war.*** Patients dripping blood were rushed along hospital corridors, often two to a trolley [emphases added]."¹⁸⁵

The casualty details known at that time were formally presented to Parliament on 23 April as 106 dead, 282 wounded of whom 212 were still in hospital.¹⁸⁶ Eventually the number of dead came to 113.¹⁸⁷

The statistics, though horrific, do not hint at the suffering glimpsed by foreign correspondents yesterday during a tour laid on by the National Security Ministry. At the Colombo General Hospital, ***scarred and disabled victims still lie moaning in a ward which, doctors said, was awash with blood on Tuesday night.*** Immediately outside there is a tin-roofed car shed where 38 bodies and bits of bodies were stacked that night. Around the corner, the city morgue is even more horrific, with ***scores of relatives patiently waiting to identify and claim the charred and mutilated corpses*** [emphases added].¹⁸⁸

Constitution (Certified on 14 November 1987) the Northern and Eastern Provinces were combined together. But the LTTE was still not satisfied and recommenced the insurrection – in this case fighting the IPKF – from October 1987 onwards. This is a very important issue and we will return to it later in this Chapter.

¹⁸³ In retaliation to this IED, the Sri Lanka Government launched a large conventional-type military operation in Jaffna Peninsula in May 1987, codenamed *Operation Liberation*. This Operation was strongly condemned by Tamil Nadu politicians who claimed that thousands of Tamil civilians were dying. Rajiv Gandhi too made excessive and totally inaccurate claims that 'carpet bombing' was taking place in Jaffna and called for the military operation to be stopped. The government of Sri Lanka eventually stopped the Operation but by that time the Indian government had set in motion a series of actions (described below) which eventually resulted in the Indo-Lanka Accord being signed on 29 July 1987 and Indian military forces arriving in Sri Lanka.

¹⁸⁴ *The Island*, 22 April 1987, '15 vehicles mangled: 20 shops gutted: Thousands flee carnage'.

¹⁸⁵ *The Times (London)*, 22 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka's violent divisions explode in the heart of Colombo: Over 100 die in massacre at bus station'.

¹⁸⁶ *The Guardian*, 24 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka waits in fear as government promises revenge'.

¹⁸⁷ *The Guardian*, 30 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka steps up the war of words'.

¹⁸⁸ *The Guardian*, 24 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka waits in fear as government promises revenge'.

This bomb explosion generated a great deal of anger amongst the thousands of Sinhala people gathered in the area and throughout the country. The government quickly activated a pre-planned police and armed forces' internal security operation which had been designed specifically to deal with possible unrest and rioting in Colombo. Criminals were rounded up and vehicle and population control security check points were activated throughout Colombo.¹⁸⁹ A curfew was declared and police and army patrolled the streets of the City and no rioting was allowed to occur.¹⁹⁰ The lessons of the July 1983 riots had been learnt by the government, police and army and no disorder was allowed to occur. The 21-hour curfew was relaxed only between 5am to 9am to allow citizens to purchase essential daily provisions.¹⁹¹ The Opposition's leader Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike (a former prime minister, 1960-65 and 1970-77) immediately tightened political pressure on President Jayewardene and stated that the "government was failing to protect the Sinhalese people through lack of vigilance and care."¹⁹²

The deaths and destruction of the bomb created strong political pressures on the government to act very harshly against the Tamil insurgents: "The Government is under heavy pressure from the Sinhalese majority to retaliate without mercy for the Colombo bomb massacre on Tuesday."¹⁹³ Soon after the explosion the government ordered the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) to attack identified Tamil insurgent camps in Jaffna. The SLAF had six Siari-Marchetti, single piston engined aircraft, which were normally used as advanced trainers but could also be fitted with unguided rockets. And also a total of 17 Bell 212 and 412 helicopters.¹⁹⁴ The attacks by these aircraft were largely symbolic as they were the only way the government could immediately strike at Tamil insurgent targets in Jaffna, and announce to the Sinhala people that this was being done. The political pressures on the government were succinctly expressed by a Sri Lankan diplomat:

Sri Lanka diplomats bluntly dismissed an immediate possibility of peace moves. 'My personal feeling is that our Government will have to go on an all-out offensive or else there will be tremendous problems' one said. The Sri Lankan opposition, led by Mrs Bandaranaike and Buddhist clergy, would be looking for signs of weakness or compromise, as would the Sinhalese majority, he said.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ *The Island*, 22 April 1987, 'Operation Thunderbolt'. This was a pre-planned operation for internal security and maintaining Law & Order in Colombo City, code-named 'Thunderbolt'.

¹⁹⁰ *The Guardian*, 22 April 1987, 'Colombo bus station bomb claims 150: Government blames Tamils for rush-hour blast'. *The Guardian's* correspondent too was in the area and filed a harrowing and detailed account.

¹⁹¹ *The Guardian*, 24 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka waits in fear as government promises revenge'.

¹⁹² *The Guardian*, 22 April 1987, 'Colombo bus station bomb claims 150: Government blames Tamils for rush-hour blast'.

¹⁹³ *The Guardian*, 24 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka waits in fear as government promises revenge'.

¹⁹⁴ *The Times (London)*, 1 June 1987, 'Slow struggle on Jaffna peninsula'.

¹⁹⁵ *The Guardian*, 22 April 1987, 'Colombo bomb blasts peace moves'.

It was also assessed that the IED blast would impact negatively on India's attempt to find a negotiated settlement.¹⁹⁶ And the events of the succeeding months proved this to be correct. This bomb explosion illustrated many aspects of the actual difficulties of implementing counterinsurgency: it illustrated (a) the 'utility' of terrorist acts by quite small numbers of insurgents, at crucial junctures, to derail or prevent the possibility of any political reforms; (b) the impact that relatively small insurgent organisations can have on large organisations such as the Indian government and the Sri Lanka government; (c) the ability for insurgents to derail implicitly IDAD type counterinsurgency processes – which was what the Indian and Sri Lanka governments were trying to do – with very little cost in personnel or weaponry.

The Sri Lanka Government decides to take very strong Action against the Insurgents, late-April 1987. The UNP's parliamentary group met in parliament on 23 April and passed a unanimous resolution which "urged the security forces to continue 'without interruption' the annihilation of terrorism and terrorists."¹⁹⁷ The government declared that the complete destruction of all terrorists camps in the North was its objective. The naïve rhetoric used by the UNP parliamentarians was impolitic, extreme and detrimental to Sri Lanka's strategic interests. One MP drew a comparison with the ending of the war with Japan and the role played by dropping atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "*We shall have to take a lot of decisions that will not be helpful to civilians. Jaffna might become a Hiroshima* [emphasis added]."¹⁹⁸ This was a deliberate reference to the dropping of bombs by aircraft and that many Tamil civilians would face death in the near future. *This type of rhetoric was completely detrimental to the Sri Lanka government's and the Sinhala peoples' image in Tamil Nadu and in Delhi.* It is unlikely that President Jayewardene or any of his senior colleagues authorised these types of statements. But nevertheless he did not disassociate his government from these backbench MP's rhetoric.¹⁹⁹ Although these statements were mainly aimed at assuaging Sinhala voters, the Tamil Nadu and the Delhi press picked up these stories and gave them wide publicity in India. This in-turn generated political pressures on Rajiv Gandhi to adopt very hard policies towards Sri Lanka (as the Sri Lanka government was

¹⁹⁶ *The Guardian*, 22 April 1987, 'Colombo bomb blasts peace moves'. This was to prove a correct assessment.

¹⁹⁷ *The Times (London)*, 24 April 1987, 'Colombo pledge to crush Tamil rebels'.

¹⁹⁸ *The Times (London)*, 24 April 1987, 'Colombo pledge to crush Tamil rebels'.

¹⁹⁹ The point that needs to be flagged here is that the Sri Lanka government and State was (and still is) a relatively unsophisticated moderately competent system, and cannot be compared with most European states and the USA. It was (and still is) deficient in institutions and personnel to 'manage' information and also strategic decision making. It is entirely possible that nobody in his Staff brought such impolitic statements to the President's attention. The period after the IED explosion was probably full of NSC (National Security Council) meetings where the details of the imminent large military operation into Jaffna were being finalised. And numerous other matters that the President had to monitor such as the possibility of Sinhala riots against Tamils, what to do about the large number of the dead, trying to garner international support for Sri Lanka and such like.

forced to learn in 3 months time). Later Rajiv Gandhi made totally inaccurate claims of 'carpet bombing' by the Sri Lanka Air Force, knowing full-well that the Sri Lanka Air Force had only 5 or 6 single engined two seat trainers which could carry a few puny bombs.²⁰⁰

There was a lack of understanding amongst the ordinary UNP Members of Parliament (MPs) of the regional military power dynamics in South Asia. One was reported as saying that "There was a time when we did not attack Jaffna because we did not have the strength and the sophisticated weapons."²⁰¹ While it was correct that the Sri Lankan armed forces had increased in personnel and had been able to obtain some new artillery weapons and such like, the possibility of the Indian armed forces entering the arena on the side of the secessionists and the ease with which India could partition Sri Lanka does not seem to have been understood by these MPs. Even more serious than the average UNP MP's lack of understanding was that President Jayewardene, Prime Minister Premadasa and senior Ministers such as Harvard Educated Lalith Athulathmudali the Minister for National Security the misjudged the possible repercussions from India, against Sri Lanka's hash new policies.

On 28 April President Jayewardene increased by several magnitude the inter-state rhetorical criticisms between Sri Lanka and India. Jayewardene harshly criticised Tamil Nadu politicians and Indian intelligence services for aiding Tamil insurgents. He especially singled out Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran by name. Jayewardene carefully sidestepped criticising Rajiv Gandhi. This could have been with the possible intention of differentiating between Tamil Nadu politics and the Indian central government's policies and wanting to keep the Sri Lanka government's communication links with the Indian central government as firm as possible, while concurrently criticising Tamil Nadu.

[President Jayewardene] described the main terrorist group, the Tamil Tigers, *as the 'private army' of Mr M. G. Ramachandran, the Chief Minister of the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. 'I am saying that deliberately, knowing you will publish it, knowing India will see it, knowing the world will see it. I will go into the box to defend you if you are charged,'* he told foreign journalists [in Colombo]. The 81-year-old President *spoke bitterly about the role of India in arming and encouraging the Tamil rebels, whose campaign for a separate homeland in the north and east of the island has cost more than 5,000 lives in four years.* He absolved his friend, the Indian Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, but accused intelligence

²⁰⁰ *The Guardian*, 30 May 1987, 'Tamils lose control of supply route in Jaffna: Government says it has retaken north-east of rebel peninsula'. These Siai-Marchettis' were in the same category as the Bristol 'Bulldog' basic trainer used by the RAF (Royal Air Force) in the past. Gandhi was a former airline pilot. He had to have been briefed by Indian intelligence about the Sri Lanka Air Force. In all probability there was probably nothing significant that India did not know about the Order of Battle of all of Sri Lanka's 3 armed forces and police.

²⁰¹ *The Times (London)*, 24 April 1987, 'Colombo pledged to crush Tamil rebels.'

services in New Delhi, as well as politicians in Tamil Nadu, of abetting the terrorists [emphases added].²⁰²

In any event, President Jayewardene said, that there would be no further negotiations with the Tamil insurgents until their armed actions ceased and the Indian government guaranteed that the insurgents would negotiate without preconditions.²⁰³

In late April 1987, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister acted with further disregard to Sri Lanka's wishes. He decided to give the Tamil people of Sri Lanka the equivalent of US \$ 3.2 million 'humanitarian aid'.²⁰⁴ The Sri Lanka government objected vehemently to this act and said that "the planned food and medical aid was not needed. It was an *interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state* [emphases added]." The Sri Lanka government stated that it was not humanitarian and because it was selective, and therefore a racist act.²⁰⁵ The allegation of the violation of the Sri Lankan State's sovereignty by Tamil Nadu is significant as it flagged the entry into the discourse of the possibility of future such acts – either by Tamil Nadu or the Indian Central Government - which would violate Sri Lanka's sovereignty. A few days later the Sri Lanka government revealed that it had information that the Tamil Nadu government had given back to the Tamil insurgents the communications equipment, arms, and ammunition which had been impounded by the Tamil Nadu police in November 1986.²⁰⁶

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister continued to make provocative statements in support of the Tamil insurgents.²⁰⁷ Strictly speaking these fell within the ambit of India's foreign policy and were the prerogative of the Central government in Delhi. But the Central government in Delhi was compelled to ignore these as the support of Mr. Ramachandran's party was needed to maintain the stability of the coalition government in Delhi. Prime Minister Gandhi – like the Prime Ministers before and after him - was dependent on the support of regional politicians like the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister.²⁰⁸

²⁰² *The Guardian*, 29 April 1987, 'Indian help for Tigers savaged: Terror group 'the private army' of Tamil Nadu chief minister'.

²⁰³ *The Guardian*, 29 April 1987, 'Indian help for Tigers savaged: Terror group 'the private army' of Tamil Nadu chief minister'.

²⁰⁴ *The Guardian*, 30 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka steps up the war of words'.

²⁰⁵ *The Guardian*, 30 April 1987, 'Sri Lanka steps up the war of words'.

²⁰⁶ *The Guardian*, 5 May 1987, 'Tamil links feud grows as Colombo hits out at India'.

²⁰⁷ *The Guardian*, 5 May 1987, 'Tamil links feud grows as Colombo hits out at India'.

²⁰⁸ *The Guardian*, 5 May 1987, 'Tamil links feud grows as Colombo hits out at India'. It is useful to flag here, yet again, this *systemic* weakness of any Prime Minister of India. This political fact impacted on Sri Lanka government and complicated its ability to develop and implement any counterinsurgency campaign. This is an instance of the *specific* difficulties faced by the Sri Lankan government in coping with the Tamil insurrection and where standard counterinsurgency doctrine has to be supplemented with 'context specific' policies.

Sri Lanka Government makes preparations for a large scale Military Operation in Jaffna Peninsula. By mid-May 1987 the Sri Lanka government was in the midst of building-up troops and stocks of arms, ammunition, armoured cars and other supplies for a large-scale military operation in Jaffna Peninsula. The international media picked up the signs of large movements of weapons and troops to the peninsula.²⁰⁹ Sri Lanka Air Force helicopters were dropped leaflets for civilians to move away from the vicinity of insurgent bases and camps.²¹⁰ Undoubtedly the Indian government too would have been aware of these preparations. From 21 May 1987 onwards the army made probing attacks from its bases in Palali, Jaffna Fort and other locations. Many Tamil sources reported to the media that the offensive had begun.²¹¹ But, as subsequent events revealed this was not the case. These actions by the army were small forays which probed the strength of the insurgents' defences which surrounded the army's bases in the peninsula. In the meantime the armed forces kept on building up its personnel, weapons and ammunition stocks in Jaffna

For more than a week, heavy reinforcements of men and material have been shipped up to Jaffna from the south. No official comment has been made on reports of an additional 2,000 men, bringing the total in the peninsula to 6,000. At least three ships, heavily laden with armoured vehicles, arms and ammunition, have been unloading in the port of Kankasanturai on the peninsula's northern coast.²¹²

Sri Lanka Government launches Conventional Type Military Operation in Jaffna, 26 May 1987 (The Inadvertent Catalyst for direct Indian intervention).

On 26 May 1987 army commandos were landed by Sri Lanka Navy crafts on the beach at Vadamarachchi on the North-Eastern topmost coastline of Jaffna Peninsula.²¹³ This was the beginning of *Operation Liberation*, the code-name given by the Sri Lanka government to this large scale operation.²¹⁴ The government's radio station SLBC announced that civilians had been given 2-hours to move to designated Hindu Kovils, Churches and schools identified by name.²¹⁵ Subsequent to this a 48-hour curfew came into effect.²¹⁶ Helicopters were used to drop leaflets with the same information.²¹⁷

²⁰⁹ *The Guardian*, 22 May 1987, 'Tamil civilians bear brunt of pounding'.

²¹⁰ *The Guardian*, 18 May 1987, 'Colombo may be poised to strike at Jaffna Tamils: India concerned about heavy shipments of arms and troops'.

²¹¹ *The Times (London)*, 21 May 1987, 'Tamils say offensive has begun'.

²¹² *The Guardian*, 22 May 1987, 'Tamil civilians bear brunt of pounding'.

²¹³ Sri Lanka Navy, 2013:37, Sri Lanka Navy: Diamond of the Silent Blue." Steering True 1950 to 2010".

²¹⁴ This Operation was launched into the Vadamarachchi area of Jaffna peninsula. Hence it is colloquially known as the 'Vadamarachchi Operation' in Sri Lanka, in both the English and Sinhala press.

²¹⁵ *Ceylon Daily News*, 27 May 1987, 'Operation Liberation' to restore law and order underway: Curfew in Jaffna, troops move in'. SLBC - Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.

²¹⁶ *The Times (London)*, 27 May 1987, 'Battle begins for Tamil stronghold'.

²¹⁷ *Ceylon Daily News*, 27 May 1987, 'Operation Liberation' to restore law and order underway: Curfew in Jaffna, troops move in'. *Sun*, 27 May 1987, '48 hour curfew in Jaffna: Govt. launches military offensive in Jaffna'.

The army used 3 Brigades for this Operation. One Brigade was used in a defensive role to hold on to the existing camps and bases in the Peninsula while the other two were used in an offensive role.²¹⁸ Two brigades moved eastwards from Palali base towards Point Pedro. Troops from other camps in the Peninsula moved out of their camps and fought with the insurgents around these locations.²¹⁹ These were diversionary moves to occupy the attention of the insurgents.²²⁰

Indian Central Government Uses very high Diplomatic Pressure and Calls for a Stop to Operation Liberation. On 27 May the Indian Central government released a statement which strongly criticised the military offensive in Jaffna Peninsula.

The massive assault launched by the Sri Lankan security forces *against the entire civilian population of Jaffna*, in spite of earlier official announcements that Sri Lanka will continue actively to pursue the part of negotiation, signifies the increasing influence of *external elements inimical to security, stability and peace in the region* [emphases added].²²¹

The Operation was not against the 'entire civilian population of Jaffna' as Rajiv Gandhi said. Foreign correspondents who later visited the Jaffna testified to this.²²² The Indian government also alleged the entry of 'external forces' into the conflict.²²³ Furthermore, in this statement the Indian government also introduced the "*security, stability and peace in the region*" into the diplomatic contest of words which had now begun between the Sri Lankan and Indian governments. As the 'predominant regional power' of South Asia, 'peace of the entire South Asian region' was a 'responsibility' which the Indian central government had appropriated for itself.²²⁴

²¹⁸ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 398, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*.

²¹⁹ *Sun*, 27 May 1987, '48 hour curfew in Jaffna: Govt. launches military offensive in Jaffna'.

²²⁰ *The Times (London)*, 29 May 1987, 'Counter-claims confuse pattern of Sri Lankan advance against Tamils'. This is confirmed by the army's official history published in 1999. See Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 398, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*. By 29 May the army's pattern of movements was becoming clear. The two Brigade columns were moving eastwards from Palali Base towards Valvedditturai. The aim being to box the insurgents in the North-East corner of the Peninsula. Other columns moved northwards from Elephant Pass Base and also from the army camp in the Jaffna Fort which was on the western border of Jaffna City. These were diversionary moves to occupy the attention of the insurgents in those areas.

²²¹ *The Times (London)*, 28 May 1987, 'Government denies 100 civilians died in air raids on Tamil positions'.

²²² *The Times (London)*, 1 June 1987, 'Slow struggle on Jaffna peninsula'.

²²³ The allegation of the entry of 'external elements' into the Sri Lankan conflict was not explained by the Indian government. Did it mean the USA? Or Pakistan? In any event here again was revealed a difficulty of implementing a COIN campaign in an actual context such as which the Sri Lanka government faced in 1987 when compared with a theoretical COIN approach. The theoretical concepts and approaches of COIN have their merits – they are the basic template on which a counterinsurgency campaign can / should be built – but specific governments find themselves caught within a 'lattice' of specific internal and external political circumstances, many of which are completely out of their control. This impacts on the ability to implement a counterinsurgency campaign.

²²⁴ Incidentally, while India was giving sanctuary and support to Tamil insurgents, at the same time it was loudly complaining about Pakistan sponsored cross-border Muslim militant attacks in Kashmir. Such are the policies that States sometimes implement.

The very next day, 28 May 1987, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi himself raised the criticism of Sri Lanka's policy to an unprecedented level when he said

The cold-blooded *slaughter of thousands* of Sri Lankan citizens by their own government cannot promote a solution [emphases added].²²⁵

Rajiv Gandhi went on further to say that by the "merciless bombing of a defenceless people" *Sri Lanka was placing its own territorial integrity and unity in danger*. This was clearly an oblique threat of direct Indian intervention. Significantly, it was reported that this statement was made soon after Rajiv Gandhi met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.²²⁶

After Prime Minister Gandhi's statement the Sri Lanka government immediately contested these claims and said that these were based entirely on propaganda. Then the government very quickly organised a visit to Jaffna by a group of foreign correspondents, diplomats and foreign military attaches.

The visit to the northern battle front was arranged by the Sri Lankan armed forces to demonstrate to a group of diplomats, foreign military attaches and journalists the falseness of the claim by Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, that thousands of innocent Tamil civilians had died as a result of 'carpet-bombing' attacks by the Air Force. The Indian military attaché declined the invitation, being unwilling to be a party to a 'propaganda operation'.²²⁷

The foreign correspondents clearly stated that there was no evidence of 'carpet bombing'. One wrote: "it was clear that the [Jaffna] town had not been 'carpet-bombed'. It is unlikely that the Sri Lankan Air Force is capable of such a thing. It possesses no bombers. The only attack planes it has are six Italian-made Siai Marchettis, which have been adapted to carry rockets."²²⁸ That the Sri Lanka Air Force had no capability to 'carpet bomb' was corroborated by another foreign correspondent who wrote "The main air strike consists of five or six marchetti trainers. They are single-engined, propeller-driven light aircraft"²²⁹

Factually this was correct and the IAF (Indian Air force), Indian MoD, Indian intelligence Agencies and Rajiv Gandhi himself (a former airline pilot) would have know this. And so too the USA, Britain, France, China, Pakistan and most countries with intelligence services. But the Indian government still went ahead and made these statements because *the message it*

²²⁵ *The Guardian*, 30 May 1987, 'Tamils 'lose control of supply route in Jaffna': Government says it has retaken north-east of rebel peninsula'.

²²⁶ *The Guardian*, 30 May 1987, 'Tamils 'lose control of supply route in Jaffna': Government says it has retaken north-east of rebel peninsula'.

²²⁷ *The Times (London)*, 1 June 1987, 'Slow struggle on Jaffna peninsula'.

²²⁸ *The Times (London)*, 1 June 1987, 'Slow struggle on Jaffna peninsula'.

²²⁹ *The Guardian*, 30 May 1987, 'Tamils 'lose control of supply route in Jaffna': Government says it has retaken north-east of rebel peninsula'. The Siai-Marchettis were in the same category as the Bristol 'Bulldog' basic trainer used by the RAF (Royal Air Force) in the past.

wanted to convey to the Sri Lanka government was not about the capability of the Sri Lanka Air Force's aircraft nor even whether 'carpet-bombing' had taken place. The message it wanted to convey was that it was greatly displeased with the Sri Lanka government's military operation in the Jaffna peninsula and wanted that operation stopped.

Sri Lanka Government Misjudges Indian Policy: A Failure of Intelligence Analysis. But President Jayewardene and his Cabinet did not get this message. The rapidity with which the fact-finding tour (mentioned above) to Jaffna was organised is a clear indication that the Sri Lanka government had registered the fact that the Indian central government had ratcheted upwards the diplomatic pressure by several magnitudes. But the Sri Lanka government did not appreciate that the danger of Indian military intervention was a real and imminent one. This, in the author's assessment, was a failure of Intelligence analysis by President Jayewardene and his Cabinet.²³⁰

And so the Sri Lanka government kept-on going with 'Operation Liberation', oblivious to the dangers building-up in Delhi. On 30 May the government triumphantly reported that it had destroyed 32 fortified bunkers in Valvedditturai, Jaffna.²³¹ Twenty civilians were also reported to have been killed in crossfire with insurgents and by insurgent booby traps meant for the armed forces (of course the Indian government's view would be that whether these booby traps were meant for the Sri Lanka armed forces or not, none of these civilians would have died if the Sri Lanka government stopped the military operation). The government also reported that up to 30 May 1987, 27 of its troops had been killed and 150 injured mostly by booby traps.²³²

Prelude to Direct Indian Intervention. On 1 June 1987 the Indian Government communicated to the Sri Lanka government that it would send a convoy of 20 Indian Red Cross chartered boats to Jaffna peninsula with 'food aid' for Jaffna civilians. The boats would

²³⁰ If President Jayewardene and his Cabinet were fully aware of the consequences that could arise in the future if the military operation in Jaffna was continued or increased, and were prepared for whatever India would do and prepared to take the accompanying risks, then this cannot be classified as a 'failure of Intelligence analysis'. It would be classified as a government deliberately choosing a high risk policy. But, when the Sri Lanka government's surprise and dismay after the Indian government's air drop of supplies on 4 June 1987 is considered, then it is clear that the Sri Lanka government had not been prepared for the actions that India took. The government had a great deal of intelligence and information (a great deal of it was in the press and the public realm) about the actions that the Indian government could take. But the Sri Lanka government either (a) chose to ignore these, or (b) could not analyse and understand the signals coming from Delhi. Consequently, the Sri Lanka government's decisions to persist with Operation Liberation needs to be classified as a policy undergirded by 'failures of Intelligence analyses'.

²³¹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 30 May 1987, 'Operation Liberation smashes 32 bunkers: Security forces win whip hand at VVT'.

²³² *Ceylon Daily News*, 30 May 1987, 'Operation Liberation smashes 32 bunkers: Security forces win whip hand at VVT'.

be unarmed and flying the Red Cross flag. The Indian High Commissioner in Colombo communicated this message to the Sri Lanka Government and requested that the convoy be given access to the Jaffna Peninsula.²³³ This was India's 1st Gambit.²³⁴

The Sri Lanka government tried various tactics to buy time.²³⁵ The government replied to India in carefully measured language and while denying that Jaffna Tamils were in any real need the government stated that it would accept the food aid "in the spirit of good neighbourly relations". Sri Lanka also said that the two governments would need to discuss "the modalities" of the delivery process.²³⁶ But the Indian government was not inclined to any discussions and ended its message with an abrupt instruction: "The concurrence of the Government of Sri Lanka may kindly be conveyed urgently so that relief can reach the long-suffering citizens of Jaffna without further delay".²³⁷ *Sri Lanka government was instructed to obey and not given any choice in the matter.* In the meantime the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister called for immediate military intervention in Sri Lanka.²³⁸

It was reported that armed Indian Coast Guard vessels were on alert and positioned just outside Sri Lanka's territorial water margin, and would engage the Sri Lanka Navy patrol boats if they attempted to stop the relief shipment. The coastguard vessels were more powerful than the Sri Lanka Navy's patrol boats and Indian Navy Frigates were reported heading for the same area of the sea.²³⁹ Although the consignment of supplies were ostensibly to aid the civilian population, foreign correspondents assessed the true objective as follows:

[...] the move showed that *India is prepared to breach Sri Lankan sovereignty and intervene, with military force if necessary*, to stop the bloodshed. Pressure has been growing in India, especially in the southern state of *Tamil Nadu*, for the Government to flex its muscles as the regional superpower [emphases added].²⁴⁰

Sri Lanka Government Alerts its Armed Forces to Defend the Sovereignty of the Country. Calls for Support from friendly States in South Asia and the West.

²³³ *The Times (London)*, 2 June 1987, 'India angers Colombo with plan for Tamil aid convoy'.

²³⁴ The word 'Gambit' is used to flag Indian strategy and tactics at this juncture. When the boat convoy was being suggested and debated in the press, the entirety of India's tactics were not in the public domain. But in retrospect, when the rapidity with which the Indian government implemented its 2nd action – the supply drop by Indian Air Force aircraft (discussed below), it is clear that the Indian government had to have *already anticipated that the boat convoy would be stopped* and already prepared the IAF aircraft.

²³⁵ *The Guardian (London)*, 2 June 1987, 'Indian gunboats on alert'.

The government lifted with immediate effect a 5-month long fuel embargo of the Peninsula targeted at stopping the movement of insurgents but which also had concurrently inconvenienced Jaffna civilians.

²³⁶ *The Times (London)*, 2 June 1987, 'India angers Colombo with plan for Tamil aid convoy'.

²³⁷ *The Guardian (London)*, 2 June 1987, 'Indian gunboats on alert'.

²³⁸ *The Guardian*, 2 June 1987, 'The fleet goes in: Why India has lost patience with Sri Lanka'.

²³⁹ *The Guardian (London)*, 2 June 1987, 'Indian gunboats on alert'.

²⁴⁰ *The Guardian (London)*, 2 June 1987, 'Indian gunboats on alert'.

With tensions rising between Sri Lanka and India due to the Indian government's stated policy of sending a convoy to Jaffna peninsula without the permission of the Sri Lanka government, the government of Sri Lanka took the unprecedented step of calling upon the Sri Lankan armed forces to defend the country's sovereignty against a potential external threat. As boats in Tamil Nadu were being loaded with supplies on 2 June 1987, on the same day the Sri Lanka Cabinet and Parliament were hastily convened for emergency sessions. After the Cabinet meeting under the chairmanship of President Jayewardene, Prime Minister Premadasa informed parliament that President Jayewardene had alerted the armed forces to defend the country and its territorial waters.²⁴¹ President Jayewardene was also reported as having telephoned and requested support from President Ronald Reagan, British Prime Minister Mrs Thatcher, Pakistan President General Zia ul-Haq and Bangladesh President Ershad.²⁴²

31 Buddhist Monks Killed by Tamil Insurgents, Eastern Province, 2 June 1987: A Ploy to Induce Indian Invasion?

On 2 June 1987 Tamil insurgents waylaid a bus transporting Buddhist monks near Arantalawa, Ampara District, Eastern Province. They were on their way to a religious ceremony in Kandy City. 31 Buddhist monks and several normal civilians, all Sinhalese, and were hacked and shot to death.²⁴³

The targets and timing of this act – Buddhist monks, most below the age of 14 – need careful examination. Why were army and police targets not chosen? The main fighting at that time was in Jaffna. Attacking army or police camps in the Eastern Province would have made sense as such attacks could have compelled the government to send reinforcements to the East. Why were these particular soft targets – Buddhist monks – chosen? The monks were a very soft target. The Bus did not have a single policeman or soldier as guard. There were hundreds of other 'soft targets', e.g. many dozens of Sinhala villages in the Eastern Province. And why the killings at this time? This attack occurred five days after Prime Minister Gandhi's very strong criticism on 28 May of the Sri Lanka government's military operation in Jaffna and one day after Gandhi declared that a Red Cross convoy would be sent to Jaffna.

²⁴¹ *The Times (London)*, 3 June 1987, '32 die in new Sri Lanka massacre - Fears rise of clash off Jaffna'.

²⁴² *The Times (London)*, 3 June 1987, '32 die in new Sri Lanka massacre - Fears rise of clash off Jaffna'.

²⁴³ See *Daily Mirror*, 24 March 2013, 'Memorial museum for Arantalawa massacre'. A museum to memorialise this massacre was opened at the site of the killings in March 2013. However, in June 1987 information about these killings were censored by the Sri Lankan government as much as it could. This was due to the apprehension that anti-Tamil rioting could occur. No such rioting occurred. The international press could not be censored. See *The Times (London)*, 3 June 1987, '32 die in new Sri Lanka massacre - Fears rise of clash off Jaffna'.

From the above circumstantial factors it is possible to make an *informed deduction* that this massacre was aimed at – if possible – triggering off anti-Tamil riots by Sinhalese. Fortunately for Sri Lanka, there were no riots against any Tamils.²⁴⁴ While no Tamil insurgent group accepted responsibility for the killing of the monks and no direct evidence exists for the above deduction, this is a deduction that deserves to be kept in mind when assessing these events of these crucial weeks of June and July 1987.

If anti-Tamil rioting had occurred then Tamil secessionist in Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu and the Tamil Nadu political establishment including Chief Minister Ramachandran himself would have had a strong argument to demand from Delhi the direct and immediate military invasion of the North and East of Sri Lanka to 'save Tamils from being killed'. If widespread anti-Tamil riots occurred in June 1987, there was a very strong likelihood that Rajiv Gandhi would have felt compelled to invade and partition the island. As mentioned earlier there were Sri Lankan Tamil political refugees living in Tamil Nadu and also Tamil Nadu politicians themselves who consistently lobbied for many years for India to militarily intervene and create a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka in the way India assisted in the creation of Bangladesh.²⁴⁵

USA, Britain, Pakistan Call Upon both India and Sri Lanka to Act with Restraint

On 2 June Sri Lanka Foreign Ministry handed over a message to India's High Commissioner in Colombo. It reiterated that Sri Lanka had not accepted the aid offered and would continue to reject this aid until the two governments' discussed and arrived at an agreement on the manner in which this aid would be supplied. The message further stated that "*if India took any unilateral action, it would be 'considered a violation of the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka'* [emphases added]."²⁴⁶ In reaction Delhi's position was:

The *Indian Government* left no doubt when it announced the aid mission on Monday [1 June 1987] that it *would brook no interference from the Sri Lankan forces*. New Delhi said the relief supplies would be landed *whether Colombo liked it or not* [emphases added].²⁴⁷

²⁴⁴ If widespread anti-Tamil rioting had occurred after the killing of the monks then Prime Minister Gandhi would have had enormous pressure brought upon him to militarily intervene in Sri Lanka. In the event such rioting did not take place and this massacre did not initiate the macro political and military consequences it could have precipitated.

²⁴⁵ *The Guardian*, 15 January 1985, 'Why the Tamils are looking to Rajiv for their salvation: Sri Lankan separatists are convinced it is only a matter of time before India intervenes'.

²⁴⁶ *The Guardian*, 3 June 1987, 'Sri Lanka orders army to defend sovereignty: Conflict looms as India prepares relief shipment to Jaffna civilians'.

²⁴⁷ *The Guardian*, 3 June 1987, 'Sri Lanka orders army to defend sovereignty: Conflict looms as India prepares relief shipment to Jaffna civilians'.

The leader of the Indian Red Cross mission in charge of this mission, however, was in a dilemma. He stated that he could not go ahead without the cooperation of the Sri Lanka government.²⁴⁸ He was quoted saying: "if the Sri Lankan Government does not permit, we will not enter Sri Lankan territory".²⁴⁹ According to the International Red Cross's Charter that was the correct procedure. Tensions between India and Sri Lanka were at a high level and had the potential of escalating.

All this was being monitored by the international community. They were concerned that war could occur between Sri Lanka and India. The USA called upon both India and Sri Lanka to amicably settle their disagreements regarding the relief shipment. The US State Department said that it was "*especially concerned about the possibility of violence if no agreement is reached* [emphases added]".²⁵⁰ The British government sent messages to the Foreign Ministries in Colombo and Delhi and also messages via the High Commissioners' of both countries in London. A UK Foreign Office spokesman stated that "*We are greatly concerned at the possibility of a military confrontation*.[emphases added]".²⁵¹ Pakistan also communicated with both India and Sri Lanka and urged them to cordially settle their dispute.²⁵² In any event, the convoy of Red Cross boats sailed from Tamil Nadu to Jaffna on the afternoon of 3 June but they were turned back by Sri Lanka Navy gunboats and had to return to Tamil Nadu.²⁵³

4.5: The Indian Air Force Violates Sri Lanka Airspace and Drops Supplies on Jaffna Peninsula, 4 June 1987

On 4 June 1987 the Indian government notified the Sri Lanka government that Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft would drop food supplies on selected areas of Jaffna peninsula. This notification was clearly a signal from the Indian Government that it could militarily intervene in Sri Lanka. Unlike the Red Cross boats the IAF aircraft were entirely under the authority of the Indian central government. Accordingly, at about 5pm on 4 June 1987 five Antonov AN-32 transport aircraft escorted by four Mirage 2000 jet fighters of the IAF flew over Jaffna peninsula and

²⁴⁸ *The Guardian*, 3 June 1987, 'Sri Lanka orders army to defend sovereignty: Conflict looms as India prepares relief shipment to Jaffna civilians'.

²⁴⁹ *The Times (London)*, 3 June 1987, '32 die in new Sri Lanka massacre - Fears rise of clash off Jaffna'.

²⁵⁰ *The Guardian*, 3 June 1987, 'Sri Lanka orders army to defend sovereignty: Conflict looms as India prepares relief shipment to Jaffna civilians'.

²⁵¹ *The Guardian*, 4 June 1987, 'Delhi vows to stand by Jaffna Tamils'.

²⁵² *The Guardian*, 4 June 1987, 'Delhi vows to stand by Jaffna Tamils'.

²⁵³ *The Guardian*, 4 June 1987, 'Delhi vows to stand by Jaffna Tamils'.

dropped 25 to 30 packages by parachutes.²⁵⁴ The Sri Lankan forces were ordered not to fire on the Indian aircraft and no defensive firing took place. The Sri Lanka government strongly protested at this violation.²⁵⁵ In a diplomatic note to India the Sri Lanka government said:

It is a naked violation of our independence. We have no military or other means of preventing this outrage. We will take up in the appropriate forums this unwarranted assault on our sovereignty and territorial integrity [emphases added].²⁵⁶

There was widespread outrage among the people in the southern parts of the country at this act by India. Several countries in South Asia, namely Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal also criticised the Indian action.²⁵⁷ After all, except for Pakistan, all the other countries of South Asia can be invaded by India at any time. Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Premadasa was addressing a World Environment Day Conference in Colombo on 4 June when he was informed of the Indian parachute drop. He spoke strongly against the Indian act – completely off the script and off the subject of the Conference – with great emotion to the international gathering:

What greater pollution is there than this? They've broken all the rules of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations [emphases added].²⁵⁸

On 6 June 1987 a government spokesperson stated that with the capture of the Vadamarachchi area of the Jaffna Peninsula Phase-1 of *Operation Liberation* had been completed. The international media's assessment was that the air drop had achieved its real objective – it delivered a warning to the Sri Lanka government to not implement Phase-2 of *Operation Liberation*:

[T]he clear message conveyed by India's air drop was this: "If we can drop relief supplies, we can drop anything, so do not go on to phase two [of your military Operation in Jaffna]." Well-informed sources said this has been received [by the Sri Lanka government] [emphases added].²⁵⁹

On 10 June the Sri Lanka government announced that it had suspended *Operation Liberation* and that it was ready for peace talks.²⁶⁰

International Critiques of Indian's violation of Sri Lanka's Sovereignty. *The Times (London)* made incisive critiques of the India's violation of Sri Lanka's sovereignty. It

²⁵⁴ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 399, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*, *The Times (London)*, 5 June 1987, 'Indian planes drop relief supplies over rebel-held Jaffna'.

²⁵⁵ *Ceylon Daily News*, 5 June 1987, 'Indian action "a naked violation of our independence": Lanka protests over airdrop of "relief supplies" in Jaffna'.

²⁵⁶ *The Times (London)*, 5 June 1987, 'Indian planes drop relief supplies over rebel-held Jaffna'.

²⁵⁷ *The Guardian*, 11 June 1987, 'Sri Lankans halt Jaffna push in preparation for peace talks'.

²⁵⁸ *The Guardian*, 6 June 1987, 'Air drop delivers message of warning'.

²⁵⁹ *The Guardian*, 6 June 1987, 'Air drop delivers message of warning'.

²⁶⁰ *The Guardian*, 11 June 1987, 'Sri Lankans halt Jaffna push in preparation for peace talks'.

said that India should not be allowed "to escape international condemnation of its action". *The Times (London)* pointed out that from 6 June onwards Delhi went out of its way to be conciliatory towards Colombo while underscoring its desire for "friendly, cordial and good-neighbourly" relations with Sri Lanka.

The Times (London) notes that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi could afford to do this because by using Indian military capabilities he had been able to display his ability to act with a firm resolve. This had won the support of his parliamentary opposition and the support of the Indian people too. On 8 June 1987 Gandhi began his party's election campaign in the state elections in Haryana State, in north India, and his Sri Lanka policies "can have done his cause no harm at all". The Times' went on to make trenchant critiques which deserve to be quoted in full:

But that cannot justify his action. *For India to infringe Sri Lanka's air space was to bully its tiny neighbour*, not treat it as a friend. *To draw an unlikely parallel, it was as if the United States has showered food on West Belfast while the British army was conducting an operation against the IRA*. How far Sri Lanka's Tamils needed supplied is a question open to debate. It is hard to believe that they need them quite so badly. *There is certainly no evidence to suggest it*. [...] If Delhi wished somehow to help them, it could have done so more effectively by *working with the Colombo government, not against it*. The latest talks in Delhi, at which further aid was discussed, suggest that co-operation between the two is possible. [...] *By its precipitate action India has alarmed not just the Sri Lankans but all other five nations of the sub-continent*. India has more than three times the combined population of the others and dwarfs them militarily and economically. [...] just now Sri Lanka needs help *against the unscrupulous enemy within*. If Delhi uses that situation to make *political capital* for itself, it is *falling far short* of what any country might expect from a more powerful friend and neighbour [emphases added].²⁶¹

In any event the violation took place. And on 29 July 1987 Sri Lanka and India signed the Indo-Lanka Agreement.

4.6: The Indo-Lanka Accord

India's direct intervention in Sri Lanka can be said to have begun with the signing of the Indo-Lanka Accord on 29 July 1987 and the arrival of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka, which began on that day itself. The intervention ceased with the withdrawal of the last units of the IPKF from Sri Lanka in March 1990. During the period July 1987 to June 1990 the Sri Lankan armed forces were not involved in any offensive military operations in the North and East. As such the events of this period fall outside the ambit of this Thesis. Therefore only a brief mention of the main Clauses of the Indo-Lanka Accord and its accompanying documents are relevant to us. And then, in Part II of this Chapter, the ceasefire

²⁶¹ *The Times (London)*, 9 June 1987, 'Leading Article: An Offensive Act By India'.

President Premadasa negotiated with the LTTE and how he and the LTTE successfully collaborated – for their own tactical reasons – to get the Indian forces to leave Sri Lanka. It was only with the re-ignition of the insurrection by the LTTE in June 1990 that the Sri Lanka government was again involved in military conflict with the LTTE, the subject of the next Chapter.

Analysis of Some Crucial Clauses of the Indo-Lanka Accord. The full and official title of the Indo-Lanka Accord is '*Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka*'. In addition to the Agreement there was one Annexure, and an exchange of two Letters between President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The Annexure and the letter from Rajiv Gandhi include a great deal of important geopolitical concessions wrested by India from Sri Lanka (please refer Annexure 4.4 for the complete texts of all the above documents and the complete context of the excerpts below).

- **A recognition of “areas of historical habitation” and thereby an indirect recognition of a ‘Tamil Homeland’**

“1.4 also *recognising that the Northern and the Eastern provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples*, who have at all times hitherto lived together in this territory with other ethnic groups;”

While the phrase ‘Tamil Homeland’ was not used in the Accord, “areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples” was included. This is a close equivalent.

- **The Northern & Eastern Provinces were to be joined together. Later a Referendum was supposed to be held as to whether the Eastern Province wished to separate from the North.**

“2.2 During the period, which shall be considered *an interim period* (i.e. from the date of the elections to the provincial council, as specified in para 2.8 to the date of the Referendum as specified in para 2.3), *the Northern and Eastern provinces as now constituted, will form one administrative unit, having one elected Provincial Council. Such a unit will have one Governor, one Chief Minister and one Board of Ministers.*”

As can be seen from the above, after 4 years of trying to prevent it from happening, the Sri Lanka government was finally forced to accept the joining together of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Although this was supposed to be for an ‘interim period’, it would remain the *status quo* till the Referendum was held.

- **However, the Referendum could be postponed indefinitely by the President of Sri Lanka (which is precisely what happened. This Referendum was never held)**

"The President may, at his discretion, decide to postpone such a referendum."

This Referendum was never held. President Jayewardene kept postponing it every year till he exited Office in January 1989. This practice was continued by President Premadasa (Jan.1989-May1993), and President Wijetunge (May1993-November1994).

- **What the Tamil insurgent groups were expected to do: respect the ceasefire, surrender all weapons.**

"2.9 The emergency will be lifted in the eastern and Northern provinces by 15 August 1987. A cessation of hostilities will come into effect all over the Island within 48 hours of signing of this Agreement. *All arms presently held by militant groups will be surrendered in accordance with an agreed procedure to authorities to be designated by the Government of Sri Lanka.*"

The ceasefire was initially respected by all insurgent groups. Some weapons were surrendered. But gradually the LTTE showed by its actions that it was not agreeable to the Indo-Lanka Accord. Eventually fighting began between the LTTE and the IPKF on 10 October 1987.

- **What the Sri Lanka Armed Forces were expected to do:**

Consequent to the cessation of hostilities and the surrender of arms by militant groups, *the [Sri Lanka] army and other security personnel will be confined to barracks in camps as on 25 May 1987. The process of surrendering arms and the confining of security personnel moving back to barracks shall be completed within 72 hours of the cessation of hostilities coming into effect.*"

The Sri Lanka armed forces did adhere to the above within 72 hours. They returned to their camps as of 25 May 1987, and stayed in such locations. But only a token amount of weapons were surrendered by the Tamil insurgents, especially the LTTE.

- **What the Indian Government pledged to do**

"2.16 These proposals are also conditional to the Government of India taking the following actions if any militant groups operating in Sri Lanka do not accept this framework of proposals for a settlement, namely:

(a) *India will take all necessary steps to ensure that Indian territory is not used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka.*"

This was a tacit acknowledgement by the Indian government that Indian territory had been used by Tamil insurgents.

Assertion of Geopolitical Objectives of India. As mentioned at the beginning of this Chapter there is evidence that the Indian central government had certain geopolitical security concerns which had nothing to do with the Tamil secessionist insurrection. The Trincomalee harbour's future and the (alleged) intelligence gathering activities of other countries from Sri Lankan soil were among India's concerns. These concerns officially manifested themselves in the text of the letter from Prime Minister Gandhi to President Jayewardene:

2. In this spirit, you had, in the course of our discussions agreed to meet some of India's concerns as follows:

- (i) Your Excellency and myself will **reach an early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel** with a view to ensuring that such presences will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations.
- (ii) **Trincomalee or any other ports** in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interests.
- (iii) The work of **restoring and operating** the Trincomalee oil tank farm **will** be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka [emphases in bold and underlining added].²⁶²

In 2(i) India wanted Sri Lanka to give assurances regarding the presence of military personnel from other countries whose assistance Sri Lanka had requested. It is somewhat ironical that this was being demanded after allowing thousands of Tamil insurgents to use India as a sanctuary for the previous 4 years. Item 2(ii) is phrased in such broad and all-encompassing terms that it gave India the basis to veto the use of any port or harbour in Sri Lanka. Through clause 2(iii) Sri Lanka was compelled to develop the facilities at Trincomalee *only* with India. These were serious violations of Sri Lanka's sovereign rights to develop its resources to its own benefit. But Sri Lanka was compelled to accede to these demands as it found itself isolated and under India's thumb. The following is another confirmation of India's geopolitical objectives. It is an excerpt from a briefing given in early 1988 by the then head of the Indian Army to the senior officers of the IPKF. This text became a public document only with its publication in 2006, nineteen years after the Indo-Lanka Accord was signed. It appeared in book by the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), Major General Harkirat Singh.

COAS [Chief of Army Staff] in his briefing said that the Indian Army has not been employed in Sri Lanka for the protection of any one community or to fight Sri Lanka's war with the LTTE **but has been deployed for safeguarding the Indian national interest**. [The] Sri Lankan Government had openly invited other countries to assist and in the bargain was prepared to give base facilities, which would have threatened Indian security at some time. Therefore,

²⁶² See Annexure 4.4, the 'Exchange of Letters' are a part of the set of documents which accompanied the Indo-Lanka Accord.

before the situation went out of hand, [the] Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE were pressurized to accept terms and conditions, which were slightly diluted to their published stand. LTTE aspirations were primarily kept in mind [emphasis in bold added].²⁶³

II

The Tactical Rapprochement Between the LTTE and President Premadasa, April 1989 onwards

By mid-1988 the Sri Lanka government was in the midst of an immense political crisis. Two separate insurrections were simultaneously under way in the country: the Tamil insurrection in the North and East where the LTTE was fighting the IPKF and, when the opportunity arose, attacking Sri Lankan armed forces targets as well. And the second was the JVP insurrection which began in July 1987 with the arrival of Indian troops on Sri Lankan soil. The JVP's main slogan was a Sinhala Nationalist one – its charge was that the 'traitorous' UNP government had brought Indian troops to Sri Lanka and that these troops would permanently stay in Sri Lanka. The JVP's aim was to turn the Sinhala people against the UNP government.

By mid-1988 the IPKF's campaign against the LTTE had also reached stalemate. The LTTE was ensconced in the jungles of the Northern and Eastern provinces and carrying out quite effective guerrilla warfare against the IPKF. The IPKF was now at the receiving end of what the Sri Lankan armed forces had been from August 1983 to July 1987. This guerrilla warfare could go on for years, and, potentially decades. Theoretically, the Indian government could continue this indefinitely – it had the financial resources and millions of army, para-military, police, navy and air force personnel in India whom it could deploy to Sri Lanka on a rotational basis. The total number of Indian personnel would obviously vary over time and the Indian government kept the details secret. Two Indian defence analysts arrived at quite similar figures: Rikhye²⁶⁴ estimated 102,000 to 105,000 in March 1989 and Singhe²⁶⁵ estimated 100,000 "at its peak".

But could Sri Lanka could not wait for years. When the two factors - viz. the IPKF unable to subdue the LTTE in the near future, and, the IPKF's presence providing the main fuel for the JVP insurrection – were assessed it became clear to both Mr. Premadasa and Mrs. Bandaranaike

²⁶³ Singh, Major General Harkirat, 2006: 161, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold*. See Annexure 4.5 for the entire text of the Briefing paper.

²⁶⁴ Rikhye, Ravi, 1989: 606, 'How Many Troops in Sri Lanka?'

²⁶⁵ Singh, Pushpindar, 1990/91: 26, 'Peacekeepers in Sri Lanka'.

that the exit of the IPKF from Sri Lanka was the essential factor for the stability of the Sri Lankan regime.²⁶⁶

Presidential Elections (1988) and Parliamentary Elections (1989). According to the Sri Lankan Constitution and electoral calendar, Presidential Elections had to be held in Sri Lanka by December 1988. The central component of the Campaign promises of the *both* the UNP's Candidate (Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadasa) and the SLFP (Mrs Sirima Bandaranaike) was that the IPKF would have to leave Sri Lanka as soon as possible. Mrs Bandaranaike pledged to abrogate the Indo-Lanka Accord. Prime Minister Premadasa's position was that he would replace the Indo-Lanka Accord with a 'Friendship Treaty' with India and de-link the Northern and Eastern Provinces).²⁶⁷ The Presidential Elections were held on 19 December 1988.²⁶⁸

Prime Minister Premadasa won the Presidential elections. He won outright with 50.4% of votes cast.²⁶⁹ Mrs Bandaranaike obtained 44.9% of the votes.²⁷⁰ Contrary to dismal expectations of the 9.4 million eligible voters, 55.3 % voted.²⁷¹ Nonetheless 14 voters were gunned down or blown-up when they tried to vote.²⁷² Immediately after his triumph was announced Mr Premadasa praised the electorate for defying threats by extremists in both majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil areas.

Premadasa wanted to begin his term of Office in a new year and was sworn-in on 2 January 1989. He made a fervent appeal for unity and reached out to both the JVP and LTTE.

Mr Ranasinghe Premadasa, sworn in yesterday [2 January 1989] as Sri Lanka's new President, *appealed to both Sinhalese and Tamil extremists* to join him in a fresh dialogue. [...] *President Premadasa said he was willing to go anywhere and to talk to anyone in order to make the extremists join the democratic process.* [...] in a gesture of conciliation intended to bring the militants back to the negotiating table he has already announced that the six-year-old state of emergency will lapse on January 15. The move will bring freedom to 2,000

²⁶⁶ Under the then prevailing conditions the IPKF could remain in Sri Lanka for an indefinite period. But, the presence of the IPKF was the major factor to the intensity of the JVP insurrection due to the considerable popular support from a widespread cross-section of Sinhala people who were concerned that the Indian military would become a permanent presence in Sri Lanka. By late-1988 the JVP insurrection had grown to a level where the survival of the government and state power were seriously threatened. The exit of the IPKF was seen by both presidential candidates as the pre-condition to undermine the JVP's support base.

²⁶⁷ *The Times (London)*, 19 December 1988, 'The Presidential Candidates and their main policies; Sri Lanka election'. De-Linking the North and the East was assessed as an issue of deep strategic significance to the unity of the Sri Lanka State by most Sinhala political and military leaders.

²⁶⁸ *The Guardian*, 19 December 1988, 'Sri Lankan presidential poll caps year of ethnic disintegration'. According to the Guardian's assessment these elections were "the most critical test of democracy in the 40-year life of a bitterly divided country."

²⁶⁹ *The Times (London)*, 21 December 1988, 'Jubilant Premadasa vows to end spiral of political violence: Sri Lanka election'.

²⁷⁰ *The Guardian*, 21 December 1988, 'PM clear winner in Sri Lanka poll'.

²⁷¹ *The Guardian*, 21 December 1988, 'PM clear winner in Sri Lanka poll'.

²⁷² *The Guardian*, 15 February 1989, 'Death threats loom over Sri Lanka election'.

political detainees held under emergency regulations. [...] Speaking about the presence of Indian peace-keeping troops in the island's Northern and Eastern provinces, the President insisted that 'we must not create situations that provoke or invite intervention.' He said *that the country's affairs must be conducted in a manner which would make foreign intervention unnecessary. 'Whatever the cost, I will not surrender one inch of Sri Lankan territory'*, he said [emphases added].²⁷³

But neither the JVP or LTTE responded positively to the President's overtures. The next important political event on the calendar were the Parliamentary Elections. These were scheduled to be held on 15 February 1989. The JVP continued with its insurrection and threatened to kill those who participated in the elections.²⁷⁴

The UNP won the Parliamentary elections as well. Out of the 225 seats in parliament the UNP won 125. The voter turn-out was 63.6%, which was higher than at the Presidential elections two months earlier.²⁷⁵ During this election too the JVP targeted and killed voters and the day was called "the bloodiest election day in the island's history".²⁷⁶

Now President Premadasa was strongly positioned politically. He was the elected Executive President and in the Parliament too the UNP had the majority. On 1 April 1989 President Premadasa made a characteristically bold initiative. He again made overtures to the JVP and LTTE. He offered both organisations some of the parliamentary seats won by the UNP in the new parliament if they gave-up violence. "The extraordinary proposal was made by President Ranasinghe Premadasa in a weekend speech [1 April 1989] to a youth rally [...] in the east of the island." But the LTTE and JVP again rejected the President's offer.²⁷⁷

But, two weeks later, on 15 April the LTTE sent a message to the President that it was prepared to initiate a dialogue with him. This was a very shrewd move by the LTTE. President Premadasa responded on 16 April itself and immediately sent a message to the LTTE in London for the LTTE to appoint a person to discuss arrangements for talks.²⁷⁸ Many commentators were surprised at the LTTE's change of its position. The correspondent of *The Guardian* was extremely perceptive when he said that "[t]he Tigers' official reason is that they want to end the violence. But the primary motive would appear to be a desire to get rid of the Indians."²⁷⁹ President Premadasa and government and military analysts would not have been

²⁷³ *The Times (London)*, 3 January 1989, 'Premadasa appeals for unity: Sri Lankan President sworn in'.

²⁷⁴ *The Guardian*, 15 February 1989, 'Death threats loom over Sri Lanka election'.

²⁷⁵ *The Times (London)*, 17 February 1989, 'Premadasa party holds on to power: Sri Lankan election'.

²⁷⁶ *The Guardian*, 17 February 1989, 'Premadasa wins violent election'.

²⁷⁷ *The Guardian*, 3 April 1989, 'Tigers reject Sri Lanka offer'.

²⁷⁸ *The Times (London)*, 17 April 1989, 'Tamil Tigers set for peace talks: Sri Lanka'.

²⁷⁹ *The Guardian*, 17 April 1989, 'Tigers accept talks offer by Sri Lanka: Separatists make first peace initiative in four years'.

unaware of this. But the President too wanted to get rid of the Indian's as early as possible so as to remove the JVP's reason for its insurrection.

Peace talks between the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE began on 11 May 1989. "Relations between the Tigers and the government have never been better. The peace talks, which began on May 11, have proceeded without any disagreement."²⁸⁰

President Premadasa demanded on 1 June 1989 that the IPKF leave the island by the end of July 1989

In a public speech made on 1 June 1989, President Premadasa stated that he wanted the IPKF to leave Sri Lanka by end-July 1989.²⁸¹ This would be the 2nd Anniversary of the Indo Lanka Accord and the arrival of the IPKF in Sri Lanka. India was taken completely by surprise. No prior consultations had taken place prior to this public statement. President Premadasa went onto say that he would be making this request from Gandhi in the next few days.²⁸² From the perspective of diplomatic relations between two States the standard procedure would have been to first inform Prime Minister Gandhi and give him some prior notice and then make this public announcement.

In the present author's assessment it was not that President Premadasa was unaware of these protocols. But rather this was a part of a deliberate strategy by President Premadasa. Premadasa chose to do things in this manner because, first, it pre-empted any objections, prevarications and back-room pressure by India. Second, it was a clear initiative by him, the President of Sri Lanka and *seen* as such by the Sinhala electorate. Third, it was an election promise he had made prior to the Presidential Elections of December 1988, and he wanted to be *seen* by the Sinhala people as carrying out his election promise. Fourth, by making this demand from the Indian government Premadasa appropriated the JVP's main demand. On the other hand Indian officials were very unhappy that Premadasa had made this announcement without consulting Delhi.²⁸³

The Sri Lankan Government announced a ceasefire agreement with the LTTE, 28 June 1989. In the meantime the 'peace talks' with the LTTE were proceeding rapidly. And on 28 June 1989 the Sri Lanka government made a momentous announcement. It said that it had arrived at a ceasefire agreement with the LTTE. The LTTE announced that the 'tacit' ceasefire which had begun in April 1989 when they agreed to talk with the Sri Lanka

²⁸⁰ *The Guardian*, 29 June 1989, 'Tamil Tigers agree to lay down arms in Sri Lanka'.

²⁸¹ *The Times (London)*, 2 June 1989, 'Indian force to leave: Sri Lanka'.

²⁸² *The Guardian*, 2 June 1989, 'Sri Lanka seeks Indian pullout'.

²⁸³ *The Guardian*, 2 June 1989, 'Sri Lanka seeks Indian pullout'.

government would now become a complete ceasefire agreement.²⁸⁴ The ceasefire was a tactical move which suited both the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE. Both wanted to see an exit of the IPKF for their own reasons.

The Tigers' main priority is the withdrawal of an Indian force which has weakened their ranks, driving them back into the northern jungles after 20 months of offensives. President Premadasa sees an Indian departure as the antidote to strikes and unrest introduced by the extreme nationalist People's Liberation Front (JVP). The front claims the government betrayed the country when it invited the Indians in.²⁸⁵

It is significant to note that "the Tigers have said nothing about abandoning their objective of a separate state of Tamil Eelam in the North and East."²⁸⁶ But President Premadasa did not press the LTTE on this matter. That issue was, after all, *the* most significant concession that the LTTE could make. President Premadasa did not pressurise the LTTE to make a commitment. In the present author's assessment this was the correct tactical position for the President to adopt. Especially as the President's and the Sri Lanka government's primary objective was to create the circumstances which would compel the IPKF to leave Sri Lanka. If the President had pushed the LTTE and the ceasefire between the two parties broke down then the IPKF would have a reason to remain in Sri Lanka.

The two sides are united in wanting the Indians to leave. The Tigers have suffered grievous losses at the hands of the Indians, while the government is suffering a crippling backlash of strikes, sabotage and assassinations by extreme nationalists opposed to the Indian presence.²⁸⁷

President Premadasa Transfers Weapons and Ammunition to the LTTE, July

1989. (A Misjudged ad hoc Counterinsurgency strategy). During the initial meetings with the government after 15 April 1989 the LTTE seems to have requested weapons, ammunition and funds from President Premadasa to be used in fighting the IPKF. Towards the end of April 1989 President Premadasa authorised the secret transfer of small arms (such as AK-47s), ammunition and money to the LTTE.²⁸⁸ Although President Premadasa wanted to keep this matter secret, on 3 July 1989 a British newspaper broke the story.

There are reports that the Tigers are now receiving money and arms from the Sri Lankan Government to carry on their fight against India. This is a bizarre turnaround. Two years ago, the Tigers were being funded, armed and protected by India to fight the Sri Lankan army. The Indian Peacekeeping Force then arrived in July 1987 to separate and pacify the two sides as the Sri Lankan forces launched a major offensive against the guerrillas [emphases added].²⁸⁹

²⁸⁴ *The Times (London)*, 29 June 1989, 'Tamil guerrillas agree ceasefire: Sri Lanka'.

²⁸⁵ *The Guardian*, 29 June 1989, 'Tamil Tigers agree to lay down arms in Sri Lanka'.

²⁸⁶ *The Guardian*, 29 June 1989, 'Tamil Tigers agree to lay down arms in Sri Lanka'.

²⁸⁷ *The Guardian*, 3 July 1989, 'Tamil Tigers face Indian offensive'.

²⁸⁸ Government of Sri Lanka, 1997: 13 and 15 [Abbreviated Title: Report on Assassination of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa] Sessional Paper No. IX-1997. See Bibliography for complete Title.

²⁸⁹ *The Guardian*, 3 July 1989, 'Tamil Tigers face Indian offensive'.

The Sri Lanka government and LTTE ceasefire was formally signed on 28 June 1989. *The Guardian's* article was published on 3 July 1989. The time period between 28 June and 3 July 1989 (including both days) is 6 days. This is far too short a period for this secret operation to have been conceived, the weapons collected, transported by trucks, etc. to have taken place. Which leads to the conclusions that (a) negotiations between President Premadasa and the LTTE regarding this matter had to have taken place prior to the formal ceasefire, and (b) the transfer of weapons and ammunition had to have begun even *before* the formal ceasefire agreement was signed on 28 June 1989. The leadership for this strategy was entirely President Premadasa's, and he took huge risks by doing this. But it was his assessment that he would be able to manage these risks.

In later years right up to his death in 1993 President Premadasa was compelled to suffer momentous consequences because of this weapon and funds transfers to the LTTE. This is an important issue as (i) it reveals how a President (or any Director of Operations) could implement *ad hoc* counterinsurgency strategies which can go terribly wrong and worsen an insurgency; (ii) in the years ahead it was used by the Opposition to undermine Premadasa and affected his presidency to an inordinate extent; (iii) it was widely misunderstood by the Sinhala people as a 'traitorous' act when in fact it was an imprudent and injudicious exercise of *counterinsurgency statecraft*. Let us examine and analyse the facts.

In 1994 a Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry was instituted to inquire into the death of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa. It completed its work in September 1997.²⁹⁰ This Commission revealed beyond any doubt that the transfer of weapons had taken place. A great deal of information from diverse sources including from army officers, civilian officials and Other Ranks who implemented the order was revealed during the investigation and became public knowledge.²⁹¹ Witnesses revealed that the then Secretary of the MoD, General (Rtd) Attygalle and Deputy Minister of Defence Ranjan Wijeratne had tried to dissuade the President, and had also solicited the support of the Secretary to the President K.H.J. Wijeydasa.²⁹²

²⁹⁰ Government of Sri Lanka, 1997: 206, *Report on Assassination of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Sessional Paper No. IX-1997*. See Bibliography for complete Title.

²⁹¹ Government of Sri Lanka, 1997: 13, *Report on Assassination of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Sessional Paper No. IX-1997*. See Bibliography for complete Title.

²⁹² Government of Sri Lanka, 1997: 15, *Report on Assassination of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Sessional Paper No. IX-1997*. See Bibliography for complete Title.

The Secretary to the President K.H.J. Wijeydasa had presented the apprehensions of the defence officials and Minister Wijeratne to President Premadasa. The President had replied and said that he was working to a strategy and a plan and mentioned four arguments to support his decision.²⁹³ It is relevant to flag at this point that this was President Premadasa's *practical counterinsurgency statecraft* in action. And if it had worked, it would have been a great triumph for him.²⁹⁴

President Premadasa explained that he had four reasons for implementing this policy: *First*, that the Chief Minister of the North-East Provincial Council (NEPC), Mr. Varatharaja Perumal, was recruiting Tamil youth and establishing a militia called the Tamil National Army (TNA). And that this was being done with the assistance of the IPKF. *Second*, that he, President Premadasa had the authority and the right to make this decision. *Third*, that the LTTE would wipe-out the Tamil National Army. *Fourth* was that he did not want Sri Lankan armed forces [i.e. Sinhala soldiers] to crush this Tamil militia [i.e. composed of Sri Lanka Tamils] but rather he preferred that the LTTE [i.e. composed of Sri Lanka Tamils] to do this task.

Let us analyse each of the President's four arguments. In relation to the *first* argument President Premadasa was accurate.²⁹⁵ The *second* argument is also accurate. The President was the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces and police, the Head of State and the Head of Government. The *third* argument too proved to be a correct assessment by the President in July 1989 as events in late-1989 and early 1990 showed. By December 1989 the LTTE was successfully destroying the hastily trained TNA militia or getting them to surrender.²⁹⁶ By January 1990, the TNA militia were deserting in their hundreds:

In a final mockery of India's involvement in Sri Lanka, *hundreds of captured Tamil boy soldiers, some only 14, are being returned to their parents* by the Sri Lankan Army and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The boys have fought the highly experienced Tigers for less than a month. *Most were forcibly recruited into an Indian-backed group, the Tamil National Army, to fight the Tigers*, and most

²⁹³ See Government of Sri Lanka, 1997: 15 where these 4 arguments are mentioned, *Report on Assassination of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Sessional Paper No. IX-1997*. See Bibliography for complete Title.

²⁹⁴ The President held the highest and Constitutionally the most powerful Office in the country. He was Head of State and the Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces. He knew that in the final analysis the responsibility was his. He did not have the luxury of sitting back and doing nothing. In the extremely difficult political situation that he found his government in - i.e. two separate insurgencies occurring in separate parts of the country and the presence of Indian troops - the President was compelled to think and take a series of measures. No doubt he would have discussed these strategies with close advisors and colleagues. But the final decisions had to be taken by him.

²⁹⁵ *The Guardian*, 2 October 1989, 'Northern Sri Lanka waits for Tigers to pounce: Tamil leaders in the island's war zones who are dreading the time when their Indian patrons depart'. *The Guardian*, 22 November 1989, 'Indian army 'behind illegal Tamil force': Sri Lankan president joins criticism of Delhi's role'.

²⁹⁶ See *The Guardian*, 16 December 1989, 'Tamil Tigers find Batticaloa is easy prey' and *The Times (London)*, 28 December 1989, 'Tamil Tigers crushing Delhi's surrogate army: Sri Lanka'.

promptly surrendered or fled at the first sign of fighting. Many gave themselves up to Sri Lankan security forces after making their way out of the Tamil-dominated northern and eastern regions. *Many also surrendered to the Tigers, who commandeered their Indian-supplied weapons* [emphases added].²⁹⁷

By mid-March 1990 the LTTE moved unopposed into Trincomalee.²⁹⁸ The President's *fourth* argument too is what eventually occurred. The Sri Lankan Armed forces were not involved in any operations against the TNA militia and it was disarmed and dismantled by the LTTE.²⁹⁹

President Premadasa's counterinsurgency strategy with the LTTE was to try and cajole, persuade and bribe the LTTE and thereby wean it away from the insurrection. The LTTE skilfully deceived the President to think along these lines – which is a perfectly acceptable tactic in warfare. If one's enemy misjudges one's true strategy it is to one's advantage to allow that enemy to continue to do so.³⁰⁰ President Premadasa *grossly misjudged* the situation. Prior to any such transfer of weapons and ammunition he should have negotiated and arrived at a confirmed agreement with the LTTE. And then, for his own insurance, made it public.³⁰¹ He did neither. By getting personally involved in the negotiations the President put at risk his political reputation and also exposed himself personally to the possibility of a massive backlash from the Sinhala electorate.³⁰²

The IPKF and LTTE Agree to a Ceasefire on 20 September 1989, and leave Sri Lanka on 26 March 1990

With the LTTE-SLG ceasefire holding, the Indian government realised that there was no point staying any longer in Sri Lanka. Consequently an agreement was signed between the Indian and Sri Lanka governments on 18 September and the IPKF declared a unilateral ceasefire on

²⁹⁷ *The Times (London)*, 3 January 1990, 'Indian ignominy as Tamil boy soldiers go home; Sri Lanka'.

²⁹⁸ *The Independent*, 15 March 1990, 'Tamils advance'.

²⁹⁹ The present author has not yet been able to locate any source which explicitly explains the President's reasons for this fourth argument. However, the present author advances the following deductions: (1) The President wanted the LTTE (composed of Tamils) to disarm or fight the TNA militia (composed of Tamils). If the predominantly Sinhalese army had operated against the TNA militia it would have been Sinhala soldiers versus Tamil militia. This may have stiffened the resolve of the TNA militia to resist and fight. (2) Worse, this may have resulted in IPKF troops fighting alongside the TNA militia. That could have led to unnecessary and dangerous consequences. (3) The LTTE cadres 'knew' the nature and quality of the youth they were fighting against and also knew the terrain. (4) No lives of Sinhala soldiers would be lost.

³⁰⁰ This is a deduction by the present author based on an analysis of the actions of the LTTE and the president.

³⁰¹ If he had done so, then he could have told the Sinhala people that he was betrayed by the LTTE. Which he was. But what ultimately occurred was that large numbers of Sinhala people – assiduously encouraged by his enemies in the UNP and the Opposition SLFP and JVP – began to suspect *him* of being a traitor.

³⁰² The President did not seem to have had an exit plan or even a damage limitation plan if the LTTE reneged on its promises. And he had just witnessed how the LTTE had reneged on Rajiv Gandhi and the Indian government. These were errors of statecraft of very serious consequence to his political reputation and were to have far-reaching repercussions on his political career. These repercussions bedevilled Premadasa's tenure as President in the years 1990-1993 (as discussed in the next Chapter).

20 September 1989. The LTTE said that it would reciprocate.³⁰³ India's general elections were due in November 1989 and Mr. Gandhi and his Congress Party had a serious electoral contest on their hands. And, as it transpired, Rajiv Gandhi lost the Elections and V.P.Singh became India's Prime Minister on 2 December 1989.³⁰⁴ The very last batch of IPKF troops left Sri Lanka on 26 March 1989. This was five days ahead of the scheduled 31 March.³⁰⁵ When that happened Rajiv Gandhi was no longer the Prime Minister of India.

4.7: Conclusions: period from July 1983 to March 1990

The next phase of the insurrection began after the pogrom-riots of July 1983. The pogrom-riots immensely worsened the government's position and substantially benefited the insurrectionary groups. The pogrom-cum-riots of July 1983 raises questions of a deeply fundamental character about President Jayewardene's and the Cabinet's policy (profoundly deficient) understanding of the Tamil insurrection they were facing, and what counterinsurgency policies would be appropriate.

When we assess the government's policies from July 1983 to March 1990, it can be clearly seen that from late-1983 onwards the government was faced with a huge increase in the Tamil insurgency's vigour and guerrilla capabilities. These were entirely new experiences for the Sri Lankan armed forces and police which had never faced such guerrilla warfare spread throughout a territory as large as such as the Northern and Eastern provinces and over such an extended period of time. And Colombo was a target of bomb attacks. Militarily, from late-1983 onwards the government was primarily on the defensive and reacting to the strategies and tactics of the Tamil insurgents. The insurgents chose the targets and time of attack. By 1985-86 the government could barely cope with the insurgent's military onslaughts.

Even when the army 'Cleared' insurgents from any area, the 'Holding' phase was always precarious and the 'Build' phase was never reached. The army's primary approach was to make forays out of its bases and large camps and try and kill as many insurgents as possible. For some period of time a particular area would witness an absence of insurgents but the army was unable to 'hold' that area indefinitely to allow the next 2 phases of a counterinsurgency campaign to begin.

³⁰³ *The Times (London)*, 21 September 1989, 'Tamil Tigers in ceasefire deal'.

³⁰⁴ *The Times (London)*, 4 December 1989, 'Singh picks flamboyant Lal as deputy; Indian election'.

³⁰⁵ *The Guardian*, 26 March 1990, 'Bananarama serenades Delhi's departing troops'.

1. Did the Sri Lanka government have Political Purposes?

Yes, the Sri Lanka government did have a set of Political Objectives. And these political purposes played the determining role in the overall direction of government policy. These objectives were:

- That a separate Tamil state was not to be allowed to be formed in Sri Lanka. This was a non-negotiable objective.
- That the government was prepared to devolve power to Tamils living in the Northern and Eastern Provinces with the District as the 'Unit of Devolution'. The government wanted to proceed slowly and carefully in the devolution of power, cognisant of the fact that these Districts were the very same Districts from which Tamil secessionists wanted to create a separate state. TULF parliamentarians and Tamil insurgents *consistently* and *inflexibly* demanded that they wanted the Northern and Eastern Provinces joined together into one 'Unit of Devolution'. When the UNP government offered the District Development Councils (DDCs) this offer was rejected.
- That the Sri Lanka government was completely opposed to merging of the Northern and Eastern Provinces into one territory called the 'North-East' or 'North-East Province' because it assessed that this was a serious threat to its territorial unity. This was the assessment of all political leaders who stood for an undivided Sri Lankan State.
- That the Sri Lanka government did not accept that the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka were the 'traditional homeland' of the Tamil people.

The above being said, however, the Sri Lanka government did not have an overall counterinsurgency campaign plan where – while achieving the above objectives – it could address the reasonable grievances of the Tamil people and defeat the Tamil insurgents. This proved to be a far too difficult a task for the Sri Lanka government because: (a) the Tamil insurrection grew immensely after the pogrom-riots, (b) the insurgents were assisted by the Tamil Nadu and Indian central governments, and (c) the Indian central government insisted on becoming an active participant in the search for a solution.

2. Did the Sri Lanka government give security to the Tamil population?

No. Very quickly after the pogrom-riots, i.e. by mid-1984, large areas of the Northern Province came under the control of Tamil insurgents. These Tamils were not governed by the Sri Lanka government. These Tamils looked to the Tamil insurgents for security.

Tamils who lived under Sri Lanka government controlled areas – such as Colombo and also areas in the East – were subject to suspicion and surveillance.

3. Did the Sri Lanka government neutralize the Tamil insurgents?

No. While there were fire-fights and ambushes and counter-ambushes, overall it was the Tamil insurgents who were on the tactical offensive and who took the initiative. The

insurgents implemented very skilful mobile guerrilla tactics which the Sri Lanka army found very difficult to cope with. The police stations were systematically attacked and all of them in the Northern Province and some in the Eastern Province too had to be abandoned. Gradually the government forces began to get isolated to their camps.

4. Did the Sri Lanka government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?

No. By this time the majority of Tamils in the Northern Province and a significant number in the Eastern Province were living in areas under Tamil insurgent control. They did not support the government.

5. Did the Sri Lanka government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base?

No. It's the opposite which happened, i.e. the Tamil insurgents separated the government from the Tamil people, especially those Tamils living in the Northern Province. By late-1986 and early-1987 it was very clear that the military situation in Jaffna Peninsula and large parts of the Vanni had turned against the army. The army was corralled within their camps and could move out only in very strong columns with armoured cars. Obviously, in such a situation there could be no normal contact with the civilian population. The insurgent tactics had *succeeded in separating the government from the Tamil people, the exact opposite of what should have happened in a successful counterinsurgency.* A similar situation prevailed in the Eastern Province too wherever government forces merely held onto their camps and some of the main roads.

6. What were the relationships the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?

The Emergency regulations activated in June 1983 continued to as before. As the Tamil insurrection escalated, legal provisions became increasingly harsher. Concurrently, extra-judicial killings also began.

7. Did the Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection?

Yes, exceedingly so. To the extent of violating Sri Lanka's sovereignty, and, forcing a change in Sri Lanka's Constitution . During this phase Sri Lanka came under very great

pressure from the Indian Central government. The Indian central government implemented a 'two-track' policy where it applied diplomatic pressure on Sri Lanka while concurrently trained and built-up the military capabilities of Tamil insurgents. The Tamil Nadu state government and its people assisted the Tamil insurgents in numerous ways. Under intense pressure from India the Sri Lanka government had to concede to a Provincial Council system in July 1987 which joined together the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This created the North-East Provincial Council (NEPC).

(But, the LTTE revealed through its actions that it wanted nothing less than a separate state. The LTTE began fighting the IPKF and also attacked and killed NEPC personnel, all of whom were Tamils who had agreed to a negotiated solution within a united Sri Lanka. Consequently the NEPC functioned for a short time and was then dissolved. And then, till the end of 1994 – the end-date of this Thesis – the insurgency raged in the North and the East and there was no possibility of implementing the Provincial Council system in the North-East.)

Chapter. 5

The Tamil Secessionist Insurrection, 1990-1994: *Presidents Premadasa, Wijetunga & UNP Government's Policies*

Introduction

This Chapter is devoted to an examination and analysis of the UNP government's policies from June 1990 when the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection to August-November 1994 when the UNP lost both parliamentary and presidential elections. These were the final 4½ years of the UNP's 17 years in power. Compared to the 7 year period covered in the earlier Chapter these 4½ years were 'simple': the LTTE continued with the insurrection and had considerable military successes. The Sri Lankan armed forces too had some successes but on balance they were in a worse position in 1994 when compared with the LTTE.

This 4½ year period had nothing comparable to the frantic political negotiations of the August 1984 to July 1987 period. There was no interference from India and no insistent pressure on the Sri Lanka government to 'concede' to Tamil demands. India adopted a "hands-off" policy after the humiliating manner in which the IPKF had to exit from Sri Lanka by March 1990. After the LTTE killed Rajiv Gandhi in 1991 this "hands off" policy became very accentuated. But even by that time significant damage had been done to the Indian national interest in the sense that the Congress Party's leader – and only remaining son of Indira Gandhi and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru – had been assassinated by the LTTE. Considerable damage had been done to India's international image. In Tamil Nadu too there was a sharp dip in support for the Tamil insurgents due to the internecine killings and the killing of Rajiv Gandhi.¹

As a matter of fact there *were* no 'Tamil demands' as such because the Tamil insurrection was by now prosecuted only by the LTTE. This was the case from October 1987 when fighting broke-out between the IPKF and the LTTE. All the other insurgent groups – TELO, EPRLF, PLOTE and EROS – became tiny caucuses of a few dozen die-hards. All of them were

¹ See Subramanian, Narendra, 1999: 303-304, *Ethnicity and Populist Mobilization: Political Parties, Citizens and Democracy in South India*.

attacked by the LTTE and most of their leaders killed. Most of their ordinary cadres either migrated abroad, were killed by the LTTE and some were selectively absorbed into the LTTE.

President Premadasa Betrayed by the LTTE. President Premadasa was very committed to maintaining the ceasefire. The armed forces and police had been given strict orders to not do anything which could be seen as a provocation by the LTTE. Up to May 1990 President Premadasa's bold strategy of a ceasefire with the LTTE had achieved significant goals: the IPKF had returned to India and the JVP insurrection had been defeated.² After the IPKF left Sri Lanka in March 1990 the ceasefire between the LTTE and the Sri Lanka government began to unravel quite quickly. LTTE re-ignited the insurrection in June 1990. This was a very serious political set-back for President Premadasa as his high profile personal effort had clearly failed.

[...] the Colombo government was clearly seen this time to have been *treacherously deceived*. There had been a truce with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam for more than a year while negotiations to provide Sri Lanka's Tamil minority with greater autonomy went ahead. *Most diplomats in Colombo felt that the government of President Premadasa was making generous concessions to try to reach a peaceful solution* to end Sri Lanka's seven-year civil war. *"The Tigers could have got everything they wanted at the negotiating table"* a Western diplomat in Colombo said in puzzlement after the attacks [emphases added].³

The Western Diplomat was correct. The merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces which had been such a persistent issue of disagreement during 1983-1987 was no longer an issue as it had already been conceded – in the face of bitter opposition by some Sinhalese – via the Indo-Lanka Accord and the 13th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution. Numerous other powers too had also been conceded via the 13th Amendment. The LTTE could have established a Provincial administration – the North East Provincial Council (NEPC) – and lawfully administered the entire Northern and Eastern Provinces as one Unit of Devolution. But the creation of a separate state had not occurred. From the LTTE's actions it can be deduced that that was the ultimate goal and anything short of that goal was unacceptable. Once that central component of the LTTE's strategy is understood the basis for puzzlement ceases to exist.

² Rumours that the Sri Lanka government had transferred weapons and ammunition to the LTTE were in circulation within the Sinhala electorate. As mentioned in the earlier Chapter the story about this transfer had already been revealed by *The Guardian* in July 1989 itself. The Sri Lankan press avoided this story due to its inflammatory potential and apprehensions regarding their own security. In any event in May-June 1990 this matter was not (yet) a controversial issue as the government-LTTE ceasefire still prevailed.

³ *The Times (London)*, 5 July 1990, 'Tigers promised fight to finish'.

President Premadasa was seriously interested in arriving at a negotiated settlement with the LTTE in 1989. In the Sri Lankan political system the President had unrivalled power and is the ultimate decision maker. By getting personally involved Premadasa sent an unequivocal signal that he was serious about negotiations with the LTTE, and that decisions could be made and implemented very fast if the LTTE were serious. President Premadasa was a very experienced Sinhala politician who had been involved in thousands of negotiations and political manoeuvres during his career as a Municipal Councillor, Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister, Prime Minister and finally President. President Premadasa was confident that he could negotiate a 'deal' with the LTTE. From sometime from June 1989 onwards President Premadasa himself took direct control of the negotiations with the LTTE.

No officials attended those talks. Premadasa said that the LTTE had now pledged to join the democratic process, they had registered themselves as a political party; he said that he could trust them. When asked if they will not betray that trust he said NO.⁴

In this belief President Premadasa was seriously, and fatally, in error. The LTTE was not ready to compromise on a solution short of a separate State. During the negotiations with him the LTTE had never given a definite commitment that it was prepared to settle for a solution within a united Sri Lankan state. But Premadasa did not, or could not, understand this. *He misread the LTTE's commitment to secession: he did not fully comprehend the LTTE's sophisticated strategies and tactics during 1984 – July 1987 when, while combining guerrilla warfare in Sri Lanka it insisted on demands which, in fact, were irrelevant to the LTTE. The LTTE insisted to Rajiv Gandhi's government from 1984 onwards that the merging of the Northern and Eastern Provinces was an essential factor for a negotiated settlement. When the Indian government finally coerced the Sri Lanka government to make this vital concession via the Indo-Lanka Accord, without cooperating with the Indian government to make the Provincial Council work, the LTTE renewed the insurrection this time fighting the IPKF. This was the LTTE's modus operandi and it should have been fully understood by the President.*

During 1990-1994 the secessionist insurrection further escalated in intensity when compared with the entire period preceding it. A large number of military operations were conducted by the government and this period also witnessed the highest intensity of fighting seen up to that time. The number of armed forces and police casualties – a concrete empirical indicator of the intensity of military conflict – far exceeded the numbers of the entire preceding periods. As can be seen from Table 5.1 the army's casualties were the highest.

⁴ Government of Sri Lanka, 1997: 15, *Report on Assassination of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa, Sessional Paper No. IX-1997*, See Bibliography for complete Title.

Table 5.1: Armed Forces and Police Casualties from 10 June 1990 to 16 Nov 1994

	Killed-in-Action			Wounded-in-Action		
	From 10 June 1990 to 16 Nov 1994	From 1977 to 10 June 1990 (entire previous period)	% increase compared to 1977-June 1990	From 10 June 1990 to 16 Nov 1994	From 1977 to 10 June 1990 (entire previous period)	% increase compared to 1977-June 1990
Army	4,230	1,017	316%	2,121	401	429%
Navy	228	40	470%	55	8	587%
Air Force	118	49	141%	71	9	688%
Police	714	400	78.5%	50	42	-16%
Total	5,290			2,297		

(Source: 'Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003')

The subjects of this Chapter are best dealt with in two parts as it facilitates the understanding of the 1990-1994 period. Part I deals with two systemic trends which exerted their effect during these years; of these the first two were major trends while the third was a very minor trend. First, the LTTE's targeted assassination of key civilian and military leaders of the government and *therefore the very serious discontinuity of leadership and strategy of the government*. The second trend was the UNP civilian government's abdication - while maintaining a cursory overview - of military strategy formulation and military operations to the army to a degree not seen before (or since) in Sri Lanka. These two strands were inextricably interwoven with each other and occurred synchronously; sometimes in close correlation with one another while at other times as a direct causal relationship with the other. Part II is devoted, in chronological order, to a description and analysis of the military operations of these 4½ years. Government policy during these 4½ years consisted almost exclusively of defensive and offensive military operations to cope with LTTE attacks.

I

5.1: LTTE's targeted assassinations of civilian and military leaders and the Strategic Consequences

During 1990-1994 there occurred a series of assassinations and deaths of political and military leaders which were unprecedented up to that time. These deaths created serious discontinuities in political and military leadership and had a deleterious impact on the

government's policymaking mechanisms and policy itself. These assassinations had *strategic* consequences. The first (Deputy Minister for Defence Ranjan Wijeratne) occurred in 1991, the next two in 1992 (Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa and Admiral Clancy Fernando) and the final one in 1993 (President Ranasinghe Premadasa). Each was a shock to the governmental system.

Ranjan Wijeratne. The first of the LTTE's *strategic* assassinations was on 2 March 1991, when Ranjan Wijeratne the State Minister (i.e. Deputy Minister) for Defence and also Minister for Plantations Industries was killed by a vehicle bomb on one of Colombo's main roads.⁵ Although in a formal sense he was the Deputy Minister of Defence, Wijeratne was in fact the Minister of Defence in day-to-day charge of the government's entire defence establishment which included all three armed forces, police and intelligence services. President Premadasa delegated the public face of Defence to Wijeratne. In parliament it was Wijeratne who forcefully articulated the strong line the government would take against the LTTE. Potentially, Wijeratne was the person who could have been the single political-military Director of Operations that counterinsurgency literature suggests. He had the Political power base within the UNP (it would have been essential that no fissure develop between him and President Premadasa (like what happened between Lalith Athulathmudali and Premadasa). And he had the confidence of the military. And some knowledge of how to get the military system to work, and how the Sri Lankan system worked.

Mr Wijeratne, aged 60, an MP for the ruling United National Party, *wielded much more power than his junior defence portfolio*, even with his task of overseeing the drive against the rebels, suggested. *Mr Wijeratne was in fact the president's second-in-command and hatchet man.* A former tea planter, he was also the plantations and industry minister [emphases added].⁶

Wijeratne was a very effective and credible 'wartime leader'. He adopted a very forceful and fearless 'proactive' posture against the LTTE and enjoyed a great deal of confidence amongst the Officers and Other Ranks of armed forces and police.

A natural leader, he was often at the war front in the island's northern and eastern provinces, talking not only to the soldiers but also to the people. A man who did not mince words, he made plenty of enemies but was respected for his honesty and dedication [emphases added].⁷

At press conferences it was Wijeratne who faced the press. For example on 18 June he said very forcefully:

The ceasefire in the northeast has been abandoned," said Ranjan Wijeratne, [Deputy] Minister of defence, referring to the failure of the second ceasefire in a week. "The northeast of the country is in a situation of all-out war and military commanders have been given authority to use any

⁵ *The Independent*, 3 March 1991, 'Sri Lanka bomb kills war leader'.

⁶ *The Times (London)*, 4 March 1991, 'Murder of minister shakes Sri Lanka'.

⁷ *The Times (London)*, 4 March 1991, 'Ranjan Wijeratne'.

operational measures necessary to defeat the guerrillas," Mr Wijeratne added [emphases added].⁸

On 19 June Wijeratne said "Now we are going to *annihilate them*, [...] Our military machine is committed to that and there is no turning back [emphases added]."⁹ Then again at a press conference on 21 June 1990 he boldly said that he wanted the destruction of the LTTE leader:

"I want the *Tigers' military leader Prabakaran's head*," said the State Minister for Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, at a press conference yesterday. Mr Wijeratne, the political leader of the armed forces, was seen as one of the main opponents of President Premadasa's attempts to be conciliatory to the guerrillas. *He called the Tigers "fascists, extortionists and murderers"*, and said their attempts to retreat and regroup *were being awaited by the security forces, "who will give them a grand welcome"* [emphases added].¹⁰

These forceful statements were a very important morale booster to the armed forces and the Sinhala electorate in an era when the LTTE was able to carry out attacks in the East, North and Colombo City and seemed impossible to defeat. While such statements uplifted morale Wijeratne should have simultaneously taken far more care of his personal security; he should have varied his route from home to Office and taken other basic precautions.¹¹ He held the rank of Lt.Colonel in the Sri Lanka Army's volunteer force¹² by virtue of the fact that he was the nominal Commanding Officer of one of the two battalions of the Sri Lanka Rifle Corps (SLRC).¹³

Ranjan Wijeratne was the *second most powerful politician in the country*. His death will *change the balance of the Cabinet* and, possibly, *the whole style of government*. Many believe he was used for his hardline stance against the JVP and the LTTE. *There is no one willing, or able, to replace him* [emphases added].¹⁴

⁸ *The Times (London)*, 19 June 1990, 'Tamil rebels face all-out war launched by Colombo'.

⁹ *The Times (London)*, 20 June 1990, 'Colombo army takes battle to Tamil bastion'.

¹⁰ *The Independent*, 22 June 1990, 'Tigers fall into a trap of their own making'.

¹¹ It was widely known in that part of Colombo that Wijeratne's convoy of vehicles would come along this road in the morning (source: the present author's discussions with friends who lived in the vicinity and also a fact known to the present author). Such routine was deadly and a mistake by Wijeratne which cost him his life. The threat that Wijeratne and his security detail seems to have anticipated was an LTTE assassination squad using automatic firearms. Such an effort would have been defeated by Wijeratne's highly trained Commando security escorts and his armoured vehicle. But the LTTE used an IED which was estimated to have had at least 100 Kg of explosives. In the face of such an attack Wijeratne's security was impotent. However, it needs to be pointed out that this was the LTTE's first *strategic* assassination of the government's political and military leaders. In March 1991 the Sri Lankan State did not know or understand that the LTTE was implementing such a strategy. Even after Wijeratne's assassination the UNP's leaders did not take adequate precautions. President Premadasa (in 1991), and ex-Ministers Lalith Athulathmudali (in 1991) and Gamini Dissanayake (in 1994) all appeared in public events and were all assassinated by the LTTE (discussed later in this Chapter).

¹² 'Volunteers' is the term used in Sri Lanka to designate the equivalent of the 'Territorial Army' in Britain. A forceful administrator, Wijeratne was an ex-Plantation Manger who had the reputation of achieving performance targets. Wijeratne had successfully lead President JR Jayewardene's government's campaign against the 2nd JVP insurrection during July 1987-Nov.1989. Wijeratne confidently asserted in parliament and in public that he would destroy the LTTE in the same way he had destroyed the JVP.

¹³ These two SLRC infantry battalions were raised from personnel working in the Plantations sector of the country's economy - Tea, Rubber or Coconut. Their primary mission was to guard and protect the plantations of the country.

¹⁴ *The Independent*, 5 March 1991, 'Obituary: Ranjan Wijeratne'.

Wijeratne's death leaves *a gaping hole in the government*. He was *deputy to Mr Premadasa at the defence ministry*, in day-to-day charge of all defence-related matters. A self-proclaimed workaholic, he was also minister for plantation industries, running a vital part of the Sri Lankan economy, and *secretary-general of the ruling UNP* [emphases added].¹⁵

There is a great deal of accuracy in the above assessments. The UNP government was profoundly destabilised by Wijeratne's death. An internecine power struggle which began from 1988 onwards when President Jayewardene selected the then Prime Minister R.Premadasa as his successor, now began to intensify. This was a power-struggle at the highest levels of the UNP government. President Premadasa was on one side and Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake – two of the most influential Cabinet ministers in President Jayewardene's Cabinet - on the other side. It culminated with an attempt to impeach President Premadasa during August to October 1991. The attempt failed in October 1991 but left its mark on the UNP government and on President Premadasa. During those three months military operations against the LTTE were negatively affected because President Premadasa was severely distracted by the impeachment motion. In September 1991 military operations were even suspended at a particular juncture.¹⁶ Such distraction was entirely to be expected as the impeachment attacked the very foundations of his Office of President. While the impeachment cannot be directly linked with Ranjan Wijeratne's death, it is the present author's assessment that it is highly unlikely that it would have occurred if Wijeratne had been alive and the General-Secretary of the UNP. It is also the present author's assessment that if Wijeratne had continued to live he could very well have become the next President of Sri Lanka after Premadasa's two terms expired or after Premadasa's assassination.

Rajiv Gandhi. The LTTE assassinated ex-Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and leader of the Indian National Congress Party in Tamil Nadu, India, on 21 May 1991.¹⁷ This assassination had a great negative impact on the Indian Government, the Congress Party of India, Indian civil and military officials, and large segments of ordinary Indian people throughout India. The *modus operandi* pointed to the LTTE but the LTTE denied any involvement in the assassination.¹⁸ In 2006, 15 years later, the LTTE apologised to India for assassinating Rajiv Gandhi.¹⁹

¹⁵ *The Guardian*, 4 March 1991, 'Tigers blamed for murder of security hawk'.

¹⁶ *The Independent*, 28 September 1991, 'Sri Lankan government calls off Tiger offensive'. "The Sri Lankan government, facing a no-confidence vote in parliament, yesterday suspended all offensive operations against the Tamil Tiger separatist guerrillas in the north of the country, military sources said."

¹⁷ *The Times (London)*, 22 May 1991, 'Rajiv Gandhi assassinated in bomb blast'.

¹⁸ *The Guardian*, 23 May 1991, 'India After Rajiv: Tigers deny role in the attack'.

¹⁹ *The Independent*, 28 June 2006, 'Tamil Tigers apologise for suicide bomber's murder of Rajiv Gandhi'.

In the years and decades after May 1991 the negative impact of this assassination gradually worked itself deep into Indian government policy formulation to the detriment of the LTTE and, in due course, led to fundamental changes in the Indian Central Government's policy towards the LTTE and the Tamil insurgency. These complex policy changes of the Indian Central Government and the Congress Party did not take place overnight but were very significant for the insurgency and counterinsurgency in subsequent years, specially the period 2006-2009.²⁰

Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa. The second death that had a strategic effect on Sri Lanka was that of Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa on 8 August 1992 in Jaffna. This occurred when the vehicle that he was travelling in was caught in an explosion.²¹ Whether it was a command detonated IED or a pressure mine could not be established beyond doubt. This was a battlefield event and has to be classified as a 'Killed-in-Action' casualty. This was not a specifically targeted killing like that of Ranjan Wijeratne as the LTTE cadres would not have known who was travelling in the army Land Rover vehicle that was caught in the explosion.

During this era Kobbekaduwa was hugely popular in the army and amongst the Sinhala people.²² A great many military operations were carried out in the Northern and Eastern Provinces from June 1990 onwards (discussed later in this Chapter). In the course of these operations two senior field officers of the army became household names in Sri Lanka: Major General Denzil Kobbekaduwa and Brigadier Vijaya Wimalaratne. Even prior to this time both Kobbekaduwa and Wimalaratne were well known in the army and amongst the Sinhala public. They had been at the forefront of operations in Jaffna during the 1984-1987. Of these two Kobbekaduwa had a very charismatic personality and was by far the most popular amongst the Sinhala public. In the army too he was greatly loved and respected by the other ranks, young officers and most senior officers. The care and concern for the welfare of troops in the field that Kobbekaduwa had shown on numerous occasions was well known in the army. Some senior officers of an equivalent seniority to Kobbekaduwa, however, were hostile to him. This was primarily due to the inevitable competition for prestigious appointments amongst senior officers of similar rank, and also the inevitable competition to become the

²⁰ Such changes and issues fall outside the time period dealt-with in this Thesis and therefore will not be discussed in this Thesis.

²¹ *The Independent*, 10 August 1992, 'Tamil Tiger mine kills top army commanders'.

²² He enjoyed the rare privilege of having had his entire military training in Britain. He obtained his officer cadet training at Sandhurst after which he did two young officers' courses in the UK. He also did his Staff College course at Camberley and his higher defence training at RCDS (Royal College of Defence Studies). See Sri Lanka Armoured Corps, 2005: 322 and *The Wish Stream*, Vol.15, No.1, 1960, p.65.

Commander of the Army. Kobbekaduwa was one of the very few Sri Lankan army officers who had his most important stints of military education – i.e. as a Cadet, Staff College and Higher Defence College – entirely in Britain.²³

From late-1991 onwards it was publicly discussed in newspaper feature columns, at public meetings and in conversations that he should enter politics and ‘save’ the country from the LTTE scourge.²⁴ Large road banners and wall posters were put-up by anonymous groups which appealed to Kobbekaduwa to contest the Presidency and lead the country to safety.²⁵

In 1990-1992 Kobbekaduwa was probably the most popular Sinhala person in Sri Lanka.²⁶ President Premadasa’s political reputation was seriously damaged by the LTTE reneging on the promises made to the President during the earlier negotiating period. Kobbekaduwa was well aware of the danger posed to his military career by the unsolicited popularity he was accruing.²⁷ The appearance of pro-Kobbekaduwa banners and posters created unease within government circles.

During the 2 years and 2 months from June 1990 to August 1992, the pace of military operations – reinforcement, withdrawals, ‘search & destroy’ - in both the North and East was unprecedented when compared with the preceding phases of the insurrection. After Minister Wijeratne’s death the tendency for the Sri Lanka Army to be in the forefront of the formulation of military strategy and planning became even further accentuated. General Kobbekaduwa’s name was often in the press. He was in the lead in the large multi-pronged operation to re-capture the populated areas of the East via Operation *Sledge Hammer* right from the inception of fighting on 10 June 1990 onwards. Subsequently, Kobbekaduwa was the

²³ See *The Times (London)*, 15 August 1992, ‘Maj-Gen Denzil Kobbekaduwa’. Kobbekaduwa had his Officer Cadet training at the Royal Military Academy (RMA), Sandhurst; his Staff College training at Camberley; and his highest level of training at the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS).

²⁴ A fact of very great political significance was that Kobbekaduwa had close family connections to the main opposition party, the SLFP, through his Kobbekaduwa family network. The prestigious and influential Kobbekaduwa family was well known in Sri Lankan politics as a pro-SLFP family. Kobbekaduwa was also married to one of SLFP leader Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike’s nieces. Kobbekaduwa was well aware of his vulnerability within a UNP government. He attempted to be scrupulously a-political in his conduct within the army, in public, and in press interviews. However, accolades were heaped on him by newspapers supportive of the Opposition SLFP.

²⁵ Banners and posters were seen by the present author in suburbs of Colombo, late-1991 to August 1992.

²⁶ This assessment is based on numerous discussions with a wide range of informants during this time, and, the press coverage given to the General. This assessment is not based on a scientific survey. Scientific surveys on such a topic were impossible to implement at that time to, among other factors, security dangers posed to the implementers of such a survey.

²⁷ Interview with the General’s wife, Mrs Lali Kobbekaduwa, June 2005, Colombo. When Kobbekaduwa received information of the appearance of banners and posters supporting him, he would arrange – if he was in Colombo - for groups of soldiers to be sent in the night to such locations to cut down the banners and scrape away the wall posters. If Kobbekaduwa was in the Northern Province, however, he would not get such information in a timely fashion nor find it easy to muster the personnel to dismantle the banners and posters.

GOC (General Officer Commanding) the amphibious task force which saved the Elephant Pass army camp in July-August 1991 from being overrun by the LTTE (discussed later in this Chapter). Up to that time the army had experienced a string of withdrawals and defeats in the Northern Province. This operation was named Operation *Balawegaya-1* and was a significant victory for the army. Newspapers carried stories on this operation and it was widely popular in the eyes of the Sinhala electorate and boosted the morale of the armed forces, police and the Sinhala public. Kobbekaduwa was a hero in the eyes of the Sinhala masses. It can be accurately stated that no other military officer up to that time had achieved such a level of popular acclaim in postcolonial Sri Lanka.

Concurrent with the above President Premadasa personally and the UNP government in general became increasingly unpopular amongst the Sinhala electorate.²⁸ By 1992 the UNP had been in government for a total of 15 years (President Jayewardene from 1977 to Jan 1989 and President Premadasa from January 1989 onwards). Up till this time no single Sri Lankan political party had governed postcolonial Sri Lanka for such a long period. There was the natural tendency, as in all democracies, for governing parties to become unpopular due to matters such as the rising cost of living and this had begun to occur to the UNP. However, significantly the Sinhala electorate was also becoming increasingly worried about the LTTE's successful attacks on the armed forces and police, the high casualties being experienced by the army and the police and the UNP government's inability to make meaningful progress against the LTTE.

After the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection in June 1990 it was on the offensive on many fronts. This compelled the abandonment of a number of army camps in the North, the withdrawal of their personnel to larger bases and the deaths of many hundreds of army and police personnel. For example, from 10 June 1990 to 31 December 1990, the police casualties were 457 killed and 12 disabled in action, and the total army casualties were 732 killed and 415 disabled in action.²⁹

It was in this context that President Premadasa's period of negotiations with the LTTE came under renewed suspicious scrutiny by the Sinhala public, a suspicion which was deliberately fanned by Opposition parties and pressure groups hostile to President Premadasa. Large sections of the Sinhala electorate began to look at President Premadasa with suspicion. This was actively encouraged by the Opposition SLFP and other opposition political parties.

²⁸ This is indirectly borne-out by the fact that in 1994 the UNP lost both Parliamentary and Presidential Elections. Discussed later in this Chapter.

²⁹ 'Official Roll of Honour-1977 to 2003', 2005: spreadsheet.

Gradually a body of opinion emerged within a section of the Sinhala peoples that Premadasa had been a 'collaborator' with the LTTE in 1989 and that he was still in collaboration with the LTTE in 1990-1992. To those with this extremist viewpoint Premadasa was a 'traitor' to the Sinhala people. The risk that Premadasa had taken in 1989 to personally become the government's chief negotiator now came to haunt him with renewed vigour. When the LTTE reneged on its commitments and re-ignited the insurrection, the President's standing in the eyes of the Sinhala people became tarnished.

Additionally, and in a sense most importantly of all, was the information that in 1989 Premadasa had authorised the secret transfer of some small arms (such as AK-47s), ammunition and money to the LTTE.³⁰ Information that President Premadasa had authorised this transfer gradually leaked into the public realm.³¹ By 1991-1992 this information was quite well known amongst the Sinhala electorate. This was assiduously encouraged by the Opposition. For most Sinhalese people who were hostile to Premadasa this was incontrovertible proof that he was a 'traitor' to the Sinhala people. Even UNP supporters loyal to President Premadasa found this fact difficult to understand.³²

It was in this volatile political context that on 8 August 1992 General Kobbekaduwa and Brigadier Wimalaratne were caught in an explosion in Jaffna. They were on a reconnaissance trip in a Land-Rover on an island off Jaffna Peninsula. Wimalaratne and many others died on the spot while the very critically injured Kobbekaduwa was rushed to Colombo by helicopter and fixed wing aircraft and desperate efforts made to save him. Eventually he was pronounced dead. The death of Kobbekaduwa dealt an immense body-blow to the morale of the Army and the Sinhala people. Army personnel were deeply affected by the two officer's deaths and there was a distinct demoralising effect on the army³³. However, other officers took over the duties of those killed and the army dourly carried-on with its duties. Mini anti-government riots occurred at both Officers' military funerals which were held at the Kanatte cemetery in Colombo. Some busses were burnt and a considerable amount of disorder took place.³⁴

³⁰ As already discussed in Chapter-4.

³¹ Wickremasinghe, Nira, 2006:292, *Sri Lanka in the modern age: a history of contested identities*.

³² As discussed in Chapter-4 there is no doubt that President Premadasa had authorised this transfer. He did this as a part of his statecraft, without fully realising the risky consequences which could arise in the future. When the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection and armed forces and police personnel began to be killed in hitherto unprecedented numbers. The Opposition spread the story that it was with the weapons and ammunition that President Premadasa had transferred that the soldiers were now being killed. The irony is that it was entirely possible that *some* of the ammunition used against Sri Lankan army soldiers were from the stock transferred in 1989. But that was not the result of a deliberate act of treason by the President but the unforeseen consequences of risky statecraft.

³³ Interview with former army Commander Lt.General (Red) G.H. De Silva, August 2006, Colombo.

³⁴ *The Guardian*, 13 August 1992, 'Mourners Rampage'.

The government appointed an official commission to investigate the explosion and the commission arrived at the conclusion that an LTTE IED (improvised explosive device) had caused the explosion. Wide segments of the Sinhala population, however, dismissed these conclusions. In any event the death of these two officers served to cast a cloud over Premadasa personally and also served to diminish his authority.

In 1994, the new SLFP-led coalition government came to power. President Chandrika B. Kumaratunga appointed a Presidential Commission to investigate the death of Major General Kobbekaduwa and others.³⁵ In 1997 this Commission published its findings and one of its main conclusions was that it had found “evidence beyond all reasonable doubt that there was an IED on board the vehicle [in which the Major General and others were travelling]” and that President Premadasa was responsible for a conspiracy which led to the death of Kobbekaduwa.³⁶

Vice Admiral Clancy Fernando. The next death was that of Navy Commander Vice Admiral Clancy Fernando on 16 November 1992. This was a targeted assassination. This attack took place when Fernando was being driven in the morning to Navy HQ in Colombo. As the Admiral’s staff car with his security detail was proceeding along one of Colombo’s main roads a motorcyclist drove up and crashed into the moving car and detonated explosives.³⁷ All the occupants in the car were killed on the spot.³⁸

The LTTE never admitted that it was responsible but the *modus operandi* was unmistakable.³⁹ This was the targeted assassination which caused the least strategic damage to the Sri Lanka government. That was because the navy took the death in its stride and a new Commander of the Navy was appointed on the same day itself and the navy dourly carried-on as usual.⁴⁰ Fernando was not politically connected as was Kobbekaduwa. Fernando’s death was

³⁵ Government of Sri Lanka 1997. Sessional Paper IX-1997, The Report of the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry Probing into The Assassination of Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa and Nine Others and Causing Serious Injury to Another at Arali, Kayts on 08 August 1992.

³⁶ See Government of Sri Lanka 1997: 170-171. *Sessional Paper IX-1997, The Report of the Special Presidential Commission of Inquiry Probing into The Assassination of Lieutenant General Denzil Kobbekaduwa and Nine Others and Causing Serious Injury to Another at Arali, Kayts on 08 August 1992*. There are serious problems with this enquiry. It was done by a SLFP-led coalition government after the UNP had lost power in 1994; none of the main witnesses were alive – eg. President Premadasa, Lalith Athulathmudali; and there were significant issues related to the investigative process. These cannot be discussed any further in this Thesis.

³⁷ *The Island*, 17 November 1992, ‘Suicide bomber on motor bike with explosives rams Navy Commander: Navy Commander killed in bomb explosion’.

³⁸ *The Times (London)*, 17 November 1992, ‘Sri Lanka navy chief murdered’.

³⁹ *The Independent*, 17 November 1992, ‘Bomber kills Sri Lankan navy chief’.

⁴⁰ Sri Lanka Navy, 2013: 505 (Annexure page.VII), *Sri Lanka Navy: Diamond of the Silent Blue. “Steering True 1950 to 2010”*.

politically significant because it caused yet another shock to the Sinhala public. From the *modus operandi* the Sinhala public, government and all armed forces concluded that the Admiral had been killed by the LTTE. This death further increased the fear and insecurity of the Sinhala people because for the first time a serving commander of one of the armed forces had been killed by the LTTE.⁴¹ This was read by the Sinhala people as an indicator of the LTTE's military prowess, and conversely, yet another pointer to weakness of the government.

President R.Premadasa. The next targeted assassination was that of President Premadasa himself on 1 May 1993. By April 1993 President Premadasa's popularity was at a very low ebb. An attempt had been made in August 1991 to impeach him. This effort was defeated in October 1991. The two senior most members of his own UNP party – Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake, both of whom were later expelled from the UNP by him – had led the impeachment effort. Premadasa was able to outmanoeuvre his opponents in parliament and did not face an Impeachment Vote. But his stature as President was further diminished. One of the charges made against Premadasa in the impeachment motion was that he had transferred arms and funds to the LTTE. As fighting between the LTTE and government forces continued throughout 1990-1993, armed forces casualties were in the newspapers almost on a daily basis. The Opposition SLFP and disgruntled UNP politicians were wont to say that the dead soldiers had been shot by ammunition and weapons transferred by President Premadasa in 1989-1990. This kind of rumour negatively impacted upon President Premadasa's reputation and stature.

In the last week of April 1993 Lalith Athulathmudali – an ex-UNP leader who was one of the leaders of the attempt to impeach Premadasa - was shot and assassinated at a public meeting in Colombo. His alleged assassin was shot and killed by police personnel who chased after him. After initial investigations the government stated that the assassin was an LTTE cadre. The Opposition, on the other hand, claimed that Premadasa was responsible for the assassination.⁴² Posters and slogans appeared on walls and a massive public campaign built-up against Premadasa. The President was compelled to go on State television and vehemently deny these allegations. However, the opposition kept-up its campaign against the President. The 1st of May is a holiday in Sri Lanka, and all the political parties have parades and public meetings commemorating workers' rights. The UNP too organised its own procession.

⁴¹ This was the first and the last time that a Commander of any of the three armed forces were killed by the LTTE.

⁴² *The Guardian*, 26 April 1993, 'Sri Lankan death mystery grows'.

President Premadasa joined the UNP procession when it was passing through his old parliamentary electoral area in central Colombo. He stepped out from his armoured vehicle and began to walk with the people in the UNP procession. A few minutes later a bomb explosion occurred in his vicinity and he, along with many of his bodyguards and UNP supporters were killed.⁴³ At least 17 were killed and 60 persons wounded.⁴⁴

President Premadasa took this risky action in an effort to recoup the popularity he had been losing over the previous months. Premadasa was an experienced populist parliamentarian with over 30 years experience in the electoral hustle and bustle of Sri Lankan politics. He had a strong popular base amongst many Sinhala voters in Colombo and throughout the country. Premadasa had an instinctive capacity for popular mobilisation.

Although he was under strict guard under normal conditions and avoided taking risks in public, on this occasion he violated the prudent counsel given by his security officers in his endeavour to be with 'his' people and be seen as 'a man of the people'. Premadasa was under political siege on many fronts. Being seen amongst thousands of his supporters was one way to begin repairing his battered public image. Later that day parliament appointed Prime Minister D.B. Wijetunga as the new President as per the Constitution.⁴⁵

Within a period of 7 days - from Lalith Athulathmudali's assassination on 26 April to the President's assassination on 1 May - the UNP and the country as a whole lost two very capable and experienced political leaders. As Dr. Neelan Tiruchelvam, TULF politician and scholar stated:

The last 10 days have completely destabilised the whole system," said Neelan Tiruchelvam, a lawyer and noted political commentator. "Two of the most dynamic, single-minded and determined politicians have been taken out. It was a dual body blow to the system, and it will take one generation to recover . . . It is a very sad time for Sri Lanka [emphases added].⁴⁶

There is a great deal of accuracy in the above observation. It is correct that the Sri Lankan State did not implode, did not decay. The institutions of the government and the State replaced the assassinated leaders with others and plodded along. But the UNP as a party went

⁴³ The Sunday Times (London), 2 May 1993, 'Tamil Tigers blamed as bomb kills president'.

⁴⁴ The Sunday Observer, 2 May 1993, 'Personal body guards among at least 17 people blown to pieces in bomb blast: President assassinated'.

⁴⁵ The Independent, 4 May 1993, 'Sri Lanka leader catapulted to top'.

⁴⁶ The Independent, 5 May 1993, 'Sri Lanka mourns and fears for future'. Dr Neelan Tiruchelvam is the same TULF leader who negotiated with then Minister Athulathmudali in 1986 (discussed in the previous Chapter). Dr Tiruchelvam was himself assassinated by an LTTE suicide bomber in Colombo on 29 July 1999. He was involved in negotiations on Constitutional Reforms which would address some of the demands of the Tamils with the then government. This would have been within a united Sri Lankan State and that was considered a traitorous act by the LTTE. This assassination was one more indicator - amongst thousands of attacks, targeted killings and renegeing on negotiations - which revealed that the LTTE was totally committed to the creation of a separate state.

into a serious crisis, other leaders in the party became fearful and, most important of all, the general public – although outwardly people tried to put on a brave face – were very pessimistic of whether a separate state could be resisted. Without Premadasa's forceful leadership the UNP became rudder-less. Suffering from the atrophy of having been in power for 16 years the UNP government was thence onwards essentially a 'lame duck' administration. While military operations were carried out, new army officers were routinely appointed as Division and Brigade Commanders and many 'search and destroy' operations were carried out very little – if any – *substantive* progress was made in countering the secessionist insurgency. A little more than a year later the UNP was defeated at both the parliamentary elections (in August 1994) and Presidential Elections (in November 1994) by an SLFP-led coalition led by Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga.

Cumulative Consequences of these Assassinations. The political and military policies of the government during 1990-1994 were compelled to 'muddle through' the deaths of the important Sri Lankan political and military leaders mentioned above. Continuity of policy was not possible to maintain when key leaders were eliminated at regular intervals. Wijeratne's assassination was a body-blow to President Premadasa's government as it eliminated the one individual in his cabinet who, at that time, could give effective leadership to the armed forces, had the confidence of the armed forces, and knew what had to be done. The other two senior leaders in the Cabinet were Ministers Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissanayake who were both contenders for presidential office and were involved in a leadership struggle with President Premadasa. After these two Ministers led an unsuccessful move to Impeach the President in August 1991, Premadasa expelled them from the UNP. In the present author's assessment Wijeratne's death was the most damaging to the Sri Lankan State. After Ranjan Wijeratne's death it was Ranil Wickremasinghe – a comparatively junior Minister who came from a traditional UNP family - that Premadasa appointed as the Minister to liaise with the Defence establishment. Consequently the tendency for senior army officers to formulate military strategy became further accentuated.

The death of General Kobbekaduwa had consequences which were complex and far-reaching⁴⁷. His death eliminated a very charismatic field commander and there was

⁴⁷ All of these complex issues, some of them in the realm of civil-military relations in Sri Lanka, cannot be dealt with in this Thesis. However, the following need to be mentioned: (i) Kobbekaduwa was one of the senior officers in the army who could have become army commander either after the retirement of Lt.General Wanasinghe (1988-1991) or Lt.General Waidyaratne (1991-1993). (ii) Kobbekaduwa's inadvertent 'connections' – through birth and marriage, both of which he had no personal control over - to the Opposition SLFP were a thorny issue for Premadasa and the UNP government. Kobbekaduwa's unprecedented popularity among the Sinhala electorate due to his association with the military successes of that added to the UNP government's

widespread demoralisation within the army. Large scale attacks such as the LTTE's attack on Pooneryn Base in November 1993 (discussed later in this Chapter) increased this demoralisation. While many operations were carried out during these years the cumulative gains were minimal. When President Premadasa was assassinated the Sri Lankan state was shaken to its foundations.

Death, which has claimed many thousands of victims in Sri Lanka's long-running civil war, has *in the last two years been stalking some very senior military and political leaders*. In March 1991 the defence minister, *Ranjan Wijeratne*, was killed by a powerful bomb in Colombo. In August last year [1992] *General Denzil Kobbekaduwa*, in charge of the war against the Tamils in the north, was killed by a landmine. In November [1992] *Vice-Admiral Clancy Fernando*, the commander of the navy, was killed by a motorcycle bomber. And just a week before Premadasa's death his main rival, *Lalith Athulathmudali*, was shot dead at a political rally. [...] *by the time of Premadasa's assassination many Sri Lankans felt that the very basis of the state was being shaken* [emphases added].⁴⁸

The deaths of these political and military leaders had *strategic* consequences. These deaths were spread-out through these years. The first took place in 1991, the next two in 1992 and the last in 1993. These deaths created serious discontinuities in political and military leadership and had a strategically significant negative impact on the government's policymaking capacity. Sri Lanka's political and defence establishments were relatively small in 1990-1994. They could not easily generate alternative leaders to replace those who were lost. The *Independent's* correspondent is accurate when he wrote that "by the time of Premadasa's assassination many Sri Lankans felt that the very basis of the state was being shaken."⁴⁹

The death of Premadasa led to a fundamental realignment of political forces and political affiliations within Sri Lanka. With his death, the most formidable challenge to the Opposition's electoral chances in the elections scheduled for 1994 had ceased to exist. UNP politicians and supporters also became demoralised and the UNP government became a 'lame-duck' administration. The electorate was weary with the UNP – which by 1993 had been in power for 16 years – and wanted a change. And that is precisely what happened in 1994 when the UNP lost both parliamentary and presidential elections.

dilemma as there was high expectation within a large proportion in the army and the Sinhala people that Kobbekaduwa would soon be appointed army commander. (iii) Simultaneously, the UNP government was faced with the fact that Kobbekaduwa was probably the most popular Sinhala person – military or civilian – then living in Sri Lanka. The government, Opposition, the Sinhala electorate and all armed forces and police personnel knew that Kobbekaduwa's popularity could easily be turned into a political asset at the next Presidential Elections.

⁴⁸ *The Independent*, 5 May 1993, 'Sri Lanka mourns and fears for future'.

⁴⁹ *The Independent*, 5 May 1993, 'Sri Lanka mourns and fears for future'.

5.2 The UNP Government's Abdication of Military Strategy Conceptualisation to the Army

One of the distinct characteristics of the 1990-1994 period was the greater than usual role of army commanders and other senior army officers at AHQ being involved in the formulation of military strategy.⁵⁰ The normal procedure in Sri Lanka is for the Commander of the Army and other senior officers to give policy advice to the government – mostly during NSC meetings but also at other MoD meetings – and for the civilian leaders to make the decisions. But during the 1990-1994 period the army's senior officers were given a degree of 'leeway' to *design and implement* overall military strategy that was much larger than in any previous periods of the Tamil insurgency. This should not be understood as the army doing major operations without informing the government. What happened was that the army would design military strategies and make presentations to the government. Once the government gave its imprimatur the army would go ahead and implement that policy.

When, in June 1990, the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection with a series of attacks on police stations in the east and attacks on armed forces camps in the north, President Premadasa's government was thrown into a serious quandary. He had been personally involved in negotiations with the LTTE and staked a substantial amount of his personal political capital in the negotiations. And the negotiations had completely failed. With its attacks in June 1990 and afterwards the LTTE demonstrated that it was strong and skilful. LTTE quickly brought large areas of the East under their control, including large cities like Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara. In these cities and elsewhere only armed forces bases and police stations remained under government control. In the North the LTTE kept up a relentless pressure on the army bases, many of which had to be abandoned and the personnel withdrawn.

It was in this context that senior army officers at AHQ in Colombo and in the field in the North and East came to the forefront of *military strategy conceptualisation and planning to a degree unseen in earlier or in subsequent phases of the counterinsurgency*. The amount of influence varied over time, and also varied in relation to the officers who were prominent at

⁵⁰ Interviews with many retired senior army officers, including senior officers who were in service at that time. Corroborated with newspaper articles of that time. This situation was changed completely by the new government which came to power in 1994 (dealt-with in next Chapter) when the civilian political leaders took a firm leadership in the strategy formulation process.

any given period. However, the period 1990 to 1994 undoubtedly witnessed a degree of abdication of the civilian government's role that was unusual for Sri Lanka.

President Premadasa's approach was to allow the 'military professionals' to handle the 'military side' of government policy and for him and his cabinet to try and achieve the 'development side' of his government's policies. In 1991- early 1993 nascent development initiatives were launched by a few army Brigades in the Vavuniya area. These were efforts inspired by the US Army's IDAD concepts. These were the result of initiatives taken by (then) Brigadier D. Kalupahana who was familiar with FM 100-20 and the British army's counterinsurgency doctrine and other officers that he had trained.⁵¹ This began as an individual initiative and was supported by President Premadasa. Kalupahana was called to Colombo by Premadasa and requested to brief a range of Cabinet Ministers, civilian bureaucrats and army officers. But President Premadasa was killed before this approach could have been given a chance to become a government-wide policy adopted by the entire army and the civil administration. After Premadasa's death this whole initiative got shunted aside and forgotten, the officers were routinely transferred to other localities and in the face of the military attacks by the LTTE.

After Ranjan Wijeratne's death Ranil Wickremasinghe was informally appointed by the President to liaise with the military establishment. These internal and informal arrangements within the innermost reaches of the government were not, and are not, openly discussed in Sri Lanka. These matters had to be painstakingly deduced and reconstructed by the present author through different bits of information obtained from close readings of newspapers and interviews with military officers made over the subsequent years.⁵² The *modus operandi* adopted in these years was for Army HQ to make presentations to the NSC on major operations planned for the future. Once the government's civilian leaders gave the 'nod' – which was almost always a foregone conclusion as the civilian politicians' view at that time was that the army should be allowed to 'get on with the job' – then these operations were implemented.⁵³ The many small scale 'search and destroy' operations launched in the East

⁵¹ Interviews with Major General (Rtd) Devinda Kalupahana, February and March 2008, Colombo. Kalupahana, then a Brigadier, had studied British and US counterinsurgency manuals from his days as a young officer. Kalupahana, with the cooperation of other junior officers that he had trained implemented an IDAD-type campaign in the area of Vavuniya that was his responsibility as a Brigade Commander. Later, from 1994-1995 Brigadier Kalupahana was the Director of Operations (DOps) at Army Headquarters, Colombo. As DOps he tried to get a coherent IDAD-type system functioning within the entire army but the army's institutional inertia resulted in the process moving far too slowly and it eventually ceased with his retirement.

⁵² Interviews with former Army Commander (1 Jan 1994 to 30 April 1996) Lt.General (Retd) G.H. De Silva, July 2008, Colombo.

⁵³ Information obtained through interviews with Major General (Rtd) Devinda Kalupahana and former army commander Lt.General (Retd) G.H. De Silva, July 2008.

and in the North were mostly launched by AHQ under its own authority and sometimes by division commanders. The government was briefed of the large scale operations (such as the 'encirclement of Jaffna peninsula' discussed later in this Chapter). In effect the army was delegated the task of subduing the LTTE and the means by which the army chose to do so was left to the army to conceptualise.

On 16 December 1992, there was a rare windfall of information for researchers like the present author. In parliament, while answering criticisms made by the Opposition on defence matters, the then Leader of the House Ranil Wickremasinghe made a wide ranging speech on government military policy and defence matters. During the course of his speech he inadvertently revealed the civilian government's 'hands-off' approach to military strategy and army's prominent and decisive role in military strategy formulation. Mr. Wickremasinghe's speech touched on a wide range of issues raging from the total number in the armed forces, new equipment and weapons, medical facilities, uniforms and even the issue of duty free cigarettes to troops.⁵⁴ The speech revealed the role played by the army in determining the highest-level military policies then being implemented in the insurgent areas, and the type of relationship which existed between the army and the civilian government at that time. To quote in full:

"And kindly remember *what the army and the armed forces have achieved in the last 2 years. They [i.e. the army] have been able to establish the administration in the whole of the Eastern Province.* There are certain LTTE groups operating in the jungles in the East. They are able to come and attack villages, sometimes disrupt communication. But the administration goes on. They have not been able to dislodge the army or police from the East, and the East is being administered by the Government.

The LTTE groups that attack the armed forces or the civilians are ones who hide in the jungles. *The armed forces have decided* that they could confine them [the LTTE] to the jungles, meet some of the threats, strengthen the security around the border villages more and then concentrate on the North. In fact last year [i.e. 1991] *their [i.e. the army's] strategy* was to consolidate themselves in the East, to clear up some of the areas - there are about 6 areas in which the LTTE is hiding in the jungle areas - and when they were in the process of doing this campaign and finishing it up, the LTTE attacked at Elephant Pass. *So the army changed their strategy,* they landed at Vettalaikerni and went into Jaffna and in the next year [i.e. 1992] *they have put a ring around Jaffna.* [...]

They [i.e. the Army] have secured the populated areas of Vavuniya, Mannar area and Mullaittivu. *But they [i.e. the army] have decided to leave the jungle area open and then they put a ring around the whole of the Jaffna Peninsula confining the LTTE into that area* [...] if you look at this map which was prepared by the armed forces, not by me, but given to me, it shows the position [...] There is administration going

⁵⁴ Sri Lanka Parliament, *Hansards*, 16 December 1992: Cols. 3234-3242.

on. *Now their [i.e. the army's] policy is this.* There are two large areas. Here (indicating on map) the LTTE operates, the jungle area, but they also are not in control, and in this area the LTTE does have control. *They [i.e. the army] have got to decide their strategy next.* In the meantime the LTTE has also decided on their measures to counter the armed forces. [...] In fairness to the armed forces Commander, General Wanasinghe, JOC, I must read out a directive because many comments were made during the Committee Stage of the Defence Ministry. I would like to tell you the operational directive issued by him for the period up to July 1993 says that *the concept of the operation (sic) is to destroy the enemy's manpower and resources.* [...] I must also say that the JOC, the three Service Commanders, the IGP, the Secretary Defence and the State Secretary are all engaged in conducting the operation (sic). *We may sometimes not agree with their strategy. In war you always find different viewpoints,* but it is not for us to go and undermine or demoralize or to attack them or for that matter to demoralize the troops [emphases added]"⁵⁵

As can be seen, in this statement the Leader of the House and the government's chief spokesman Wickremasinghe placed the entire responsibility of the military strategy then underway, including the 'encirclement of Jaffna Peninsula', on the shoulders of the army. On one occasion he even uses the word 'policy'. At various points of his speech Wickremasinghe said that it was the army which had "changed its strategy"; that it was the army's "policy" to implement certain measures; that the army has to "decide their strategy next"...and so on and so forth. Towards the end of the above speech Wickremasinghe used 'we' to refer to the civilian leaders of the government, and 'they' and 'their' to mean the army. He thereby created a 'we'/'they' dichotomy which separated the civilian leadership from the military strategy then being implemented. He went to the extent of stating that:

"We [i.e. meaning the government and also parliamentarians in general] may sometimes not agree with the Army's strategy. In war you always find different viewpoints."⁵⁶

Thus, here we have a situation where the civilian government stated in parliament that it may "sometimes not agree" with its own Army's military strategy because in warfare there are always different viewpoints. And that the correct posture for the government (and Opposition parliamentarians too) was to unquestioningly support the army and not criticise it as that would demoralise the soldiers. The above clearly violates civilian control of the military which is supposed to exist in a democracy and illustrates the UNP's inability to cope with the insurrection. And so it handed over the entire responsibility to the army.

⁵⁵ Sri Lanka Parliament, *Hansards*, 16 December 1992: Col. 3239-3240.

⁵⁶ Sri Lanka Parliament, *Hansards*, 16 December 1992: Col. 3240.

II

Government Military Operations, 1990-1994

During 1990-1994 the LTTE showed strategic and tactical capabilities far greater than the earlier 1984-1987 phase when it fought the Sri Lanka army, or the 1987-1990 phase when it fought the IPKF. For example, in those earlier phases not a single army camp was overwhelmed by the LTTE. During the period 1990-1994, however, the situation changed significantly to the detriment of the government. This increase in the LTTE's ability to confront government forces was the result of the LTTE's progressively increasing military capabilities. In certain areas of the Northern Province the LTTE was able to move from 'strategic parity' to 'strategic offensive'.

5.3: The Army Responds to the LTTE's Initial Onslaught in the East and the North

In the Northern and Eastern Provinces the LTTE had - beginning in the months prior to the exit of the IPKF in March 1990 - gradually taken control of towns and villages that it could dominate. As the last soldiers of the IPKF left the island's shores in March 1990 the LTTE rapidly moved-in to locations where the IPKF had been and filled the 'vacuum'. And President Premadasa's government - desperately trying to keep the ceasefire intact - didn't do anything to prevent this.

For nearly three months [March, April and May 1990], with little interference from Colombo, the Tigers have policed the north and east, levied (some say extorted) taxes, and eliminated their remaining rivals. Most ominously, they have started to reconstruct the bunkers and booby traps which caused such carnage among Indian troops.⁵⁷

During the 1989-1990 period when the government and LTTE were having talks President Premadasa's government had given strict orders to the armed forces and police to refrain from any action which could be perceived as provocative by the LTTE and a reason for it to re-ignite the insurrection. Army personnel were very careful of the way they interacted with the LTTE. They were under strict orders to do nothing which could provoke the LTTE. No Officer wanted to be accused by higher authorities of being responsible for re-igniting the conflict.⁵⁸

Excluding the large Sri Lankan armed forces bases, smaller camps and police stations, by early June 1990 large segments of even major towns like Trincomalee and Batticaloa were

⁵⁷ *The Guardian*, 16 June 1990, 'Sri Lanka's bloody conflict returns to square one'.

⁵⁸ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 447, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*.

under the effective control of the LTTE. During April and May 1990 an uneasy stalemate existed in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. During these months Premadasa's government frantically tried to maintain the ceasefire with the LTTE.

By early June 1990 the atmosphere was very tense in the Batticaloa District, Eastern Province. The Sri Lanka Army reported that the LTTE had by that time opened 30 to 40 small outposts with bunkers in and near Batticaloa town.⁵⁹ And the LTTE insisted that its permission be obtained for the police, armed forces or government officials to travel to various parts of the town in the course of their official duties. The Sri Lanka Army states that:

This situation was *brought to the notice* of the higher command and the civilian bureaucracy who were negotiating with the LTTE at that time. *But the Security Forces were explicitly told to co-operate with the LTTE to bring about a peaceful settlement to the conflict* [emphases added].⁶⁰

However, on 11 June 1990 LTTE re-ignited the insurrection with attacks on Sri Lanka police stations, and by encircling army camps. All the initial attacks took place in the Eastern Province. In two attacks the LTTE killed 10 soldiers and 8 policemen.⁶¹

Concurrently all army camps and police establishments in both the North and East were surrounded by the LTTE. In the East, army camps and police stations in Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Ampara Districts were surrounded. By 12-13 June the LTTE had captured 25 police stations in the Eastern Province.⁶² The LTTE asked the policemen to surrender saying that they would be released to the government. The government – desperately under the impression that the ceasefire could be salvaged even through last minute negotiations – gave orders for the Police to surrender. But in an action which no person in the government anticipated – and about which the government received confirmed information only some weeks later, “in many cases, the police were driven to forest clearings, made to lie down, then shot. More than 150 bodies have been found so far, and 650 policemen are still missing, presumed dead.”⁶³

Sub-Inspector Pulhiri Ranaweera said that all 115 policemen who had surrendered at his station on the assurance that they would not be harmed had been massacred. “We were taken into the jungle after being blindfolded,” he said, his voice a little above a whisper. “Then we were stripped of our belongings and uniforms and made to lie down. Then they sprayed us with rifle shots. I pretended to be dead and though they shot at me the bullet just grazed my head.”⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Of the three Districts which composed the Eastern Province – i.e. Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara Districts – Batticaloa District had the largest percentage of Tamils.

⁶⁰ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 445, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*.

⁶¹ See *The Independent*, 12 June 1990, ‘Tamils attack’ and *The Guardian*, 12 June 1990, ‘Tamil Tigers kill 18 in new fighting’.

⁶² *The Independent*, 16 June 1990, ‘Fiercer fighting in Sri Lanka’.

⁶³ *The Times (London)*, 5 July 1990, ‘Tigers promised fight to finish’.

⁶⁴ *The Times (London)*, 18 June 1990, ‘Sri Lanka killings resume amid ceasefire collapse’.

The official casualty record notes that 410 police personnel were killed in the Eastern Province between 11-13 June 1990.⁶⁵

The nature of the Tigers' offensive has appalled most Sri Lankans, including many Tamils, and the foreign community. The Tigers entered police stations after the police had been ordered by their superiors to lay down their arms. In many cases, the police were driven to forest clearings, made to lie down, then shot. More than 150 bodies have been found so far, and 650 policemen are still missing, presumed dead.⁶⁶

The army camps in the East too were surrounded by the LTTE who called upon them to surrender and said that they would not be harmed and handed over to the government at the Batticaloa airfield.⁶⁷ But the Commanding Officers of these army camps did not surrender. One of them prevaricated "in order to buy more time and avoid being found fault with for starting the war".⁶⁸ All the others too stalled for time. This was fortunate because if they had surrendered they too would have been executed and their weapons and equipment captured by the LTTE. The army camps were encircled and attacked but none were overrun. The smaller and indefensible ones were abandoned and the personnel withdrawn to larger camps.

While the initial attacks were taking place President Premadasa was still urgently trying to negotiating with the LTTE and re-establishing the ceasefire. Minister of Foreign Affairs A.C.S. Hameed was at the forefront of these efforts. But these efforts were in vain as by 16 June widespread fighting was taking place in the Eastern Province.⁶⁹

By 18 June the government stated unequivocally that a state of 'war' existed in the North and East. "The *ceasefire in the northeast has been abandoned*," said Ranjan Wijeratne, [Deputy] minister of defence, [...] "The *northeast of the country is in a situation of all-out war* and military commanders have been given authority to use any operational measures necessary to defeat the guerrillas," Mr Wijeratne added [emphases added].⁷⁰

Government Re-Captures Populated Centres in the East: Operation Sledge Hammer. Operation *Sledge Hammer* was the first Operation to be launched by the government after the LTTE's attacks.⁷¹ Regaining control of both Provinces was not possible given the strength of the LTTE and government forces and the degree to which the insurrection had

⁶⁵ Official Roll of Honour, 1977-2003.

⁶⁶ *The Times (London)*, 5 July 1990, 'Tigers promised fight to finish'.

⁶⁷ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 446, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*.

⁶⁸ Sri Lanka Army, 1999: 447, *Sri Lanka Army: 50 Years On, 1949-1999*.

⁶⁹ *The Independent*, 16 June 1990, 'Fiercer fighting in Sri Lanka'.

⁷⁰ *The Times (London)*, 19 June 1990, 'Tamil rebels face all-out war launched by Colombo'.

⁷¹ *The Times (London)*, 16 June 1990, 'Troops advance on bases held by Tamil Tigers'.

developed up to that time. What was achieved by the army was to re-capture the large populated towns and areas along the East coast, and, to defend the armed forces bases and camps in Jaffna Peninsula and in the Vanni.⁷² Practically all personnel who could be spared in the East were deployed on the offensive while in the North all the personnel were on a defensive posture. The government was dangerously unprepared for the LTTE's onslaught, which is inexcusable given the actions of the LTTE over the previous months.⁷³

Tactical Retreat by LTTE in the East. It is with heavy fighting that the army was able to enter Batticaloa town.⁷⁴ In the face of Operation *Sledge Hammer* LTTE cadres retreated into the extensive jungles in the hinterland while the army controlled the highly populated area - i.e. the narrow strip along the coastline. The villages and little town lets further inland - sometimes as little as 7-8 Kms from the coast - were under the control of the LTTE. It needs to be kept in mind that these LTTE controlled areas were not permanently fixed areas. In the later years the army carried out many 'search and destroy' type operations into the scrub jungles, small villages and rice fields which lay inland from the East coast. In turn, the LTTE too made many forays into the army controlled areas: it carried out 'hit and run' attacks on army foot patrols; ambushed army road convoys; detonated IEDs when the opportunity arose; assassinated Tamil civilians - MPs, local government politicians, and civil administrative employees - whom it determined were collaborating with the armed forces and police. "For their part, the Tigers are withdrawing into the tropical forests from where they can, as in the past, launch hit-and-run attacks, mine roads and blow up bridges."⁷⁵

After *Sledge Hammer* accomplished the initial capture of main towns and territory the army launched several smaller 'search and destroy' operations in the East during the rest of 1990. The majority of LTTE cadres were pushed into the jungles of the East.⁷⁶ These operations

⁷² *The Guardian*, 16 June 1990, 'Intensive army drive to dislodge Tigers: Guerrillas blamed for 'massacre' of Sinhalese police'.

⁷³ *The Sunday Times*, 24 June 1990, 'Taking a hammer at the LTTE'. The government's official press release mentions practically every senior Officer in the defence establishment except the Minister of Defence - i.e. President Premadasa - as being involved in the planning or implementing the Operation in some capacity or another. Obviously the President would have been kept informed. The participation of such a wide range of the senior-most officers was a manifestation of the priority and urgency accorded to it by the government. And a public relations exercise to reassure the Sinhala public. Strategies for the implementation of Operation *Sledge Hammer* were planned by Deputy Minister for Defence Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Lt.General (Rtd) Cyril Ranatunge (Secretary, MoD), Air Chief Marshall (Rtd) Walter Fernando (Secretary to the State Minister for Defence) along with the armed forces' commanders and the IGP. It was reported that they all met together on a daily basis. Lt.General Hamilton Wanasinghe (army commander) was placed in overall charge of the operation. He worked "in conjunction with" Vice Admiral Ananda Silva (navy commander), Air Marshal Terrence Gunawardena (air force commander), and Mr. Ernest Perera (Inspector General of Police). Maj.General J.R.S. De Silva was the Northern area commander and Maj.General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was the Eastern area commander.

⁷⁴ *The Times (London)*, 20 June 1990, 'Colombo army takes battle to Tamil bastion'.

⁷⁵ *The Times (London)*, 29 June 1990, 'Despair grips Sri Lanka as war grows more brutal'.

⁷⁶ *The Guardian*, 20 June 1990, 'Army assault drives Tigers from east'.

were targeted at destroying LTTE cadres who had infiltrated back into specific populated areas along the coast of the Eastern Province. This was a constant process which occurred throughout 1990-1994 between the armed forces and the LTTE. The LTTE did its utmost to have a presence in all Tamil populated town lets and villages areas in the East. It had to as it was necessary to keep the insurrection alive. The LTTE also needed supplies, intelligence, and recruits from the Tamil population. When under pressure by the army the LTTE cadres either withdrew into the jungles inland from the coast while some stayed clandestinely amongst the Tamil people.

Army under Siege in the Jaffna Peninsula. While the populated areas of the East were gradually re-captured by the army, in the North the situation was different. In the North the army was in camps and large bases encircled by the LTTE.

The heaviest fighting, however, is in the north. The government-held Palaly air base, close to Jaffna, was under intense artillery fire, and the Tigers were reported to be using three armoured bulldozers in assaults on Jaffna Fort. Later the army said it had broken out of Palaly base, using shells, mortars and helicopter gunships to drive the Tigers back, but the fort remained under siege.⁷⁷

In the Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni the LTTE was in a much stronger position than it was in the Eastern Province. The civilian population was entirely Tamil and the armed forces were in camps and large bases located at strategic positions throughout the area. When it re-ignited the insurrection, the LTTE attacked all the army camps then existent in Tondaimanar, Valvedditturai, Point Pedro, Mandaitivu, Elephant Pass and Jaffna Fort⁷⁸ (see Map 5.1). The main bases of Palali and Karaitivu were not attacked as they were large, well supplied and defended and could not be approached close enough.

In any event, it is the present author's deduction⁷⁹ that LTTE's initial objective at this time was to make the army's smaller bases and camps untenable and force them to be abandoned. The LTTE succeeded in achieving this objective.⁸⁰ By the end of 1990 in the Jaffna Peninsula the

⁷⁷ *The Independent*, 21 June 1990, 'Fighting divides Sri Lanka'.

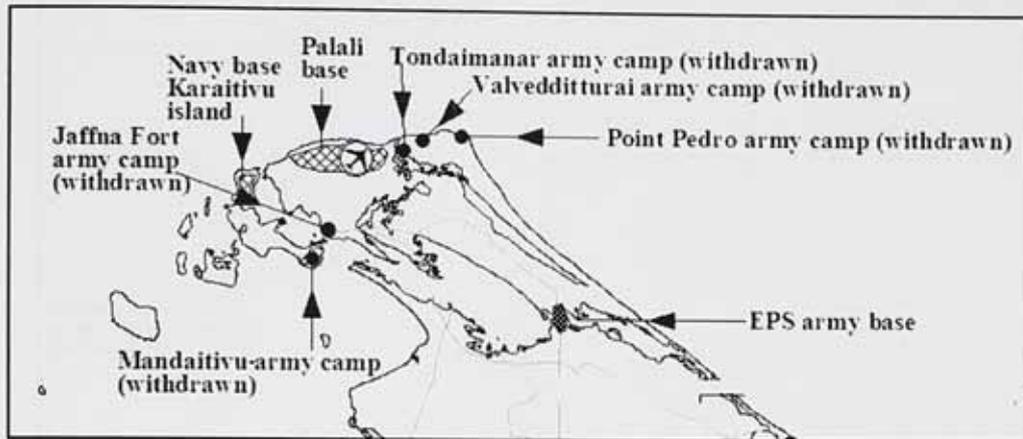
⁷⁸ Jaffna Fort army camp had a prestige value and the army and government were initially reluctant to withdraw from it. But it soon became clear that the Fort was untenable – it could not be regularly re-supplied as the LTTE had surrounded it. Eventually the troops in the Fort were withdrawn through a large-scale military operation - Operation *Thividha Balaya*, which incorporated all three of the armed forces.

⁷⁹ Based on a close examination of the LTTE's attacks during these years.

⁸⁰ The attacks on these camps were not large-scale frontal attacks meant to rapidly overrun these camps. If that had been done the LTTE's casualties would have been too high. The LTTE merely used mortars, RPGs, heavy machine guns and small arms fired from the outer perimeters of the camps to keep the personnel within these camps pinned down, under siege and thereby underscoring the insecurity of these camps. The LTTE was in control of the territory in between them and the main Palali Base. Palali Base had large stocks of ammunition and non-perishable supplies which could last for months. The army camps at Tondaimanar, Valvedditturai, Point Pedro and Mandaitivu were abandoned and there was an orderly withdrawal to Palali Base very soon after the LTTE's attacks on 11 June 1990.

government was left only with bases in Karaitivu (Navy), Palali (Army and Air force) and Elephant Pass (Army).

Map 5.1: Armed Forces Bases in Jaffna Peninsula which were Withdrawn or Retained



Landlocked Army Camps in the Vanni in Very Grave Danger. In the 'Vanni' region south of the Peninsula the situation was as follows: there were three isolated and land-locked army camps at Mankulam, Kokavil, and Kilinochchi. *These three landlocked camps were the ones in greatest danger.* These three camps were located along the strategically important A-9 main road which linked Vavuniya to Elephant Pass. These camps could not be supplied by land and therefore highly vulnerable.⁸¹ From mid-June 1990 onwards the LTTE encircled these three camps and kept them under siege.⁸² Simultaneously, the LTTE kept the army base at Mullaitivu under pressure with attacks using mortars and small arms.⁸³

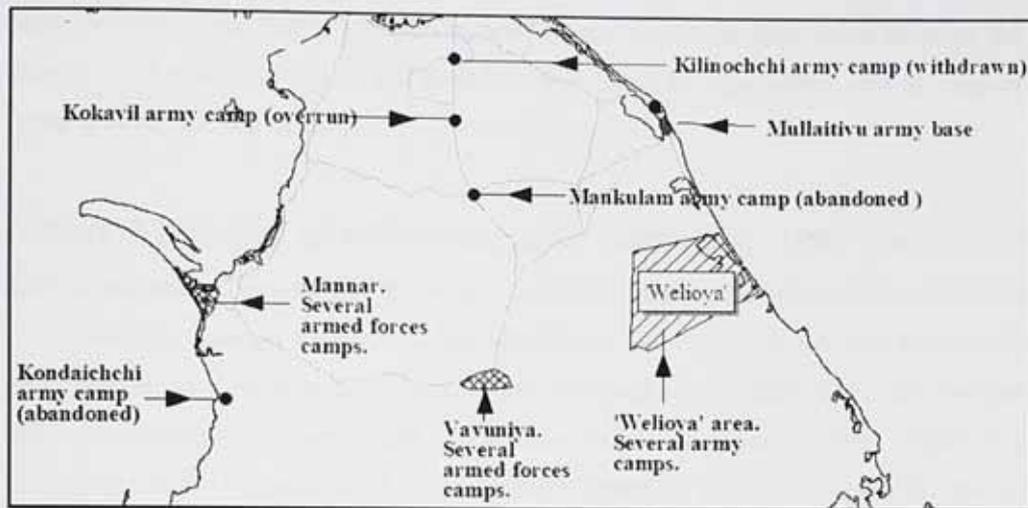
As soon as hostilities resumed the army abandoned its camp at Kondaichchi on the west coast and withdrew its personnel to safety (see Map 5.2). The army had large camps in Mannar, Vavuniya and Welioya. These camps and bases were on the 'outer-rim', so to speak, of the Vanni (see Map 5.2). They were not directly attacked by the LTTE but the LTTE kept them under pressure by firing mortars at them. The LTTE also ambushed army foot patrols in the jungles surrounding these large camps thereby deterring the army from launching reinforcement or rescue operations of the three landlocked camps.

⁸¹ In the previous years when the IPKF was operating in these areas these camps had been supplied by truck convoys along the A-9. During that period the LTTE carried out guerrilla attacks on the IPKF but these camps could be supplied and reinforced by land. The LTTE was operating in a guerrilla mode from the jungles.

⁸² *The Guardian*, 15 June 1990, 'Tigers move fight to north of Sri Lanka'.

⁸³ This deterred any attempt by troops in Mullaitivu to make forays towards Mankulam or Kokavil and try to reinforce them. In June-August 1990 the LTTE did not attack Mullaitivu camp in a serious fashion. Mullaitivu was on the eastern coast of the island and could be supplied by navy vessels and air force helicopters.

Map 5.2: Armed Forces Camps in the 'Vanni' which were Overrun, Withdrawn or Retained



From June 1990 onwards LTTE concentrated its attentions on Kokavil, Mankulam, and Kilinochchi. Kokavil was a radio relay station and had only about 1+ platoon of troops. Mankulam had about 200 troops; Kilinochchi had about 150 troops.⁸⁴ The LTTE's strategic objective in attacking these camps was very clear: if these camps could be destroyed then the entire 'inner' areas of the Vanni would come completely under the control of the LTTE (see Map 5.2).

Kokavil Army Camp Captured and all Personnel Killed, July 1990. Kokavil was the smallest camp with the least amount of personnel. The LTTE tactically correctly attacked it first. The Kokavil camp was overwhelmed on 11 July 1990 and all its personnel killed.⁸⁵ The Official Roll of Honour indicates that 29 personnel were killed on that day.⁸⁶ Military sources acknowledged that "the base is surrounded by dense jungle patrolled by the Tigers."⁸⁷

If so why was this camp's personnel not withdrawn as soon as the LTTE's attacks began? It was very clear from the beginning that Kokavil could not be re-supplied and reinforced. It could be re-supplied and re-enforced for a limited time by helicopters.⁸⁸ The needless loss of the soldiers at Kokavil camp was a manifestation of the army's high command lack of a proper appreciation of the danger to the camp and a high degree of incompetence. Landlocked

⁸⁴ The Independent, 26 July 1990, 'Sri Lankan troops lift siege'.

⁸⁵ The Island, 13 July 1990, 'Death toll not known'.

⁸⁶ Official Roll of Honour, 1977-2003, data from Spreadsheet.

⁸⁷ The Guardian, 14 July 1990, 'Tigers take base in jungle siege'.

⁸⁸ But that too at great risk to the aircraft because the moment LTTE cadres with heavy machine guns and RPGs arrived in the area the helicopters were in danger.

and isolated camps like Kokavil, Kilinochchi and Mankulam camps should have been withdrawn as soon as hostilities began. They did not have secure supply routes and were therefore completely untenable. Camps and bases (the larger the camp or base, the better) like Palali, Mullaittivu and Mannar were relatively secure because they were near or on the sea coast itself and therefore they could be approached and re-supplied over 'open ground' i.e. the Ocean.

Orderly Withdrawal of Kilinochchi Army Camp, July 1990. The loss of Kokavil camp concentrated the minds of the Army's high command on the vulnerability of the remaining two land-locked camps, Kilinochchi and Mankulam. On 19 July, eight days after Kokavil, the army carried out Operation *Gajasinghe*. Some 500 troops from Palali were first transported by helicopter to Parantan located south of Elephant Pass. Subsequently, these soldiers moved to Kilinochchi in the face of some LTTE resistance, linked-up with the troops at Kilinochchi base and then all of them made an orderly withdrawal with all their weapons, equipment and soldiers back to Elephant Pass camp. They had to face harrying attacks by LTTE fighters who were around their moving column but the operation was successfully completed.⁸⁹ Both the army and the LTTE made tactical mistakes in relation to the timing of their actions related to Kilinochchi. Fortunately for the army, it did not suffer any consequences.⁹⁰

Disorderly Rout of Mankulam Army Camp, November 1990. The LTTE maintained its encirclement of Mankulam camp, regularly attacking with mortars and machine gun fire. Mankulam was further south on the A-9 road than both Kilinochchi and Kokavil (see Map 5.3) and was in an even more precarious situation.⁹¹ On 15 July 1990 the army dropped fresh troops by helicopters in the vicinity Mankulam camp. They joined the troops at Mankulam camp and

⁸⁹ *Sun*, 21 July 1990, 'Troops liberate Paranthan' and *The Independent*, 26 July 1990, 'Sri Lankan troops lift siege'.

⁹⁰ After the fall of Kokavil the army took eight days to launch *Gajasinghe*. This was far too long a delay but the army did not have to pay a price because of the LTTE's mistake (see below). The 8 day delay may have been the result of the lack of troops to launch the Operation and other reasons. Whatever the reasons, it was a risk but fortunately for the army it didn't suffer any loss. In the case of the LTTE, it should have quickly exploited the shock-effect of its victory at Kokavil on the government's civilian leaders and the army's high command. The LTTE should have overwhelmed Kilinochchi within a day or two after Kokavil and not given the army those 8 days. But the LTTE did not attack immediately; it may have thought it had more time to deal with Kilinochchi camp; it may not have anticipated a *Gajasinghe* type operation; or it may not have had sufficient cadres to carry-out an attack on the scale that was needed in the case of Kilinochchi camp – which had more than 4 times the number of soldiers who had been at Kokavil. Whatever the reasons the opportunity slipped away from the LTTE. Two days after *Gajasinghe* on the night of 22 July the LTTE attacked some troops who were still at Parantan and killed 9 and wounded 35 but the emplacement was not overrun.⁹⁰ Later all army personnel at Parantan too were quickly withdrawn north to the larger camp at Elephant Pass.

⁹¹ The air force continued to re-supply the camp as best as it could by dropping supplies and ammunition from helicopters. The helicopters had to stay at a sufficient height to avoid the worst of the LTTE's heavy-machine gun anti-aircraft fire. Inevitably some of the supplies fell outside the camp perimeter and into the hands of the LTTE.

the defence of the camp was temporarily shored-up.⁹² By November 1990 the number of troops in Mankulam were reported as 300.⁹³ In Mankulam camp's case a fresh *Gajasinghe* type operation would have been even more dangerous and difficult than Kilinochchi.⁹⁴

In any event the army did not do anything proactive. It just re-supplied as best as it could and allowed the situation to continue for another 4 months. The LTTE maintained its pressure on Mankulam camp over the following months but simultaneously built-up a sizable attacking force near Mankulam. Then on 23 November 1990 the LTTE, after gathering an estimated 1,500 cadres and heavy weapons launched a very forceful attack on Mankulam camp.⁹⁵ After 2 days of fighting the remaining soldiers at Mankulam were forced to abandon the camp and all their heavy weapons and ammunition.⁹⁶ "Tamil Tiger rebels have captured an important army camp in northern Sri Lanka in *possibly the bloodiest battle of the seven-year civil war*, the defence ministry confirmed yesterday [emphases added]."⁹⁷

Mankulam was a disorderly rout and reflected very badly on AHQ and the senior officers of the army. *In effect Army HQ abandoned the soldiers at Mankulam who had to save themselves as best they could.*⁹⁸ This is mentioned here to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the Sri

⁹² *Sun*, 16 July 1990, 'Mission to relieve Mankulam soldiers; rescue Kokavil survivors: Troops launch fresh offensive in North'.

⁹³ *The Independent*, 28 November 1990, 'Troops escape'. Here again, in the assessment of the present author the army made another tactical error. Instead of shoring-up the camp, what the army should have done was a *Gajasinghe* type operation and withdrawn its personnel, weapons, ammunition and other equipment. Depending on tactical criteria the army could have either withdrawn northwards to Elephant Pass or southwards to Vavuniya. Better still, Operation *Gajasinghe*'s should have withdrawn both Kilinochchi and Mankulam at the same time.

⁹⁴ The reasons were, first, the LTTE had experienced *Gajasinghe* and seen what the army could do; second, by delaying the army had given the LTTE time to prepare counter-measures; third, Mankulam was even deeper in the Vanni jungles than Kilinochchi so the reinforcement troops would have had to fight their way, both to and from Mankulam camp, for much greater distances; fourth, the air force's helicopters would have been in greater and greater danger depending on how close they came to Mankulam to disembark the reinforcement troops; fifth, if the army implemented an operation similar to *Gajasinghe* then the reinforcement troops would have had to re-fight their way on the same route all over again and the LTTE had already had an (inadvertent) rehearsal. But the problem was that, in fact, a *Gajasinghe* type operation was the only option the army had as the air force just did not have enough helicopters to implement a complete helicopter-bourn operation. If such a helicopter-bourn operation had been attempted the air force risked the loss of most of the helicopters in its fleet.

⁹⁵ *The Guardian*, 26 November 1990, 'Heavy losses as Tigers 'capture army stronghold'.

⁹⁶ Fortunately this did not include any artillery guns. But did include heavy and light mortars, heavy machine guns and the stock of ammunition. The fleeing soldiers took only their personal weapons and whatever ammunition and food they could carry while moving fast.

⁹⁷ *The Guardian*, 27 November 1990, 'International News in Brief: Tigers' victory'.

⁹⁸ It needs to be mentioned here that the army and the government did not have many options in relation to Mankulam. Reinforcing Mankulam by troops marching overland was extremely dangerous and could very well resulted in those troops too getting wiped out as well. Helicopter bourn operation could have resulted in the air force losing all the helicopters that it deployed. This would have had consequences to all the other camps and bases which – when required – needed to have some communication via helicopter. However, the government and army could have made proactive decisions after Kokavil's loss in mid-July 1990. But AHQ managed to get some supplies through but beyond that just waited. The LTTE's final attack came in November, 4 months after the falloff Kokavil. This is inexcusable. What AHQ should have done soon after (or better, simultaneously with)

Lanka armed forces and police during these years suffered from innumerable leadership, analytical and tactical deficiencies, and this is just one example.⁹⁹ Small groups of soldiers and individual soldiers tried as best as they could to make their way southwards through the jungle to government controlled territory in the Vavuniya area. The retreating soldiers were constantly harried, attacked and killed by pursuing LTTE guerrillas.¹⁰⁰ A significant number were ambushed and killed by the LTTE. Air Force helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft patrolled the skies and searched for groups of surviving troops. Some of the fortunate ones were picked up by helicopters and brought to safety in Vavuniya.¹⁰¹ By 29 November Ranjan Wijeratne stated that 117 armed forces personnel had been rescued by air force helicopters.¹⁰² The Official Roll of Honour mentions that 75 army personnel were killed in Mullaitivu District during 23-24 November 1990.¹⁰³

Victory for the LTTE in the interior of the Vanni. By the end of 1990 the LTTE's strategy in the Vanni had achieved success. Map 5.3 is an aggregate map which indicates all the camps which were overrun or abandoned in both Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni region and those which still remained under government control. As can be seen its only the army camps in Mannar, Vavuniya, Welioya, Mullaitivu, Elephant Pass, Palali and the Navy base at Karaitivu which remained were under government control. These bases were on the 'circumference' of the Northern Province. The rest of the area – and its population – was completely under the control of the LTTE. In Jaffna peninsula the army's bases at Elephant Pass and Palali, and the navy base on Karaitivu island were the only locations under government control. The rest of the territory and the entire population was under LTTE control.

The viability of all these bases depended entirely on whether they had secure supply lines.

Operation *Gajasinghe*, was to have ordered the Mankulam troops to break-out of their camp and make an orderly withdrawal to Vavuniya (along the A-9 road, directly southwards, see Map 5.2). In late-July 1990 the troops at Mankulam were better nourished, had less wounded personnel amongst them, had more ammunition, had more serviceable trucks and jeeps – in effect, in all military aspects they were in much better shape than they were 4 months later in November 1990, after being besieged with daily mortar and small arms fire by the LTTE.

⁹⁹ Details about these deficiencies can be dealt-with in this Thesis only to the minimum degree necessary for this Thesis.

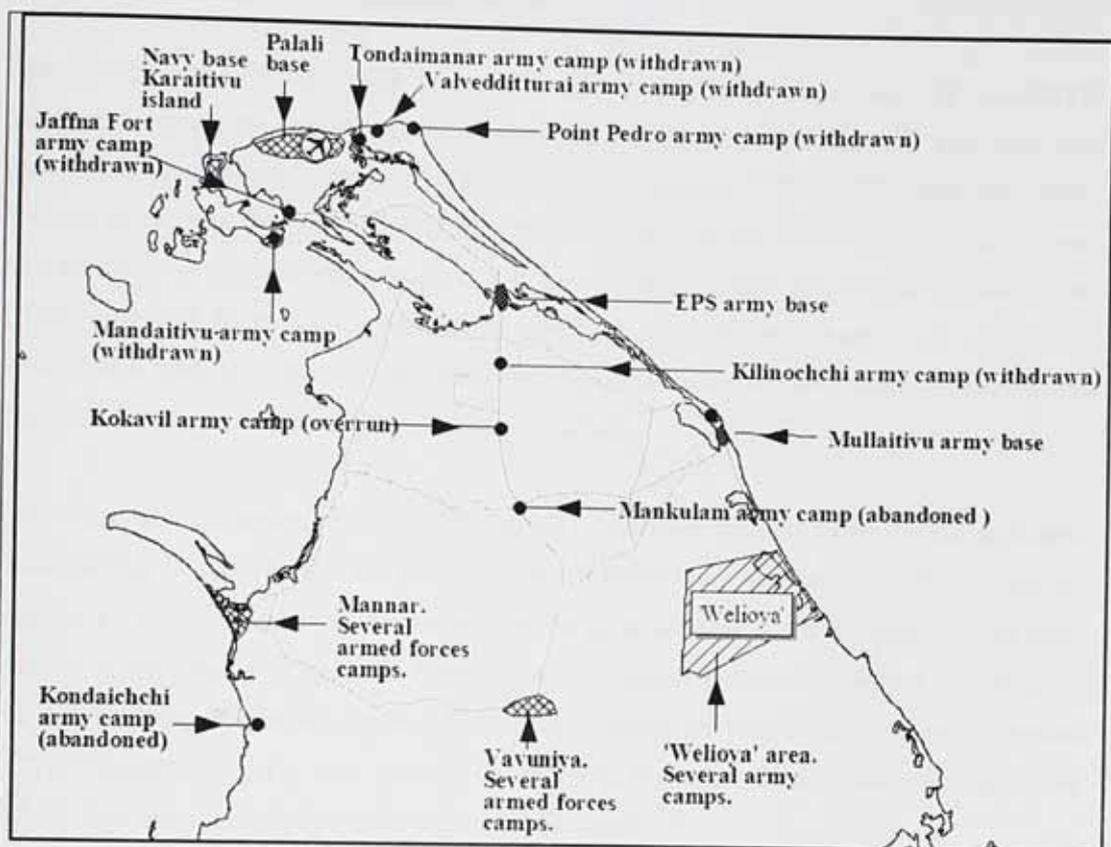
¹⁰⁰ *The Island*, 26 November 1990, 'Soldiers pull out of Mankulam camp'. Desperate fire fights would have taken place within the Vanni jungles. Sometimes the soldiers would have won and have managed to escape to Vavuniya. At other times not, and then their bodies would have been stripped of their kit and weapons and their bodies left to decompose or consumed by jungle animals.

¹⁰¹ Interviews with air force pilots who flew on such sorties and *The Island*, 27 November 1990, 'In bid to spot soldiers: Aerial survey of Mankulam jungles'.

¹⁰² *The Island*, 30 November 1990, 'Ranjan on Mankulam Camp attack: Helicopters pick-up 117 soldiers'. Wijeratne was the Deputy Minister of Defence.

¹⁰³ Official Roll of Honour, 1977-2003, data from Spreadsheet. These were soldiers who died during the final attack on the camp and also killed in the jungles.

Map 5.3: All Armed Forces camps, Northern Province, 10 June 1990 to end-November 1990. Some abandoned or overrun.



Mannar had to be supplied 'external lines of communication' by sea or helicopter. Occasionally urgent supplies or high ranking officers would be transported by helicopter. The road link between Mannar and Vavuniya ran through territory which was contested. While the LTTE allowed civilian buses and trucks to ply on these roads, vehicles of the armed forces or police could be ambushed at any time. After being checked for IEDs and picketed, infrequent truck convoys would be run. By contrast **Vavuniya** was well connected via 'internal lines of communication' by road and rail from the south. In the **Weliyoa** area the many camps had secure 'internal lines of communication' from the rest of the country to its south. **Mullaitivu** army base, however, was isolated on the east coast and could be re-supplied only by sea or helicopters. Further north was **Elephant Pass (EPS)** base. At this time - early-1990s - it was a battalion+ sized camp which dominated a tiny strip of land which joined Jaffna Peninsula's isthmus to the 'Vanni' region south of the Peninsula. Both the A-9 road and the former railway line went through this point. EPS was a strategic 'choke-point' and a camp which was there from at least the 1950s. When the IPKF was in Sri Lanka EPS could be supplied by trucks from Palali. But once the IPKF left and the entire area between EPS and Palali came under LTTE control EPS became isolated. EPS had to be supplied by helicopters from Palali. **Palali** army plus air force base was a very large base having accommodation for many thousands of troops at any one time. Palali was the armed forces' largest and main base in the Jaffna Peninsula. While it too had 'external lines of communication' by sea and air its re-supply was reasonably assured. It had large reserves of food and ammunition and was the main re-supply base for the other camps in the North. It had a well equipped hospital, refrigerated supplies, ammunition and weapon stores and numerous other facilities. The air force's Palali airfield could handle the largest fixed-wing aircraft of the air force and was situated within the perimeters of this large base. So too was the Kankasanturai (KKS) harbour. The large Navy base at **Karaitivu** obtained its supplies from Palali Base and via independent navy supply vessels.

5.4: LTTE'S Large-Scale Attack on Elephant Pass (EPS) Army Base, mid-July to mid-Aug. 1991

After many weeks of clandestine preparation, in the early hours of 10 July 1991 the LTTE launched a very large and well-planned attack on the Elephant Pass Base.¹⁰⁴ This base was land locked and the only means of re-supply was by helicopter.¹⁰⁵ The LTTE made the correct analysis that it was the most vulnerable of the army bases in the North. In many ways it was like Mankulam base with the exception that the eastern sea coast was not too distant. If the LTTE were able to produce a Mankulam type rout, it would have been a very significant victory, and most important of all, unhindered communication between Jaffna peninsula and the 'Vanni' region immediately south of the peninsula.

From the scale and tactics of the LTTE's attack it was very obvious to the defending troops, reconnoitring helicopters and the senior officers at Palali main base and at AHQ in Colombo that the LTTE's intention was to overrun the camp as soon as it could. Attacking the camp was not an easy task as it had to be done over several hundred metres of relatively open land - the exact distance depended on the direction from which an attack was launched. Therefore LTTE attacked at night or very early in the morning. Its cadres used mortars, rifle grenades, AK-47 type arms and heavy machine guns for the attack.¹⁰⁶

LTTE also used some improvised armoured vehicles which had a considerable shock effect on the defending troops.¹⁰⁷ These were ordinary earthmoving bulldozers over which LTTE mechanics had welded steel plates.¹⁰⁸ According to army sources these vehicles had considerable amounts of explosives within them and were driven by LTTE suicide cadres.¹⁰⁹ In addition, LTTE also had normal farm tractors which had been given some degree of

¹⁰⁴ *Ceylon Daily News*, 19 July 1991, 'Balavegaya column makes Headway: Troops within 3 miles of camp'.

¹⁰⁵ At this time this camp had a strength of approximately 800 men. The area surrounding the camp is low-lying and bare of trees and large vegetation. It's a shallow lagoon most of the year. The soil was saline and arid and the vegetation are clumps of coarse grass and weeds. The camp itself was a collection of crude shelters and one storey buildings surrounded with trenches, sandbags, barbed wire fences and mine fields.

¹⁰⁶ *Ceylon Daily News*, 12 July 91, 'Grim battle at Elephant Pass: Forces inflict heavy Tiger Casualties'.

¹⁰⁷ *The Independent*, 15 July 1991, 'Tamil attack'. These bulldozers had been stolen by the LTTE from the army or private contractors or government corporations such as the abandoned cement factory in KKS, Jaffna.

¹⁰⁸ *Ceylon Daily News*, 15 July 91, 'Fresh siege of Elephant Pass camp repulsed: 70 Tigers killed as forces hit back'.

¹⁰⁹ *The Island*, 13 July 91, 'Attack on Elephant Pass enters third day: Army knock bulldozers down, repulse attack'.

armour protection. According to the government the LTTE had mobilised four armoured bulldozers and "hundreds" of tractors.¹¹⁰

In the first days of the LTTE's attack one of the policies adopted by the government was to impose a curfew over the entire northern province of the excluding the Sinhala populated area south of Vavuniya.¹¹¹ The objective was to prevent as much as possible the LTTE bringing more cadres to the Elephant Pass battle. In spite of this measure LTTE moved supplies and personnel during the night and under jungle cover, and managed to keep up the attack on Elephant Pass camp.

The Army's Successful Amphibious Reinforcement Operation: Operation Balavegaya-1. When the LTTE's attack on Elephant Pass began, the government and the army quickly decided that the base could not be allowed to fall to the LTTE. This could not be another Mankulam-type fiasco. The government was very firm on this. The army's high command rapidly developed a counter-operation to link-up with the troops at Elephant Pass and rescue them. This was Operation *Balavegaya-1*. It was an amphibious operation which began on 14 July 1991, four days after the LTTE began its attack. It was led by Maj.General Denzil Kobbekaduwa and Brigadier Vijaya Wimalaratne. After considering several options it was rapidly decided that a large force would be transported in landing craft from the Trincomalee navy base and landed on the a suitable location on the east coast of the isthmus of the Peninsula.¹¹² In the face of intense LTTE counter-attacks the troops landed on the beach at Vettilaikerni. With great difficulty a beachhead was secured. Then the troops began to fight their way towards Elephant Pass camp.¹¹³

The LTTE kept on attacking the troops at Elephant Pass while concurrently attacking the task force column which was inching its way from Vettilaikerni to Elephant Pass and attacking the beachhead at Vettilaikerni itself.¹¹⁴ During the initial days and weeks of the attack the initiative was with the LTTE and Elephant Pass camp may have been overrun. However, the army column

¹¹⁰ *Ceylon Daily News*, 19 July 1991, 'Balavegaya column makes Headway: Troops within 3 miles of camp'. It needs to be noted that all these "hundreds" of tractors were not of the armoured variety. Both the army and the LTTE had discovered by this time that normal farm tractors with flat bed trailers were the best means of field transport in the rough terrain in the North and East. They were widely used for transporting personnel and supplies by both the LTTE and the armed forces.

¹¹¹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 12 July 91, 'Grim battle at Elephant Pass: Forces inflict heavy Tiger Casualties'.

¹¹² *The Independent*, 16 July 1991, 'Navy joins battle to lift Tamil siege'.

¹¹³ *The Guardian*, 18 July 1991, 'Sri Lanka troops cut by Tigers'.

¹¹⁴ *Ceylon Daily News*, 17 July 1991, 'Relief on the way to besieged soldiers at Elephant Pass: Troops halfway there in dogged advance'.

fought-on. "More than 600 Tamil rebels and 78 soldiers have died in nine days of the most intense combat since the Tamil independence drive began eight years ago."¹¹⁵

After three weeks of hard fighting the army's reinforcement troops linked up with the besieged troops at Elephant Pass on 2-3 August. During the three week battle the government claimed that at least 1,300 LTTE cadres had been killed and that 149 soldiers were killed and 600 wounded.¹¹⁶ When *Balavegaya-1* finally ended the army's task force comprised of approximately 8000 personnel.¹¹⁷ It was estimated that the LTTE had mobilised approximately 4000 cadres at the inception of its attack, although LTTE sources never confirmed this.

It is indisputable that the LTTE mobilised its maximum military capabilities at the time to attack Elephant Pass camp and also to resist the task force. The LTTE, however, was unable to prevent the task force from landing and then fighting its way to Elephant Pass. The army, the government and the Sinhala people in the south rejoiced at the task force's achievement. Maj.General Kobbekaduwa was feted as a national hero by newspapers and his popularity amongst the Sinhala increased even further.¹¹⁸

However, it was worrisome that by July 1991 the LTTE had been able to develop the military capability to, first, launch a nearly successful attack against Elephant Pass camp and second, resist the advance of a task force of approximately 6000+ troops for three weeks. This had to be analysed and digested by the army.

The confrontation has led to a reappraisal by the army of the rebels' strength and capabilities. The Tigers have evidently organised themselves along conventional military lines, with a ranking system. Lieutenant-General Hamilton Wanasinghe, the army commander, admitted: "*The Tamil Tigers can no longer be considered only as a guerrilla outfit.* They can field large numbers of men, redeploy fighters from elsewhere in the war zone when required, and are armed with weapons like machineguns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars to match the Sri Lankan army's armour and field artillery [emphases added]."¹¹⁹

What did this type of capability signify in relation to the insurrectionary process as a whole? What did these capabilities indicate as to the specific 'phases' that the LTTE may be able to enter? Was 'strategic parity' and 'strategic offensive' possible in localised areas?

¹¹⁵ *The Independent*, 20 July 1991, '678 killed in Tamil battles'.

¹¹⁶ *The Sunday Island*, 4 August 1991, 'Tigers routed at Battle of Elephant Pass: Army enters besieged camp'.

¹¹⁷ *The Sunday Island*, 4 August 1991, 'Tigers routed at Battle of Elephant Pass: Army enters besieged camp'.

¹¹⁸ The reader should refer to Part I of this Chapter where Major General Kobbekaduwa, his popularity and his death are discussed. It was victories like saving EPS camp that cemented General Kobbekaduwa's popularity with the Sinhala people.

¹¹⁹ *The Times (London)*, 2 August 1991, 'Sri Lankan troops push within sight of besieged camp'.

5.5: The Army's 'encirclement' of Jaffna Peninsula Strategy, August 1991-July 1992

The LTTE's attempt to overrun Elephant Pass camp compelled all three of the armed forces – with the army taking the lead – to exert an enormous effort to save the camp from being overrun. This was a very worrying and sobering experience for all senior officers.¹²⁰

After the Elephant Pass camp was saved, the army began a deep analysis of what the LTTE's strategic objectives were for it to have expended such a great deal of its cadres and resources to try and overwhelm Elephant Pass camp.¹²¹

In August-September 1991 the army modified its then extant strategy and introduced an additional objective of 'encirclement of Jaffna Peninsula'. This new strategy was a military secret in August-September 1991 and was revealed in parliament only more than a year later by chief government spokesman Ranil Wickremasinghe in parliament in December 1992.

“they [i.e. the army] have decided to leave the jungle area open and then they put a ring around the whole of the Jaffna Peninsula confining the LTTE into that area”¹²²

The army decided on a new strategy because of the following.¹²³ First, if the LTTE had been able to capture Elephant Pass then it would have been able to freely move its cadres, heavy weapons, vehicles, food supplies and ammunition, back and forth from the Jaffna Peninsula to the Vanni region. The LTTE would have an unhindered supply route to its reserves of cadres, heavy weapons and ammunition in the Vanni. Second, if the LTTE acquired this free movement it would give the LTTE considerable strategic and tactical advantages during any of its future attacks *both* in the Peninsula and/or in the Vanni. For example, if the LTTE were to overwhelm Palali base such a loss would spell the end of the government's control of the Northern Province unless it established an equivalent base. Third, if and when the army made an attempt to launch an operation from Palali base the LTTE would have been able to

¹²⁰ Although Operation *Balawegaya-1* had technically been a victory for the government – in the sense that the LTTE had not been able to achieve its objective – the army and the government had to accept that the LTTE's military capabilities had unquestionably grown considerably larger and also more sophisticated when compared to the pre-July 1987 period. It is the present author's assessment that the LTTE's 'trial through fire' when it fought the IPKF during October 1987-March 1990 contributed substantially to its increased military capability. This is an aspect which has not caught the attention of most military historians and analysts who have studied the Sri Lankan conflict. More research is needed, and will be done, to empirically substantiate this assessment.

¹²¹ As recalled in an interview, March 2008, Colombo, with Major General (Retd) D.Kalpahana, who was a Colonel who commanded one of the Brigades of the Task Force at that time. He recalled that these questions had begun to be discussed by officers at Major General Kobbekaduwa's field HQ while Operation *Balawegaya-1* was still underway and the link-up with EPS camp had not yet happened.

¹²² Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, Official Government Spokesman, Sri Lanka Parliament Hansards, 16 December 1992: Col. 3239-3240. This strategic addition was a counter to the perceived strategy of the LTTE.

¹²³ Interviews with former Army Commander (1 Jan 1994 to 30 April 1996) Lt.General (Retd) G.H. De Silva, July 2008, Colombo. Also see Sri Lanka Parliament, *Hansards*, 16 December 1992: Col. 3239-3240.

summon cadres *and* heavy weapons from the Vanni to reinforce its cadres fight with the army. Fourth, because of Elephant Pass camp the LTTE was forced to transport its cadres and supplies by sea (off the eastern coast or crossing from island to island on the western side), or across the Jaffna lagoon. The LTTE's heavy weapons such as improvised armoured vehicles could not be transported at all from one theatre to another as they were far too heavy for any LTTE boat.

By July 1992 the army's new strategy was (inadvertently?) revealed when Sri Lankan newspapers carried articles with titles such as 'Strangulation of the Jaffna Peninsula'.¹²⁴ It then became undoubtedly clear that the army was embarked upon an attempt to isolate the Jaffna Peninsula from the rest of the Northern Province.

The Army 'Seals Off' Jaffna Peninsula, October 1991 to July 1992

So the army began a series of Operations through which it intended to permanently prevent the free movement which the LTTE sought. To do this the army had to occupy all the 'choke points' and islands between Jaffna Peninsula and the Vanni region. Accordingly, from October 1991 onwards the army began to implement this plan which lasted till July 1992. Operation *Valampuri-1* began on 18 October 1991 and was completed in two days.¹²⁵ Then, on 22 October 1991 *Valampuri-2* landed troops on the Pooneryn promontory. That this was a part of the army's strategy was acknowledged by the government in parliament on 24 November 1993:

The Pooneryn Security Forces Complex comprising the Army Camps and the Navy base was established on 18th October 1991, immediately after *Operation Valampuri*. The primary objective for the establishment of this complex was to seal off the movement of terrorists into the Peninsula from the South and vice versa.¹²⁶

In June 1992 the army launched Operation *Balawegaya-2*. This operation lasted from 28 June to 11 July 1992 and was a fiercely resisted by LTTE cadres in the area.¹²⁷

Government forces in northern Sri Lanka have launched a huge offensive aimed at cutting Tamil Tiger guerrillas off from their largest stronghold, the Jaffna peninsula. Several thousand troops, backed by tanks, helicopter gunships and naval fire, are reported to be forcing their way from the east coast towards Elephant Pass, where a garrison is stationed.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ See *The Sunday Island*, 19 July 1992, 'Strangulation of the Jaffna Peninsula'.

¹²⁵ Its objective was to expand and strengthen the army's hold on Kayts, Mandaitivu and Punkudutivu islands which lay very close the Jaffna Peninsula on its western side. Due to the tactical difficulty of supplying and defending these islands the LTTE's positions on these islands were unsustainable and it wisely withdrew. See *Ceylon Daily News*, 21 October 1991, 'Kayts, Mandaitivu islands fall into forces lap: Valampuri a 'Walkover'.

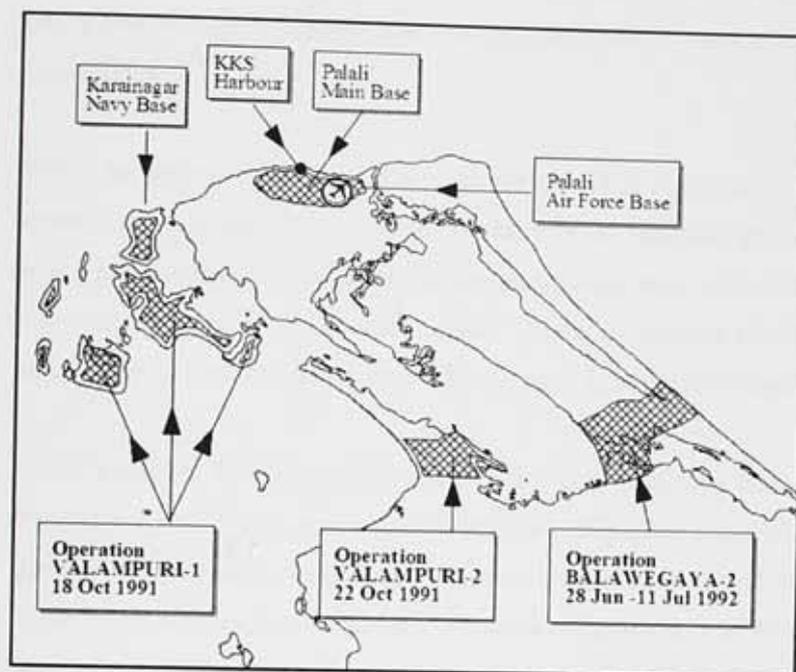
¹²⁶ Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, Hansards, 24 November 1993: Col.333. The troops rapidly began establishing a large joint army-navy base at Pooneryn.

¹²⁷ *Ceylon Daily News*, 1 July 1992, 'Dogged thrust by Balawegaya forces: Depleted Tigers hit and run'.

¹²⁸ *The Guardian*, 29 June 1992, 'Tamil Tigers under threat'.

The objective of this Operation was to bring under army control an entire strip of land from Vettalaikerni on the eastern coastline of the isthmus to Elephant Pass camp.

Map 5.4: The 3 Operations through which the Army 'encircled' Jaffna Peninsula



LTTE's Counter Strategy: Ferry Boat Service Across Jaffna Lagoon and Counter-Attacks

When faced with this situation LTTE countered it by developing a ferry service across the Jaffna Lagoon. The LTTE used normal fibreglass boats fitted with outboard motors normally used for fishing, and, other boats with powerful engines it utilised for operations at sea and in the Lagoon. It used these vessels for attack and for transport purposes. Most of these boats operated from Sea Tiger bases on the east and west coasts of the peninsula. Some of these boats were modified as suicide weapons and against the navy's Fast Attack Crafts (FACs) and Patrol boats.

So, in the months after *Balawegaya-2* the LTTE began a well-organised ferry-boat service from Jaffna Peninsula across the Lagoon to the 'Vanni'. Passengers had to pay for the service. A convoy would consist of a few dozen boats, or even a few boats, escorted by LTTE

dinghies fitted with machine-guns. To avoid visual detection by the armed forces these journeys were always done in the middle of the night or early in the morning. However, there was a limit to this non-detection as the armed forces swiftly installed small radar stations at both Elephant Pass and Pooneryn. The route most frequently used by the LTTE was from Kilali, an abandoned small fishing village on the eastern shore of the Jaffna Lagoon to 'Kunchi' Parantan, another abandoned fishing village on the 'Vanni' edge of the Jaffna Lagoon. The army and navy bases in Pooneryn and Elephant Pass sometimes fired artillery or heavy machine-guns at these convoys, and the convoys were also attacked by Inshore Patrol Craft (IPCs).¹²⁹

While the armed forces tried to stop the movement of convoys, the LTTE counter-attacked the armed forces. It carried out attacks on navy boats, escorted the passenger boats with armed boats, and used sea mines to restrict the operation of navy vessels. The following accounts are a few examples of LTTE counter-actions. On the 31 January 1993, a 65kg. sea mine designed to explode on impact was recovered by the navy in the Jaffna Lagoon east of Sangupiddy.¹³⁰

On 22 February 1993, the LTTE attacked the army defensive bunkers on the perimeters of the Pooneryn Base.¹³¹ This was not a full-scale attack intended to overrun the Pooneryn Base, but almost certainly an 'exploratory' attack to gauge the strength of the Base's defences, the location of bunkers and numerous tactical intelligence. On 25 February 1993, a navy Inshore Patrol Craft (IPC) was blown up by a Tiger sea mine. Two sailors were killed and 3 were and wounded.¹³² By August 1993 LTTE attacks had increased in intensity. On 26 August 1993, Sea Tigers destroyed another navy IPC (Inshore Patrol Craft), damaged another and killed 5 navy personnel.¹³³

5.6: The LTTE's Highly Destructive Attack on Pooneryn Army and Navy Base, 11-13 November 1993

In the early morning of 11 November 1993 the LTTE launched a very large-scale attack on Pooneryn Base. It was estimated that at least 2000 LTTE cadres took part, although the LTTE

¹²⁹ IPCs were 30-foot long, shallow-draft vessels mounted with swivelling heavy machine-guns suited for operating in the Jaffna Lagoon and the shallow waters along the sea coast.

¹³⁰ *Ceylon Daily News*, 2 February 1993, 'Navy spots Sea Tiger mine afloat in Jaffna lagoon'. Three days prior to that a sea tiger transporting a similar mine was shot and killed.

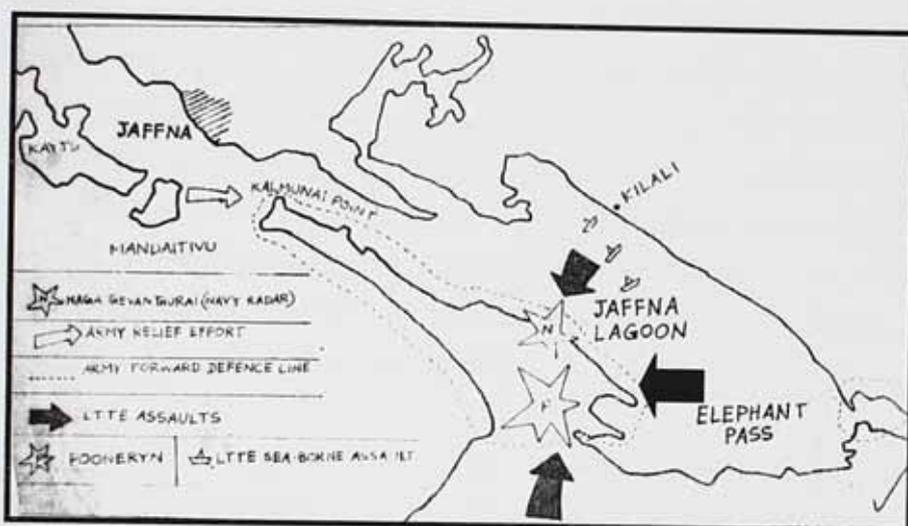
¹³¹ *Ceylon Daily News*, 23 February 1993, 'Tiger attack on Pooneryn repulsed'.

¹³² *Ceylon Daily News*, 27 February 1993, 'Two sailors killed three injured by mine blast in Jaffna lagoon'.

¹³³ *The Island*, 27 August 1993, 'Sea Tigers in boats launch attack with machine guns: Navy vessel destroyed, five killed in lagoon'.

never revealed any figures.¹³⁴ This included land fighters and Sea Tigers. While two large groups of LTTE cadres attacked the army positions of the Base from over land from the south and the east, a large group of Sea Tiger cadres attacked the navy's base at Nagatevanturai, stealthily approaching the base, across the Jaffna Lagoon, from the direction of Kilali in the north-east. They moved undetected across the Jaffna Lagoon in a large flotilla of boats (see Map 5.5 below).

Map 5.5: Overview of LTTE's Attack on Pooneryn Base, 11-13 November 1993



(Source: reproduced from *The Sunday Island*, 14 Nov. 1993, 'Army Moves Back into Pooneryn'. The original information given in the newspaper's map was accurate except for one tactical detail: the LTTE's ground attack cadres were composed of a group from the south and another from the east. The error is probably a mistake as the fact that a large LTTE group attacked from the eastern side of the Base was mentioned in several newspaper. This error was been rectified by present author in Map 5.5. The black arrow pointing westward from the East was added by the present author as it is missing in the original Map.)

The Tamil Tigers have inflicted the worst defeat on the Sri Lankan armed forces since the Tamil insurgency began 10 years ago, killing hundreds of their troops yesterday and seizing a vast amount of war booty. At least 200 Sinhalese soldiers and sailors - possibly as many as 500 - died in a Tiger attack on a military base at the Jaffna lagoon in the north of the country. [...] The chief military spokesman, Brigadier Nalin Angammana, said: "*It is a very big attack. All we know at the moment is that casualties are very high.*" Another officer described it as "*the worst setback for 21 years*". The army has suffered very heavy casualties in Tamil Tiger attacks twice before - in 1986 and, more recently, last July - *but never on this scale*. Although the fighting is not yet over, the Tigers appear to have gained virtually free access to their heartland, the Jaffna peninsula [emphases added].¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Estimates given to present author in August 2008 by a number of army officers including former army commander Lt. General (Retd) G.H. De Silva who, in November 1993, was the Chief-of-Staff at Army HQ, Colombo.

¹³⁵ *The Guardian*, 12 November 1993, 'Hundreds Killed in Tiger Attack'.

Army commander Lt. General Cecil Waidyaratne personally flew to Palali Base and supervised the preparation for the reinforcement of Pooneryn.¹³⁶ The LTTE implemented several tactics to thwart the army, air force and the navy from reinforcing Pooneryn Base. Clearly the LTTE had learnt the tactical lessons from its attack on Elephant Pass Base two years earlier. In the initial days, the LTTE used heavy machine-guns and repeatedly prevented air force helicopters carrying troops from landing in the area.¹³⁷ The LTTE thereby obtained valuable time for other cadres to overwhelm the army troops who were fighting back and defending the camp's armouries. It was reported that some heavy artillery weapons – probably the 120mm heavy mortars captured from the army by the LTTE (see list below) – were used against beaches on which reinforcements could land.¹³⁸ Sea Tigers in boats also fought the reinforcement troops: “military sources said the rebels blocked attempts to send reinforcements by amphibious landings close to the base and fighting was reported between the navy and sea-borne rebels.”¹³⁹ As the fighting on the base continued throughout 11, 12 and 13 November, all three armed forces made a maximum effort to prevent a complete collapse of the Base. The air force used all the aircraft which it could muster – the Pucara ground attack aircraft, Siai-Machetti SF-260s and F-7 jet fighters on Close Air Support (CAS), the Bell-212s helicopters in gunship mode and the Mil-Mi-17s as tactical transports.¹⁴⁰

When news of the Pooneryn attack reached Colombo there was a flurry of activity. Caretaker President D.B.Wijetunga directed the commanders of all three armed forces to regain control of Pooneryn “at any cost”.¹⁴¹ Clearly the government (correctly) realised that for very valid military and political reasons Pooneryn base could not be allowed to be completely overrun.¹⁴² While reinforcement troops were not immediately available from Elephant Pass or Mannar, the army rapidly set about organising a reinforcement operation.¹⁴³

¹³⁶ *Observer*, 12 November 1993, ‘LTTE Cadres in Pooneryn, says Voice of Tigers: Forces launch major offensive’.

¹³⁷ These tactics indicate that the LTTE was much better prepared to counteract reinforcement attacks launched by the army. See Senaratne, J.P. 1998: 160-161, *The Sri Lanka Air Force: A Historical Retrospect, 1985-1997, Vol.II*,

and *Observer*, 12 November 1993, ‘LTTE Cadres in Pooneryn, says Voice of Tigers: Forces launch major offensive’.

¹³⁸ *Ceylon Daily News*, 13 November 1993, ‘Pooneryn: Commandos face logistics problems: Tigers turn captive guns on rescue troops’.

¹³⁹ *The Independent*, 13 November 1993, ‘Tamils resist relief attempt’.

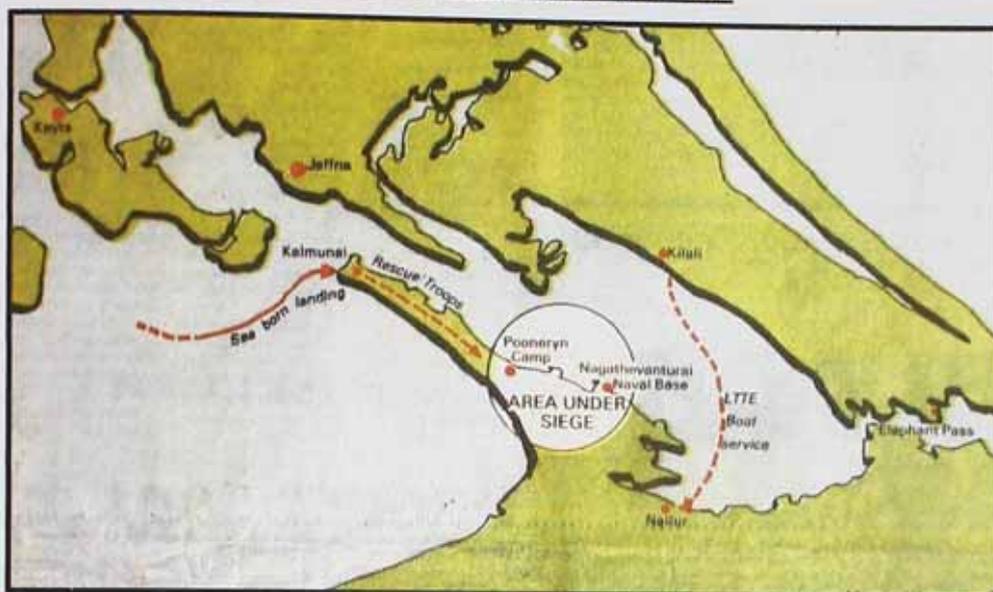
¹⁴⁰ See Senaratne, J.P. 1998: 160-162, *The Sri Lanka Air Force: A Historical Retrospect, 1985-1997, Vol.II*.

¹⁴¹ *Sunday Observer*, 14 November 1993, ‘Get back Pooneryn at any cost - President’. Wijetunga was appointed President after President Premadasa was assassinated by the LTTE on 1 May 1993.

¹⁴² Militarily it would be a very bad defeat for the army and the government. While a great deal of weaponry was stolen by the LTTE, the entire stock of weapons could not be taken. Casualties too could have been 300-400 more. Politically, the citizens of the country and the international community (which was closely following events) could come to the conclusion that resistance against the LTTE was pointless.

¹⁴³ *Observer*, 12 November 1993, ‘LTTE Cadres in Pooneryn, says Voice of Tigers: Forces launch major offensive’.

Map 5.6: Army's Reinforcement of Pooneryn Base



(Source: Reproduced from *Sunday Times*, 14 Nov. 1993, 'Pooneryn re-captured: Over 400 soldiers dead another 400 wounded')

On 14 November 1993, 950 reinforcement troops managed to land on the Pooneryn promontory by sea and air.¹⁴⁴ They then linked-up with a group of more than 500 Pooneryn Base soldiers who had managed to hold-on to one section of the Base.¹⁴⁵ By this time the LTTE had begun to withdraw to the Vanni jungles and to Jaffna Peninsula by boats taking with them their dead and the large amount of captured weapons and ammunition.¹⁴⁶

Up till that time this was the battle which caused the highest casualties to both sides in a single encounter. The government stated in parliament that the total number of army personnel in Pooneryn had been 56 Officers and 2,236 Other Ranks. The total number of navy personnel had been 268.¹⁴⁷ The government acknowledged that 8 officers and 233 Other Ranks had been killed in the attack but made no mention of the many hundreds of personnel missing.¹⁴⁸ This was a deliberate ploy to minimise the shock on the Sinhala public and to minimise the political damage to the government. Eight months later, in July 1994, a Colombo newspaper reported that in addition to the above number confirmed killed a further 4 Officers and 396 Other Ranks were missing due to the Pooneryn attack. Over the subsequent years it became clear that *all those originally classified as missing-in-action had in fact died*. Therefore a total of

¹⁴⁴ Of them 800 landed by sea while 150 were landed by helicopters. See *The Island*, 15 November 1993, 'Army inside Pooneryn base – Brigadier Nalin Angammana'.

¹⁴⁵ *Sunday Times*, 14 November 1993, 'Pooneryn re-captured: Over 400 soldiers dead another 400 wounded'.

¹⁴⁶ *The Independent*, 15 November 1993, 'Sri Lankan troops break siege of key army base'.

¹⁴⁷ Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, Sri Lanka Parliament, Hansards, 24 November 1993: Col.333.

¹⁴⁸ Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, Sri Lanka Parliament, Hansards, 24 November 1993: Col.335.

641 military personnel had been killed by the LTTE.¹⁴⁹ The LTTE too is reported to have suffered heavy casualties. Estimates based on intercepted LTTE radio transmissions ranged from 407 cadres¹⁵⁰ to 425 killed.¹⁵¹

The armouries in Pooneryn were plundered by the LTTE.¹⁵² An initial estimate of the value of the weapons and equipment lost mentioned Rs.300 million.¹⁵³ A great amount of weapons and ammunition were undoubtedly captured by the LTTE.¹⁵⁴ These losses were a great insult to the armed forces and made the UNP government even more unpopular in the eyes of the Sinhala electorate. The Sinhala public was shocked at the scale of the losses.

The attack on Pooneryn was an immense shock to the army, government and the Sinhala people in the south. In the very early days after the attack a senior army officer in the north was anonymously quoted in a government-owned newspaper as having said that:

*“the situation as turning out to be extremely serious for all military operations in the north, particularly in the peninsula. We have to remember that the LTTE now has possession of enough military hardware to equip a modern brigade, including artillery and armour. This poses a threat to any future operations, because the LTTE may now be able to hamper our aerial operations on which so much depends.”*¹⁵⁵

This was a surprisingly candid statement. It appeared in a government-owned newspaper in the immediate aftermath of the attack. Clearly the senior officer who made this statement knew that his statement did not reflect well on either the army or the government. But this doesn't necessarily mean that this officer was anti-government. It was a reflection of this officer's apprehensions regarding the obvious increase in the LTTE's military capabilities and the weapons it had captured.¹⁵⁶

¹⁴⁹ *The Sunday Leader*, 31 July 1994:7, 'Mass graves - only epitaph for fallen heroes'.

¹⁵⁰ *The Sunday Observer*, 14 November 1993, 'Daring sea born landing saves besieged camp: Rescue troops enter Pooneryn'.

¹⁵¹ *The Island*, 15 November 1993, '425 cadres killed, confirms LTTE'.

¹⁵² *The Island*, 12 November 1993, 'Tigers retaliate fiercely for Kilali attack Two bases attacked?: 200 army, navy men killed'.

¹⁵³ *Ceylon Daily News*, 15 November 1993, 'Sporadic mortar fire, evacuation of wounded begins: Fresh troops link with Pooneryn forces'.

¹⁵⁴ *The Island*, 15 November 1993, 'Army inside Pooneryn base' and *Ravaya*, 21 November 1993. A list of the material reported in the press included (the number lost is within parenthesis): two T-55 Main Battle Tanks, one of which subsequently destroyed by the air force; 120mm heavy mortars (04); 0.50-inch calibre Heavy Machine-Guns (11); M203 grenade launchers (03); 106mm recoilless rifle (01); Light Machine-Guns (54); T-56 assault rifles (394); M-16 assault rifles (11); RPG launchers (19); a Radar set; and a great deal of ammunition. Five navy patrol craft moored at the navy base (most probably IPCs) armed with 0.50-inch calibre heavy machine-guns were also captured by the LTTE.

¹⁵⁵ *Ceylon Daily News*, 15 November 1993, 'Sporadic mortar fire, evacuation of wounded begins: Fresh troops link with Pooneryn forces: Tigers too take heavy losses'.

¹⁵⁶ Interviews and discussions the present author had with many army officers at this time reflected these concerns.

A few days after the attack official army spokesmen went into 'damage limitation' public relations mode and tried to downplay the seriousness of the attack. Although in public the government and the army tried to shrug-off the whole issue, members in both institutions realised that this attack was a very serious indicator of the military capabilities which the LTTE had acquired by that time. Sinhala civilians living in the country realised this fact too. Although the government and the army tried as much as possible to hide the details of the set-back, privately owned newspapers in Colombo published information 'unofficially' gleaned from army and other government sources.¹⁵⁷

The attack clearly illustrated that the LTTE had the capacity to plan and carry-out large and complex attacks. The army put on a brave face and said that the LTTE had not been able to overrun and completely capture the Pooneryn Base. That is correct. If the LTTE had done so the Pooneryn attack's political and military consequences would have been very much greater. Nonetheless the tactics of the attack, the damage done to the base and the weapons captured, the number of personnel killed made the LTTE's attack a substantial success and most intelligent observers in the army, government and Sinhala civilians knew this.¹⁵⁸

The army in its public statements said that the LTTE had been badly hurt due to the loss of approximately 400 of its cadres. But this glossed-over the fact that the LTTE had anticipated these casualties – by this time the LTTE had a great deal of military experience after having fought the Indian and the Sri Lankan armies for many years and knew that it would inevitably have to suffer considerable casualties in an attack on this scale. The army's assessment missed the important point which was that the attack indicated that the LTTE had *graduated* to a level of military capability where it could attack a large military base, do unprecedented damage, capture a large amount of weapons and ammunition and make an orderly withdrawal taking most of its dead and all its injured with it. For example, in July 1983 the LTTE carried out an ambush in Jaffna which killed 13 soldiers (which contributed to the launching of the pogrom-riots of that period). Ten years later, in 1993, the LTTE was able to implement an operation on the scale of the Pooneryn attack.

¹⁵⁷ As tends to happen in all protracted insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, the government tried to control the information which got into the public realm. The government appointed 'official spokesmen' for each of the armed forces and police and instructed all other personnel to refrain from talking to the press. But journalists searching for scoops and stories managed to circumvent these restrictions and unofficially get in contact with military personnel and obtained information from them.

¹⁵⁸ Extensive discussions which the present author had in November-December 1993 with persons from all of the above 'constituencies'.

This increase in the LTTE's military capability over the preceding 10 years was extremely significant as it indicated the LTTE's growing military (and therefore political) strength. It was clear that the army's counter-actions up to that time *were not having a qualitative impact upon the LTTE*. Clearly the Tamil insurgency was not reducing in potency. During the course of the Pooneryn attack a total of more than 1000 persons from both sides of the conflict – the government and the LTTE – were killed in action. Hundreds more were wounded. When military engagements reach this scale it is one indicator that the insurgents may have arrived at 'Strategic Parity' or even the early stage of 'Strategic Offensive'. Of course the LTTE had to prove in the future that it could *sustain* this level of casualties and maintain military effectiveness. Whether the Sri Lanka government had the capacity to endure high casualties and defeats, however, was also a factor in the equation.

5.7: The Decline and End of the UNP Government, November 1994

After the near-total loss of Pooneryn, 1994 was a year of relatively little military activity in the North and East. In the East the army held on to the populated areas along the coastline and conducted routine operations. The LTTE controlled the jungles and villages further inland. Both the army and the LTTE attempted ambushes and there were some skirmishes. But nothing conclusive occurred.

The UNP government's end can be said to have begun from the Pooneryn attack in November 1993 to the UNP Government's defeat in Parliamentary and Presidential Elections in August and November 1994, respectively.

By 1994 the UNP government had become very unpopular amongst the Sinhala electorate and after 17 years in power was suffering from entropy. By 1994 the UNP had been in power – both in Parliament and in the Presidency – for 17 years. Significant proportions of the Sinhala voters were weary of the UNP and wanted a change. The main Opposition party – the SLFP – was increasing in popularity. For the Sinhala voters one of the main factors was the government's inability to deal conclusively and effectively with the secessionist insurrection. For ordinary Sinhala citizens it was incomprehensible why the army should suffer casualties in the many hundreds, and eventually totalling thousands, at the hands of the LTTE. Pooneryn was the most recent case in point. In Pooneryn the armed forces lost the largest number of personnel in a single attack. In the aftermath of Pooneryn the Opposition parties made outlandish allegations that the UNP government was 'betraying' the Sinhala nation to the LTTE and implied that the military set-backs were deliberately perpetrated by the government. These allegations were

cleverly mixed-up by the Opposition with the late President Premadasa's transfer of some weapons to the LTTE and the death of General Kobbekaduwa.

Both the Opposition and the government were aware that many crucial elections were due in 1994. Provincial Council Elections were due in early 1994 and also Parliamentary and Presidential Elections had to be held in late 1994. The late President Premadasa's transfer of military equipment to the LTTE – an action which most Sinhala people could comprehend only through words like 'treason' and 'traitor' – was repeatedly mentioned in Opposition propaganda meetings and publications. Although President Premadasa himself died in May 1993 the insinuation was that there were 'other forces' within the UNP government which were 'supporting' the LTTE. In this political atmosphere, speculation, rumour and conspiracy theories flourished.¹⁵⁹ Frustrated and bitter army personnel – themselves unable to understand the scale of the defeats suffered at the hands of the LTTE – leaked information to the Opposition's press and this added fuel to the fires of speculation.

The elections for the Provincial Council of the Southern Province were held on 24 March 1994. The UNP lost this elections to a rejuvenated SLFP-led alliance. The Provincial Council itself was not very significant except that it served as a 'political barometer' to the mood of the Sinhala electorate. "Sri Lanka's ruling party has suffered its worst election defeat in 17 years in a provincial poll seen as a vital pointer to the presidential contest in December."¹⁶⁰

The Parliamentary Elections were held 18 August 1994 and that too was won by the SLFP-led alliance and Mrs. Bandaranaike's daughter Chandrika Kumaratunga became the Prime Minister.¹⁶¹ The Presidential elections were held on 9 November and Chandrika Kumaratunga was elected as President with 62% of the votes cast. She polled almost 2 million votes more than the UNP candidate.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Personal conversations with many civilians and military officers. Such non-textual and oral means of communication are very significant in Sinhala society. While it is difficult at present to give documentary sources for these stories, the present author continues to investigate these accounts. The present author was living in Sri Lanka throughout this time and observed and noted these speculations and conspiracy theories.

¹⁶⁰ *The Guardian*, 26 March 1994, 'Sri Lankan Left wins region poll'.

¹⁶¹ *The Times (London)*, 19 August 1994, 'Daughter of turbulent political dynasty takes helm in Sri Lanka'.

¹⁶² *The Guardian*, 11 November 1994, 'Sri Lankans vote for PM and Peace'.

5.8: Conclusions: period from March 1990 to November 1994

After the exit of the IPKF in March 1990, the LTTE re-ignited the insurrection in June 1990. The re-ignition of the insurrection, and, the information about the transfer of weapons to the LTTE discredited President Premadasa in the eyes of the Sinhala electorate. This was something from which Premadasa never completely recovered, politically. The intensity of the fighting which ensued during these 4½ was the highest that it had ever reached up till 1994. During these years the LTTE carried out a series of targeted assassinations which killed a very forceful Deputy Minister of Defence, Ranjan Wijeratne, the most popular army general, General Kobbekaduwa and also President Premadasa. These assassinations had a seriously destabilising effect on government policymaking as discontinuities were created. Concurrently, this period also witnessed the army being given an unusually high degree of autonomy to determine strategy. This revealed the UNP government's flawed understanding of its responsibility for developing a coherent counterinsurgency project. Such a counterinsurgency project should have been the highest priority of the government. The military strategy should have been a part of a joint political-military counterinsurgency project proactively developed by the government as a whole. The measures to address Tamil grievances had to come from, and be legislated by, civilian politicians. In any event the army did not have the Constitutional authority to decide such policies nor the political skills to negotiate and make compromises. Strategically, nothing resembling a 3-phased Clear-Hold-Build counterinsurgency strategy could be implemented because in the North the army was able only to hold on to some large bases and 'encircle' the Jaffna Peninsula by capturing and establishing large bases on the land routes connecting the Peninsula with the 'Vanni' region.

In 1990 the military actions were composed of a large number of operations to re-capture areas in the East from the LTTE, and to hold-on to selected bases in the North. In the Northern Province the army was in serious difficulties, confined to its large bases. The rest of the area was controlled by the LTTE, including Jaffna City. In the years 1991-1993 what the army did was to attack and 'Clear' specific areas such as the areas surrounding its main bases. The purpose was to give greater protection to these bases and put them out of LTTE mortar range. Then the army would 'Hold' these areas. But as these areas were devoid of Tamil civilians these were not counterinsurgency 'Clear-Hold-Build' type operations. However, these operations furthered the government's overall effort in the sense that these large bases were retained under government control - if they had not existed then the LTTE would have established a separate state very rapidly. The mere existence of these bases forced the LTTE

to devote time and effort to attack them, and forced the LTTE to avoid the forays made from these bases.

In the East, the army 'Cleared' and brought major populated centres along the coast under its control. The LTTE was present in the jungle areas and villages approximately 7-10 kilometres inland from the coast. The coastline north of Trincomalee was progressively more insecure and was not dominated by the army similar to the coastal belt south of Trincomalee. The army maintained control of most of the coastline south of Trincomalee and carried out 'search & destroy' forays into the jungles.

Overall, these government military operations served to ensure that the LTTE didn't have a complete free run of the North and East but cumulatively also did not result in a diminution of the LTTE. In November 1993 the LTTE attacked the army-cum-navy base at Pooneryn and caused very high casualties, demoralised the military, and further diminished the Sinhala people's support for the UNP government. By 1994 although a great deal of fighting had taken place the LTTE was nowhere near defeat. On the other hand neither was the LTTE able to overwhelm, as it may have wished, the army bases in the North or the East. It was a stalemate. But the Sinhala people had lost confidence in the UNP to bring a conclusive end to the LTTE's insurrection and voted them out at both the Parliamentary and the Presidential elections.

1. Did the Sri Lanka government have Political Purposes?

Yes, it did. And these political purposes played the determining role in the overall direction of government policy. Primarily and these purposes were:

- That a separate Tamil state would not to be allowed to be formed in Sri Lanka. This was a non-negotiable objective.
- That the LTTE's power would be contained to the degree the government was able to.

2. Did the Sri Lanka government give security to the Tamil population?

No. The situation of Tamil civilians was very similar to the previous period i.e. July 1983 to March 1990. Large areas of the Northern Province came under the control of Tamil insurgents. Actually the situation was worse from the government's point of view because, for example, the entirety of Jaffna City and the complete Peninsula, with a population of at least 200,000 was under LTTE control. The armed forces were in control of only the large bases such a Palali. The Jaffna Fort base too had ceased to be under army control and the troops had to be withdrawn. The Tamil civilians were not governed by the Sri Lanka government but by

the LTTE. These Tamils looked to the LTTE for security. Tamils who lived under Sri Lanka government controlled areas – such as Colombo and also areas in the East – were subject to suspicion and surveillance.

3. Did the Sri Lanka government neutralize the Tamil insurgents?

By and large, no. However in as much the army lost 4000+ personnel killed in action (see Table 5.1) the LTTE too would have lost cadres around the same figure. However, definite figures for the LTTE cannot be given as the LTTE never released verifiable casualty figures (which is understandable as a great deal of tactical military intelligence can be deduced by such information, especially if dates and locations are given).¹⁶³

4. Did the Sri Lanka government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?

No. By this time the majority of Tamils in the Northern Province and a significant number in the Eastern Province were living in areas under LTTE control. As a matter of fact the situation was worse than in the previous phase (July 1983-March 1990) because the entirety of Jaffna City and Peninsula, except the large military bases, were under LTTE control. These Tamil civilians did not have any contact with the Sri Lanka government and did not support the government.

5. Did the Sri Lanka government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base?

No. As in the earlier phase it was the opposite that happened, i.e. the LTTE separated the government from the Tamil people, especially those Tamils living in the Northern Province. A similar situation prevailed in the Eastern Province too wherever government forces merely held onto their camps and some of the main roads.

6. What were the relationships the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?

The Emergency regulations activated in June 1983 continued to as before. As the Tamil insurrection escalated, legal provisions became increasingly harsher. Concurrently, extra-judicial killings also began.

¹⁶³ It is relevant to mention here that the same applies to armed forces casualties as well. The armed forces' 'Roll of Honour' which has been of great utility to this present study was printed in 2005, i.e. 11 years after 1994. And that too during a period when there was a ceasefire with the LTTE.

7. Did the Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection?

By and large, No. And this was a great relief for the Sri Lanka government during 1990-1994.

This was a massive change from the Indian policy of the previous phase, i.e. up to March 1990. After the IPKF was compelled to leave Sri Lanka, the Indian central government seems to have done a thorough review of its intervention in Sri Lanka (this has to be deduced by analysts such as the present author as the Indian government has not released any such information).

Furthermore, with the LTTE's assassination of Rajiv Gandhi the entire Indian governmental system received a huge shock and realisation dawned that such interventions could grievously hurt India's own core interests.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

6.1: Introduction

The objective of this Thesis is to analyse the efforts by the UNP government of Sri Lanka to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection during the 17 years from 1977 to 1994. The analytical framework utilised for this task is grounded in British and United States counterinsurgency doctrine which spans approximately 50 years from the writings of the pioneers in the 1960s, to the most recent US and British Army doctrine. Using the insights from this literature seven research questions were identified by the present author:

1. **Did the Sri Lanka government have Political Purposes?**
2. **Did the Sri Lanka government give security to the Tamil population?**
3. **Did the Sri Lanka government neutralize the Tamil insurgents?**
4. **Did the Sri Lanka government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?**
5. **Did the Sri Lanka government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base?**
6. **What were the relationships the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?**
7. **Did the Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection?**

The counterinsurgency campaigns of the Sri Lanka government 1977-1994 are analysed using these seven research questions.

The 1977-1994 period can be divided into three qualitatively different phases, each separated by clear and dramatic breaks from the others. The first is from the UNP's election victory in 1977 to the pogrom-riots of July 1983. The second is from the 1983 pogrom-riots to the exit of the Indian army from Sri Lanka in March 1990. The third is from the re-ignition of the Secessionist insurrection by the LTTE in June 1990 up to August-November 1994 when the UNP lost both parliamentary and presidential elections and therefore ceased to be the counterinsurgent. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 deal, in chronological order, with these three periods.

Our analytical work is deeply complicated by the fact that in the second of the above two phases, i.e. the phase dealt-with in Chapter 4, the Indian central government was a pivotal player in the process. Eventually, in July 1987, India used pressure on *both* the Sri Lanka government and the Tamil secessionists to arrive at an Agreement called the Indo-Lanka Accord. However, this Agreement could not be implemented and eventually the Indian forces

left Sri Lanka in March 1990. Subsequently, the secessionist insurrection was re-ignited by the LTTE with its attacks against the Sri Lanka government. In the other two phases too, i.e. Chapters 3 and 5, the picture is not straightforward as we see President Jayewardene making mistakes and tacitly facilitating the pogrom-riots. In the 1990-1994 period (Chapter.5) President Premadasa is faced with enemies from within his government and is also at a loss as to what strategy he should adopt which could out-manoeuvre and defeat the LTTE. What eventually transpired was that *he* was out-manoeuvred and then assassinated by the LTTE.

Throughout this period the three main counterinsurgents – i.e. President Jayewardene, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Premadasa – made serious errors of judgment (especially of the LTTE) and also on many occasions worked at cross purposes with one another. Such incoherencies are severely detrimental to a counterinsurgency effort. In the case of the errors of judgement of ex-Prime Minister Gandhi and President Premadasa, both paid for the errors with their lives. Working at cross-purposes is clearly seen when the Indian central government provided military training to Tamil insurgents, allowed Tamil Nadu to give sanctuary to the Tamil insurgents and also – as can be seen when the Indo-Lanka Accord, its Annexures and Letters are examined – when India manoeuvred to obtain geopolitical advantages over Sri Lanka. In this context tensions between Sri Lanka and India were inevitable.

6.2: Overall Assessment Of the Sri Lanka Government's Counterinsurgency Approach

1. Did the Sri Lanka government have Political Purposes?

Yes, the Sri Lanka government did have a set of clear Political Objectives. As all recognised counterinsurgency theorists and manuals such as Thompson¹, FM 3-24 (US Army)² and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army)³ emphasise, any government implementing a counterinsurgency campaign must have clear political objectives.

The Sri Lanka government clearly stated policy was that a separate Tamil state would not be allowed to be formed in Sri Lanka. This was a non-negotiable political objective and was consistent throughout the 1977-1994 period. From 1977 onwards the government offered

¹ Thompson, 1966: 50-58, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*.

² See US Army, 2006: 1-20, *Counterinsurgency*. They are explained in detail in pp. 1-21 to 1-24.

³ British Army, 2009: 3-2, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

District-level devolution and de-centralisation of power. But the Tamil parliamentarians and the Tamil insurgents refused to accept this offer. The Sri Lanka government did not accept that the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka were the 'traditional homeland' of the Tamil people. The government also opposed to the merging of the Northern and Eastern Provinces into one territory called the 'North-East' or 'North-East Province'.

The above being said, however, the Sri Lanka government was unable to develop an overall counterinsurgency campaign plan where – while achieving the above objectives – it could address the reasonable grievances of the Tamil people and defeat the Tamil insurgents. This proved to be a far too complicated and difficult a task for the Sri Lanka government. The reasons which contributed to this were, first, the Tamil insurrection grew immensely after the pogrom-riots. Second, the insurgents were assisted by the Tamil Nadu and Indian central governments. Third, the Indian central government insisted on becoming an active participant in the search for a solution during the period 1983-1987, and eventually, in the text of the Indo-Lanka Accord, forced the Sri Lanka government to compromise its stance on the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces. However, during the entire period 1977-1994 the Sri Lanka government did not give-in to the Tamil secessionists campaign to divide the country.

2. Did the Sri Lanka government give security to the Tamil population?

As noted in both FM 3-24 (US Army)⁴ and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army)⁵, this is a significant task that a counterinsurgent government should strive to achieve. However, except for the first 4-5 years after being elected to power in 1977, the government could not achieve this. At the beginning of its tenure from July 1977 to approximately 1980, the government was able to give some degree of security to the Tamil people. However, with the gradual and unstoppable escalation of the insurrection there is evidence that from around 1980 two policy trends had emerged within the government. One of them supported negotiations with Tamils. The other was a sinister policy which advocated a 'Pogrom against Tamils'. There is very substantial corroborative evidence from many separate sources to the existence of this trend. President Jayewardene's tacit condoning of the 'pogrom-against-Tamils' tendency was a judgement with very long-term negative consequences. This pogrom-riot paved the way for the escalation of the Tamil insurgency, the unending agitation in Tamil Nadu and the

⁴ See US Army, 2006: 1-20, *Counterinsurgency*. They are explained in detail in pp. 1-21 to 1-24.

⁵ British Army, 2009: 3-2, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

intervention by the Indian central government. President Jayewardene lacked the foresight to have nipped this trend in the bud, and it manifested itself in the pogrom-riots of July 1983.

Therefore, it has to be concluded that by June-July 1983 the government was not giving adequate security to the Tamil population. After the 1983 pogrom-riots the security of Tamils worsened to a substantial degree due to a combination of factors: the Tamil insurrection increased with more daring and effective guerrilla attacks and armed forces and police casualties increased to unprecedented levels. Concurrently, the government's military and police actions against the insurrection increased in severity and this had unavoidable impacts upon the security of Tamil civilians.

After the IPKF left in March 1990 the LTTE began to control large areas of the North and East and Tamil civilians living in these areas came under LTTE control. Tamils who lived under Sri Lanka government controlled areas – such as Colombo and also some areas in the East – were subject to suspicion and surveillance. The cumulative result of all this was the further decrease in the security of the Tamil population.

3. Did the Sri Lanka government neutralize the Tamil insurgents?

On the whole, no. This is a straightforward military-police task that any counterinsurgent government must strive to achieve at least to *some* appreciable degree. Both FM 3-24 (US Army)⁶ and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army)⁷ mention this is their respective lists of counterinsurgency tasks. Although during these 17 years the military did conduct many operations, the Sri Lanka government was, however, unable to neutralize Tamil insurgents to an appreciable degree which could have a strategic result. In the 1977-1983 period, although the government tried to neutralize the (still) quite small number of Tamil insurgents, it was unable to do so. In July-December 1979 when the army was placed in charge of Jaffna District, Tamil insurgents made a tactical retreat to Tamil Nadu and thereby completely escaped the government.

In the 1983-1987 period the Tamil insurgents were on the strategic and tactical offensive and implemented skilful mobile guerrilla warfare which the Sri Lanka army found very difficult to cope with. Gradually the government forces began to get isolated to their camps. After the exit of the IPKF in March 1990, the military situation for the government became worse than

⁶ See US Army, 2006: 1-20, *Counterinsurgency*. They are explained in detail in pp. 1-21 to 1-24.

⁷ British Army, 2009: 3-2, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

the previous periods. From June 1990 to November 1994 the Sri Lanka army lost 4000+ personnel killed in action, and the combined police, navy and air force casualties were another 1000 (see Table 5.1). Although it can be assumed that the LTTE too would have lost equivalent number of cadres, this still did not amount to 'neutralizing' the Tamil insurgents.

4. Did the Sri Lanka government gain and maintain popular support of the Tamil people?

Both FM 3-24 (US Army)⁸ and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army)⁹ mention this as an important task that a counterinsurgent government should strive to achieve. However, by and large, the Sri Lanka government was unable to achieve this. Although there were some Tamils who supported the government in the 1977-1983 period, most Tamils in general were either neutral towards the government or tacit supporters of the TULF or Tamil insurgents - it needs to be recalled that the vast majority of them had voted in support of the TULF's secessionist platform in the parliamentary elections of July 1977.

After the 1983 pogrom-riots the Tamil peoples' support for the government reduced to a negligible level. Gradually, with the escalation of the insurrection larger and larger numbers of Tamils began to live under the control of the insurgent groups. From March 1990 onwards, the LTTE filled the vacuum left by the IPKF, and the situation became even worse: the entirety of Jaffna City and Peninsula, except the large military bases, came under LTTE control. Such Tamil civilians did not have any contact with the Sri Lanka government and did not support the government. Therefore, the answer to this question has to be 'negative'.

5. Did the Sri Lanka government separate the Tamil insurgents from their support base?

Most counterinsurgency theoreticians and practitioners from pioneers such as Thompson¹⁰ and Galula¹¹ to FM 3-24 (US Army)¹² and *Countering Insurgency* (British Army)¹³ stress the importance of a counterinsurgent government separating the insurgents from the people. In the Sri Lankan case, however, the government was unable to achieve anything close to even a minimum degree of such separation during the entire 17 year period discussed in this Thesis.

⁸ See US Army, 2006: 1-20, *Counterinsurgency*. They are explained in detail in pp. 1-21 to 1-24.

⁹ British Army, 2009: 3-2, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

¹⁰ Thompson, 1966: 50-58, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*.

¹¹ Galula, David 1964, *Counter-Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*.

¹² See US Army, 2006: 1-20, *Counterinsurgency*. They are explained in detail in pp. 1-21 to 1-24.

¹³ British Army, 2009: 3-2, Field Manual, Volume 1 Part 10, *Countering Insurgency*.

During the 1977-1983 period Tamil insurgents lived amongst the Tamil people and they were well protected and hardly any were captured by the government. After the 1983 pogrom-riots

the government's military situation worsened, especially in the North and large areas in the East as well. By late-1986 and early-1987 the army was corralled within their camps and could move out only in very strong columns. Obviously, in such a situation there could be no normal contact with the civilian population. Therefore the insurgents *succeeded in separating the government from the Tamil people, the exact opposite of what should have happened in a successful counterinsurgency*. A similar situation prevailed in the Eastern Province too where government forces merely held onto their camps and some of the main roads. This general situation prevailed in the North and East, along with small tactical changes vis-à-vis government-controlled versus LTTE-controlled areas, up till the end of 1994. Therefore, the answer to this question has to be 'negative'.

6. What were the relationships the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations had with the Law?

While many counterinsurgency theoreticians and Manuals advocate that counterinsurgent forces act within the Law, in practice many counterinsurgency campaigns have had difficulties in implementing this. The difficulties faced by the Sri Lanka government have not been very different from those faced by other governments faced by similar situations. In early June 1983 several very harsh provisions of the Emergency Regulations were brought into force by the government. These provisions suspended the need for a Coroner's investigation of persons killed by armed forces and police action. Within Sri Lanka's post-colonial political culture these regulations have meant that the armed forces and police could use deadly force and destroy bodies without any magisterial enquiry.

President Jayewardene's position was that these harsh provisions were necessary to protect police and armed forces personnel from legal action being taken against them. With the escalation of the insurrection after the 1983 pogrom-riots the Emergency Regulations activated in June 1983 continued to as before, and powers were increased. Over the course of the subsequent years extra-judicial killings and "disappearances" of suspected Tamil insurgents began to occur. Therefore it has to be concluded that the Sri Lanka government's counterinsurgency operations led to violations of the strict boundaries of the Law.

7. Did the Tamil Nadu and the Indian central government impact upon the Sri Lanka government's efforts to counter the Tamil secessionist insurrection?

Yes, the Tamil Nadu and Indian Central governments played a crucial role in Sri Lanka. During 1977-1983 the interference was relatively mild. But after the 1983 pogrom-riots the interference from Tamil Nadu and Delhi rose to an unprecedented level.

During 1983-1987 the Indian central government implemented a 'two-track' policy where it built-up the military capabilities of Tamil insurgents (while the Tamil Nadu state government and its people too assisted the Tamil insurgents in numerous ways). Concurrently, India applied intense diplomatic pressure on the Sri Lanka government to agree to very high degrees of devolution of political power. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and his policy advisors were of the opinion that this was the path to diminishing the Tamil insurrection. In July 1987 India intervened directly and coerced Sri Lanka to sign the Indo-Lanka Accord and also forced an Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution (the 13th Amendment). Under the provisions of the 13th Amendment a system of Provincial Councils was created in Sri Lanka. This led to the merging of the Northern and Eastern Provinces and created the North-East Provincial Council (NEPC).

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and members of his government tried very hard to get the LTTE to agree with the terms of the Indo-Lanka Accord and end the secessionist insurrection. But the LTTE attacked the IPKF and re-ignited the insurrection – this time fighting India's armed forces. The LTTE revealed through its actions that it wanted nothing less than a separate state. The LTTE attacked and killed NEPC personnel, all of whom were Tamils who had agreed to a negotiated solution within a united Sri Lanka. Consequently the NEPC functioned for a short time and was then dissolved. And then, till the end of 1994 – the end-date of this Thesis – the insurgency raged in the North and the East and there was no possibility of implementing the Provincial Council system in the North-East.

The IPKF left Sri Lanka in March 1990. Consequent to departure the Indian central government seems to have done a thorough review of its intervention in Sri Lanka. By this time Rajiv Gandhi's party had lost the elections and he was no longer India's Prime Minister. India adopted a "hands-off" approach to Sri Lanka. This was a welcome relief for the Sri Lanka government during 1990-1994. In 1991 the LTTE assassinated Rajiv Gandhi in Tamil Nadu. With this assassination the entire Indian governmental system received a huge shock and realisation dawned that the intervention in Sri Lanka had grievously hurt India's own core

interests. Thenceforth no further Indian intervention took place in Sri Lanka's affairs during the period relevant to this Thesis.

By 1994 large areas of the North and the East and many hundreds of thousands of Tamil people were living under the control of the LTTE. Although the LTTE had not established a separate state nor had they made a unilateral declaration of separate statehood, the LTTE in effect did run something akin to a separate state in large areas of the North and East from 1984 to 1994 (with allowances being made for various operations carried out by the IPKF). 'Dismal failure' are the words that best describe the UNP government's achievements by 1994. And towards the end of 1994 the UNP lost both parliamentary and presidential elections and had to exit government.

By 1994 neither the Sri Lanka government nor the LTTE could be said to have won conclusively. A situation akin to a stalemate existed but the advantage was with the LTTE as it controlled large swathes of land in the Northern and Eastern Provinces and at least 300,000+ Tamil civilians. The LTTE's increase in military capability over ten years is clearly illustrated when its capabilities of 1983 (ambush and killing 13 soldiers) are compared to 1993 (when it attacked large Army-cum-Navy base in Pooneryn and killed at least 650 military personnel and stole truckloads of weapons and ammunition). This being said, however, the Sri Lankan government doggedly hung on and refused to cave-in and as, mentioned earlier, something akin to a stalemate existed at the end of 1994 at which point the UNP is forced to exit government.

6.3: Limitations of this Thesis and Suggestions for further research

This Thesis reveals the need for further research in several areas. Some of these areas branch off directly from this Thesis while others are somewhat distantly connected. First, the need to research the 15 year period from January 1995 to May 2009. This Thesis ends in November 1994. But from January 1995 to May 2009 a great many important military and political events and processes took place. This is an important subject for further research.

Second, the need to research and understand the inherent problems and difficulties governments face when trying to develop political reform packages in ethnically deeply divided societies. The persistent difficulties - discussed to a moderate degree in this Thesis - faced by postcolonial governments of Sri Lanka, including the 1977-1994 period, are good

examples of this. This is a vast and complicated subject which requires volumes of its own and could not be included in this Thesis.

A third area for further research is the growth and development of the Tamil secessionist insurrection. The strategies and operational art of the Tamil insurgency are not analysed in depth in this Thesis. This is due to lack of space as the subject matter of this Thesis is already large and it was not possible to concurrently analyse in depth the Tamil insurgency as well. That subject deserves research in its own right. Some research on the subject has already been published in books and articles but more remains to be done.

A fourth area of research would be the humanitarian issues and human rights violations which have occurred during both the insurrection and government counter actions. While a number of reports and books on this subject have already been published by organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch there is need for more work.

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Sun

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Newspapers published in Britain:

(Note: due to the similarity of their names with some newspapers printed in Sri Lanka, some of the British newspapers have '(London)' following their names. British newspapers such as *The Guardian* do not have any Sri Lankan equivalents and therefore are exempted from this measure.)

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Annexure-1.1

Brief Biographies of some of the main personalities in this Thesis

Amirthalingam, Appapillai: a lawyer by profession and a Hindu Tamil. The Leader of the Opposition for a period of six years and two months in the Parliament of Sri Lanka. This was from August 1977 to October 1983. He was the Leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) from 1977 onwards until killed in 1989. He was killed by the LTTE in 1989. He was 61 years old at his death. He was a long standing Member of Parliament (MP) representing Vaddukkoddai (1956-1970) and Kankasanturai (1977-1983). In 1989 he came to parliament as a member of the National List of the TULF.

Athulathmudali, Lalith: a Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. An MP in Sri Lanka from 1977 to April 1993, when he was assassinated. Born in 1936 November, assassinated in April 1993 (when he was 56 old). He qualified as a Barrister (UK) and later obtained a degree in law from Harvard University (USA). He was made a Presidents' Counsel in Sri Lanka in 1985. He was a member of the UNP and served as a cabinet Minister for a number of subjects such as Education, Trade, Shipping and National Security under President J.R. Jayawardene. He was also a Deputy Minister of Defence and was involved in various operations against the LTTE in the 1980s. Later he formed his own party in 1990 called the Democratic United National Front (DUNF).

Balasingham, Anton: a Sri Lanka Tamil, born in 1938. Died in December 2006 due to serious illness. Balasingham was a British citizen. He was a Journalist until he joined the LTTE. He led the LTTE team at the Thimpu talks in 1985 and was a participant in the negotiations with the Sri Lanka government in 1989. He became the LTTE's main theoretician and strategist from the 1990s onwards.

Chelvanayakam, S. J. V.: a lawyer by profession and a Protestant Christian Sri Lanka Tamil. He was born in March 1898 and died in April 1977 in Jaffna. He was a MP from 1947 to 1952 and represented the Kankasanturai electorate. In subsequent elections from 1956 onwards he was elected again as an MP. Towards the end of 1972 he gave up his seat in Parliament as he was not in favour of the new constitution. He was the Deputy Leader of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) from 1944 to 1949. The ACTC under G.G. Ponnambalam joined with the UNP in 1948. This led Chelvanayakam to form a new party along with others from the ACTC in 1949 and it was called the *Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi* (ITAK). He was its leader until 1972. In 1972 May he together with ITAK and some other Tamil parties formed the Tamil United Front (TUF) with him as leader. During the latter part of the 1970s the TUF changed its name to Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) and Chelvanayakam was its leader until 1977.

Dias Bandaranaike, Sirima R.: a Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. Born in April 1916 and died in October 2000. She became the leader of the SLFP and elected as Prime Minister in 1960 soon after the assassination of her husband S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1959. Thereby she became the first woman Prime Minister in the world. She was in office till 1965, and re-elected again from 1970 to 1977. And 1994-2000. It was during her tenure in office that the 1972 Republican Constitution created.

Dissanayake, Gamini: was born in Kandy, Sri Lanka in October 1942. A Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. A lawyer by profession. Later he obtained an MPhil degree from the University of

Cambridge, UK in International Relations. Gamini Dissanayake played a crucial role in two political events. One was the signing of the 1987 Indo-Lanka Peace Accord, and the other was the impeachment motion against President Premadasa which was aborted. With regards to the latter the UNP expelled him from the party in 1992. At this point he joined the United National Democratic Front (DUNF) newly formed by Lalith Athulathmudali. He was assassinated by a LTTE suicide bomber in October 1994 (when he was 52 years old) at an election rally.

Fernando, Clancy: was born in 1938 and died in 1992 when he was assassinated by an LTTE suicide Bomber. A Sinhalese, religion Roman-Catholic. He served in the Sri Lanka Navy for 35 years and reached the rank of Admiral. He carried out graduate studies in the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington, India, and the National Defence College in New Delhi, India. He was a member of the British Institute of Management as well as the Nautical Institute of the UK. Admiral Fernando was the Commander of the Sri Lanka Navy from November 1991 to November 1992. He was the most senior officer of Sri Lanka's armed forces to be killed on duty.

Gandhi, Rajiv: Was born in August 1944 and died in May 1991 when he was assassinated by a female LTTE suicide bomber in Tamil Nadu, India. He was 46 years old at the time of his death. He began his political career as a member of the Lok Sabha in 1981. He was the Prime Minister of India from October 1984 to December 1989. From 1985 to 1991 he was the President of the Indian National Congress. He was leader of the opposition during December 1989 and December 1990. He was a key leader who was involved in the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka in 1987.

Jayawardene, Junius Richard (JR): was born in September 1906 and died of natural causes in November 1996. A Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. He was a lawyer and began his very long political career as an activist in the Ceylon National Congress (CNC) in 1938. He joined the UNP when it was formed in 1946, and was Finance Minister in the first Cabinet of Ceylon in 1947 under D.S. Senanayake. He was in the opposition from 1956-1965. He was a cabinet Minister in the UNP government of 1965 to 1970. Leader of the Opposition from 1970 to 1977. In the parliamentary elections of July 1977 the UNP under Jayewardene's leadership won a huge victory obtaining 5/6th of parliamentary seats. He became the Prime Minister. He was in that position from July 1977 to February 1978. In February 1978 he amended the Constitution and created an Executive Presidency and thereby became the first Executive President of Sri Lanka. In 1982 he was re-elected for a second term of six years until 1989. The 1983 riots against the Tamils and the signing of the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord took place during his tenure in office.

Kobbekaduwa, Denzil: was born on the 27 July 1940 and died on 8 August 1992. A Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. Lt. General Denzil Kobbekaduwa was a much loved, very popular, respected and highly decorated officer of the Sri Lanka Army. He was killed when the vehicle he was in went over an LTTE land mine. He joined the army as a cadet officer in May 1960. Thereafter, he went for training to RMA, Sandhurst, England. He was a graduate of the British Army Staff College, Camberley and the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS). In 1990 he became a Major General, and in 1992 he was posthumously promoted Lt. General.

Mathew, Cyril: A Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. Was a cabinet Minister of the UNP government under President J. R. Jayawardene from 1977 onwards and during the 1980s. He was the MP for the Kelaniya electorate and was well known for his stance against Tamil Eelam. In 1984 he was expelled from the cabinet as well as the UNP by President J. R.

Jayewardene due to his hardline against the Tamil community. Died of natural causes in 1989 at the age of 77.

Prabhakaran, Velupillai: A Tamil Hindu. Born in November 1954 and killed by Sri Lanka Army at age 54 in May 2009. At the age of around 18 years in 1972 he, along with other Tamil youth, formed the Tamil New Tigers (TNT). In 1976 May the TNT was renamed as the LTTE and Prabhakaran was its leader until his death.

Premadasa, Ranasinghe: A Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. Born in June 1924, Premadasa was a member of the UNP and served as a cabinet Minister. He was Prime Minister of Sri Lanka from February 1978 to March 1989 (under President JR Jayawardene). From January 1989 he was elected as the President of Sri Lanka and in office until May 1993. Premadasa was assassinated by a suicide bomber of the LTTE during the UNP May Day procession, Colombo, in 1993. Was 68 years when he was killed.

Wijeratne, Ranjan: A Sinhalese, religion Buddhism. Born on 4 April 1931 and was a planter by profession. He started out as a politician in 1988. Just prior to this he worked in high posts as a public servant and was also a commissioned officer in the Volunteer force of the Sri Lanka Army. In 1988 he joined the UNP and served both as its Chairman and General Secretary. He entered parliament as a UNP national list member in 1989 and was a Cabinet Minister under President Premadasa. He served as Minister of State for Defence, Plantation Industries and Foreign Affairs. Killed by LTTE IED in Colombo, March 1991. Posthumously promoted General.

Anexure-3.1

Empirical Details of Increasing Deterioration of 'Law & Order' from May to Mid-July 1983: *the impact of Increased Tamil Insurgent Attacks & retaliatory anti-Tamil mini Riots by Sinhalese Mobs*

Anti-Tamil Student Unrest at Peradeniya University, Kandy, 11 May – 16 July 1983

In May 1983 anti-Tamil agitations began occurring at the University of Peradeniya, Kandy where large numbers of Tamil students lived in residential halls. On the night of Wednesday 11 May 1983 organised attacks were made by some Sinhala students on Tamil students staying in residential halls. On 12 May a Tamil Lecturer was assaulted.¹ From Friday 13 May onwards about 1,200 Tamil students fled the University in great hurry and went to Jaffna and other parts of the country.² Many Sinhala students and lecturers helped and protected Tamil students and assisted them to travel to safety. This was gratefully acknowledged by Tamil students who gathered together at Jaffna University on 15 May.³ The Tamil students were eager to resume their studies and returned to Peradeniya University at the beginning of June.⁴ But in the face of fresh intimidation by agitators, Tamil students again hurriedly fled to their homes on 12 June.⁵ The University was closed for an indefinite period from 13 July onwards.⁶ The Vice-Chancellor said that politically motivated individuals were playing a role in inciting the students to carry on with their demonstrations.⁷ Although not specifically mentioned in the press, when assessed contextually, this was a reference to anti-Tamil Sinhala agitators, both students and non-students.

¹ *Sun*, 16 May 1983, 'Students Return: All is Calm at the Campus'. This headline was misleading as subsequent events revealed. This headline was meant to have a calming effect on the readers. The text of the complete article reveals many details of the role played by *agent provocateur* Sinhala students.

² *Sun*, 19 May 1983, 'Team to probe campus incidents'.

³ *The Island*, 16 May 1983, Resolution Passed at Jaffna Varsity Premises: 300 P'deniya Tamil U'grads thank Sinhala Dons, Colleagues'. In the present author's assessment these were well-meaning acts by Sinhalese students and staff who were deeply embarrassed by the actions of the Sinhalese attackers, and, grateful Tamil students expressing their gratitude. Both groups wanted reconciliation and to resume their interrupted university studies as soon as possible. But there were much more stronger and sinister forces – i.e. Tamil insurgents and Sinhalese planning anti-Tamil riots – who were at work in the greater society *and* within the student body and it is they who eventually won. During the subsequent years the Universities were sometimes closed for months at a stretch. Many of the Tamil students could not resume their university studies: some joined the insurgents, others migrated or fled abroad, others gave-up their studies and found employment in Sri Lanka or abroad.

⁴ *The Island*, 12 June 1983, 'Alleged assault on P'deniya Tamil students: Fresh tensions as bid to boycott lecturers aborts'. Other incidents were reported from three more student resident halls and an attempt had been made to set fire to the doors of two residential rooms (which probably had Tamil occupants, although this is not mentioned in the newspaper). On the night of 8 June four Tamil students were assaulted. When the Vice-Chancellor of the University suspended a few students related to incidents which had occurred many months earlier, many of the rest of the students began vociferous demonstrations on Campus and clashes between student groups also began to occur around 11 June.

⁵ *The Island*, 12 June 1983, 'Alleged assault on P'deniya Tamil students: Fresh tensions as bid to boycott lecturers aborts'.

⁶ *The Times (London)* 18 July 1983, 'Armed police in Sri Lanka close university'. By mid-July 1983 student demonstrations on campus were assessed by the University authorities as uncontrollable.

⁷ *Ceylon Daily News*, 12 July 1983, 'Peradeniya varsity closed indefinitely: All students ordered to leave campus', and, *Sun*, 12 July 1983, 'Demos getting out of control: Peradeniya University closed'.

Small scale anti-Tamil riots and Disorder in Kurunegala, Gampaha, Anuradhapura, Kandy, Kalutara, Nuwara Eliya and Pollonnaruwa Districts

The Table below gives details of small scale anti-Tamil rioting and disorder against Tamils in Districts throughout the country. Colombo City and Trincomalee City are dealt with separately, later on.

Table 3A: Small scale anti-Tamil riots and Disorder in the Country (excluding Colombo & Trincomalee), 1 - 7 June 1983

Date	Incident	Govt Response (as mentioned in the press)	Location & District	Province	Source
1 June	Arson & damage to Vavuniya Bazaar. At least 100 buildings affected.	Curfew Imposed	Vavuniya Town, Vavuniya	North	(a)
2 June	Riotous mobs break shops and attempt to loot.	Police act firmly. 1-day curfew declared	Kurunegala Town, Kurunegala	North-Western	(b)
2-3 June	Arson	Police act firmly	Divulapitiya, Gampaha	Western	(c)
2-3 June	Attempted arson	Police act firmly	Minuwangoda, Gampaha	Western	(c)
2-3 June	Attempted arson	Police act firmly	Negombo, Gampaha	Western	(c)
2 June	Colombo-Jaffna train's Tamil passengers assaulted	n.a.	Talawa, Anuradhapura	North-Central	(d)
4 June	Tamil Doctor's house attacked, robbed, and burnt. Doctor injured	Kurunegala Police rush to house	Kurunegala Town, Kurunegala	North-Western	(e)
2-6 June	23 shops burnt and destroyed	n.a.	Kurunegala Town, Kurunegala	North-Western	(f)
Between 2-6 June	Shop set on fire	Police act rapidly and limit damage	Teldeniya, Kandy	Central	(f)
Between 2-6 June	1 man killed by petrol bomb	n.a.	Negombo, Gampaha	Western	(f)
6 June	3 Tamil & 2 Muslim shops burnt by mob	Curfew declared. Police patrol	Panadura, Kalutara	Western	(g)
Between 2-7 June	Arson and looting	n.a.	Talawakelle, Nuwara Eliya	Central	(h)
Between 2-7 June	Arson and looting	n.a.	Nawalapitiya, Nuwara Eliya	Central	(h)
Between 2-5 June	Trains attacked	n.a.	Moragollagama, Kurunegala	North-Western	(i)

Between 2-5 June	Trains attacked	n.a.	Hingurakgoda, Pollonnaruwa	North-Central	(i)
Between 2-5 June	Passengers in 3 trains moving between Colombo-Jaffna attacked	Police Investigate	Ganewatte, Anuradhapura	North-Central	(j)
6 June	Bomb exploded in Batticaloa-Jaffna Bus. Driver injured	n.a.	Jayanthipura, Pollonnaruwa	North-Central	(k)
n.a. – not available					
Sources: Table 3A: *as reported in the press					
(a) <i>The Island</i> , 2 June, 'New market ablaze: Two Airmen shot dead, 2 terrorists captured: Curfew in Vavuniya'; <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 4 June, 'Damage toll taken as Vavuniya returns to normal'.					
(b) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 3 June, 'Looters took to their heels'.					
(c) <i>The Island</i> , 4 June, 'Police deployed to curb violence: K'gala. Divulapitiya, Negombo'.					
(d) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 4 June, 'Passengers assaulted'.					
(e) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 13 June, 'Doctor pays tribute to K'gala police' [Note: 'K'gala' was a shortening of 'Kurunegala']					
(f) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 8 June, 'Over hundred arrested'.					
(g) <i>Sun</i> , 7 June, 'Sporadic incidents' and <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 7 June, 'Five Shops gutted'.					
(h) <i>The Island</i> , 8 June, 'Security intensified in Colombo South'.					
(i) <i>The Island</i> , 6 June, 'Special police squads to round up trouble makers: Hunt on for wanted criminals'.					
(j) <i>The Sunday Observer</i> , 6 June, 'Army, Navy keep order'.					
(k) <i>The Island</i> , 7 June, 'Driver hurt as bomb explodes'.					

Table 3B: Anti-Tamil Disorder and Mini-Riots in Colombo, 2nd to 8th June 1983

Date	Incident	Govt Response (as mentioned in the press)	Source
Between 2-5 June	Mob sets Pharmacy on fire. Knife attack on owner & son in Ratmalana, Colombo	Curfew imposed	(a)
6 June	2 Houses attacked & robbed Dehiwela, Colombo	Police act firmly. 1-day curfew declared	(b)
Approx. 7 June	arson and looting Bambalapitiya, Colombo	Police act firmly	(b)
Approx. 7 June	arson and looting Wellawatte, Colombo	Police act firmly	(b)
Approx. 7 June	arson and looting Dehiwela, Colombo	Police act firmly	(b)
Approx. 7 June	arson and looting Ratmalana, Colombo	n.a.	(b)
Between 2-7 June	Doctor attacked with knife; house attacked by mob in Mt. Lavinia, Colombo	Police action praised by Doctor	(c)
8 June	Two bombs thrown at All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTC) leader Kumar Ponnambalam's House located in Colombo-7 (an elite area of the City), Colombo City	n.a.	(d)
n.a. – not available			
Sources for Table 3B *as reported in the press			
(a) <i>The Island</i> , 6 June, 'Pharmacy set on fire: owner, son attacked'			

(b) <i>The Island</i> , 8 June , 'Security intensified in Colombo South'.
(c) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 8 June , 'Over hundred arrested'
(d) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 9 June , 'Two bombs hurled at TC leaders house'.

Table 3C: Anti-Tamil Violence and Mini-Riots in Trincomalee, 2nd - 11th June 1983

Date	Incident	Govt Response (as mentioned in the press)	Source
Between 2-6 June	Arson, murder, looting, damage to property. Fishing boats & equipment destroyed. Reports of a Tamil youth shot dead, a stabbing incident, a Mill, bookshop, saloon attacked and damaged. Trincomalee town and environs.	Navy, army and police deployed on 'Internal Security' posture patrolled the area	(a)
5 June	Pillayar Kovil in China Bay & Mansion Hotel on Main street attacked & damaged by mobs. Fires in various parts of Trincomalee town and environs.	Navy, army and police deployed on 'Internal Security' posture patrolled the area	(a)
Between 7-9 June	A Tamil youth stabbed to death, Mullipuram in Kantalai, Trincomalee	n.a.	(b)
Between 7-9 June	A Tamil youth working in shop shot dead by gang who came to loot the shop. Morawewa, Trincomalee	n.a.	(b)
9 June	Sub-Postmaster, a Tamil, shot at by gang at Uppuvelli, Trincomalee	n.a.	(b)
11 June	Two bombs thrown at Trincomalee MP Sampanthan's house, Trincomalee Town.	n.a.	(c)
n.a. - not available			
Sources:		*as reported in the press	
(a) <i>The Island</i> , 7 June 1987, 'Situation still tense in Trincomalee'.			
(b) <i>Sun</i> , 10 June , 'Trinco returns to normal'.			
(c) <i>The Island</i> , 12 June , 'Two bombs flung at Trinco MP's house'.			

Table 3D: Evidence of Government's Public Order Actions before July 1983 Riots - Examples of Armed Forces' Deployed on 'Internal Security' to assist the Police, 2nd- 7th June, 1983

Date	Deployment	Location & District	Province	Source
2-5 June	Army assisted Police	Kurunegala, Kurunegala District	North-Western	(a)
2-5 June	Army assisted Police	Kandy, Kandy District	Central	(a)
2-5 June	Navy assisted Police	Peliyagoda, Gampaha District	Western	(a)
2-5 June	Navy assisted Police	Negombo, Gampaha District	Western	(a)
2-4 June	Army &/or Navy assisted Police	Ratnapura, Ratnapura District	Uva	(b)
2-4 June	Army &/or Navy assisted Police	Balangoda, Ratnapura District	Uva	(b)
2-4 June	Army &/or Navy assisted Police	Kalutara, Kalutara District	Western	(b)
2-4 June	Army &/or Navy assisted Police	Galle, Galle District	Southern	(b)
2-5 June	Police search vehicles	Divulapitiya,	Western	(c)

2-5 June	Police search vehicles	Gampaha District		
		Minuwangoda, Gampaha District	Western	(c)
2-5 June	Police search vehicles	Kurunegala, Kurunegala District	North-Western	(c)
2-7 June	Preventive arrests	Kurunegala, Kurunegala District	North-Western	(d)
2-7 June	Preventive arrests	Trincomalee, Trincomalee District	East	(d)
2-7 June	Preventive arrests	Negombo, Gampaha District	Western	(d)
2-7 June	Preventive arrests	Mt. Lavinia, Colombo District	Western	(d)
2-7 June	Preventive arrests	Panadura, Kalutara District	Western	(d)
2-7 June	Police open fire on rioters	Kurunegala, Kurunegala District	North-Western	(d)
	Sources: See Annex 3.1	n.a. - not available		
Sources:				
(a) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 6 June, 'Round up criminal elements - Actg IGP'.				
(b) <i>The Sunday Observer</i> , 5 June, 'Army, Navy keep order'.				
(c) <i>The Island</i> , 6 June, 'Special police squads to round up trouble makers: Hunt on for wanted criminals'.				
(d) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 8 June, 'Over hundred arrested'.				

Table 3E: Resurgence of Anti-Tamil Disorder and Mini-Riots in Trincomalee and environs, from approx. 13 June to 2 July 1983

Date	Incident	Govt Measures (as reported in the press)	Location & District	Source
13 June	5 bomb attacks; Prima Factory bus stopped and workers assaulted	12-hour curfew (Dusk-to-Dawn) increased to 19-hour curfew .	Trincomalee town and environs	(a)
By 15 Jun	Rioting & disorder in Trincomalee	50 rioters arrested	Trincomalee	(b)
27 June	High increase in rioting. Many shops set on fire. A 'mini-war' like situation reported in the main market area; 2 Hindu temples set on fire	Army and Navy deployed to restore order. Open fire on rioters. Indefinite curfew declared.	Trincomalee town	(c)
Up to 30 Jun	By 30 th June nine (09) people had been killed; entire rows of shops set on fire; in Uppuvelli area 15 houses set on fire	48-hour curfew declared. Police, Navy and Army patrols arrested 75 persons	Trincomalee and Uppuvelli	(d)
30 Jun	20 houses at Nochchikulam and 20 houses in China Bay set on fire	n.a.	Nochchikulam and China Bay, Trincomalee	(e)
27-30 Jun	Serious disorder and rioting continued	48-hour curfew extended continuously for 65 hours. Lifted for 6-hours and then re-imposed.	Trincomalee town	(f)
Up to 30 Jun	Serious disorder and rioting continued	By 1 st July 300 persons under arrest. 100 in Police custody & 200 in army custody	Trincomalee town	(g)
By 2 Jul	Serious disorder and rioting continued. By 2 nd July sixteen (16) people reported killed. Actual number may have been higher.	Civil Administration in Trincomalee	Trincomalee	(e)

		suspended. Navy Commander Rear-Admiral Asoka De Silva appointed 'Coordinating Officer' of Trincomalee District		
n.a. – not available				
Sources:				
(a) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 15 June , '19-hour curfew in Trinco'.				
(b) <i>Observer</i> , 15 June , '50 held over Trinco violence'				
(c) <i>The Island</i> , 29 June , 'Trinco mini-war: Army, Police open fire'.				
(d) <i>Ceylon Daily News</i> , 30 June , 'Trinco death toll now nine: President orders crackdown on violence'.				
(e) <i>Sun</i> , 2 July , 'Civilian Administration Suspended: Navy Commander Takes Over Trinco'.				
(f) <i>Sun</i> , 1 July , 'Trinco Curfew Lifted for 6 Hours'				
(g) <i>The Island</i> , 1 July , 'Trinco violence: 300 in custody'.				
(h) <i>The Island</i> , 9 July , 'Trinco situation must not be allowed to take turn as Jaffna: Amirthalingam'.				

Annexure-4.1

Guerrilla Attacks by Tamil Insurgents. To enable the reader to obtain an overview of Tamil insurgents' tactics.

Insurgent Attacks from October 1983 to end-1984

Table 4A: Insurgent Robberies (mostly targeting Government Banks) in the North & East, Oct. 1983 to Aug. 1984

Incident	Target of Robbery	Date	District	Province	Source
10 armed youth attacked Batticaloa Katchcheri (i.e. the Govt's main Administrative Office). They stole 99 shotguns and cash (Rs.12,000)	Batticaloa Katchcheri	17 Oct 1983	Batticaloa	East	(a)
A 10-12 armed gang robbed cash (Rs.238,000)	Not mentioned	14 Nov 1983	not mentioned	North	(b)
4 armed youth robbed cash, Rs. 1,392,000.	General Post Office, Jaffna	14 Nov 1983			(b)
Peoples' Bank robbed of Jewellery (Rs. 36 million) and Cash (Rs.240,000)	Kattankudy Branch	mid-Jan 1984	Batticaloa	East	(c)
25 strong gang rob Peoples' Bank of Jewellery (Rs. 5 million)	Chankani Branch	mid-Feb 1984	Jaffna	North	(d)
25 strong gang armed with machine guns rob Peoples' Bank of Jewellery (Rs. 12 million)	Kinniya Branch	22 Feb 1984	Trincomalee	East	(e)
Armed gang rob 2 safes from Bank of Ceylon. Safes abandoned when fired upon	Velannai Branch, Kayts	24 Feb 1984	Jaffna	North	(f)
Armed gang rob Bank of Ceylon of cash (Rs. 950,000)	Point Pedro Branch	9 Apr 1984	Jaffna	North	(g)
15 strong armed gang rob Bank of Ceylon of cash (Rs.1.2 million)	Stanley Road Branch, Jaffna Town	10 Apr 1984	Jaffna	North	(h)
Bank of Ceylon robbed of cash (Rs.1.4 million) & foreign currency (Rs.38,000)	Kilinochchi Branch	early-Jul 1984	Kilinochchi	North	(i)
A gang of 50 rob Bank of Ceylon of two Safes and 6 guns. Safes happened to be empty	Jaffna Branch	Early-Aug 1984	Jaffna	North	(j)

Sources:

- (a) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 18 October 1983, 'Armed gang gets away with 99 shotguns'.
 (b) *The Island*, 18 November 1983, 'Youth steal Rs. 3.8 lakhs in the North'.
 (c) *Sun*, 14 January 1984, 'Armed gang hits Kattankudy People's Bank: Biggest Jewellery Heist in History: Haul over Rs. 36 million'.
 (d) *Daily Mirror*, 15 February 1984, 'Armed gang holds up People's Bank again: Five branches closed immediately'.
 (e) *Daily Mirror*, 23 February 1984, 'Kinniya Bank hit for Rs.12m. by 25 member gang'.
 (f) *The Island*, 25 February 1984, Gunfight at Pannai causeway: Police fire at getaway terrorists: one dead, safe recovered'.
 (g) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 10 April 1984, 'Daring hold-up of Bank of Ceylon at Point Pedro: Youths get away with Rs. 9.5 lakhs'.
 (h) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 11 April 1984, 'Curfew in Jaffna: Lalith over radio...We must refuse to be

(i) *Daily Mirror*, 3 July 1984, 'Armed youth rob Killinochchi Bank'.(j) *The Island*, 8 August 1984, 'Terrorists attack Jaffna bank: Take safes with no cash'.**Table 4B: Insurgents Attacks on Police Stations, 1984**

Target of Attack	Date	District	Province	Source
Police Station, Ampara	Approx. 2-5 Jul 1984	Ampara	East	(a)
Police Station, Oddusuddan	5 Aug 1984	Mullaittivu	North	(b)
Police Station, Chunnakam	8 Jul 1984	Jaffna	North	(c)
Police Station, Kayts	13 Aug 1984	Jaffna	North	(d)
Police Station, Valvedditturai	14 Aug 1984	Jaffna	North	(e)
Police Station, Kayts	14 Aug 1984	Jaffna	North	(f)
Police Station, Kayts	21 Aug 1984	Jaffna	North	(g)
Police Station, Kalawanchikudy	22 Sep 1984	Batticaloa	East	(h)
Police Station, Point Pedro	4 October 1984	Jaffna	North	(i)
Police Station, Chavakachcheri	20 Nov 1984	Jaffna	North	(j)

Sources:

(a) *The Island*, 6 July 1984, '20 guns robbed from police station'.(b) *Sun*, 6 August 1984, 'Several Casualties: Security forces quell terrorist attacks'.(c) *Sun*, 9 August 1984, '70 Terrorists Killed in Confrontations: Security forces repulse terrorist attacks'.(d) *Sun*, 14 August 1984, '31 guerrillas killed in three incidents within 24 hours: Police repel terrorist attack on Kayts station'.(e) *Daily Mirror*, 15 August 1984, 'Fresh attacks on police posts in North repulsed'.(f) *Daily Mirror*, 15 August 1984, 'Fresh attacks on police posts in North repulsed'.(g) *Daily Mirror*, 22 August 1984, 'Attack repulsed for third time'.(h) *The Sunday Observer*, 23 September 1984, 'Two dead in police station attack'.(i) *Sun*, 5 October 1984, 'Forces repulse attack on Pt. Pedro police station'.(j) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 22 November 1984, 'Storming of Chavakachcheri station was planned to the minute: Shock attack gave police no chance'.**Table 4C: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1984**

Location	Killed & Injured	Date	District	Province	Source
Pt. Pedro-Valvedditturai	4 STF (killed)	2 Sep 1984	Jaffna	North	(a)
Alampil	9 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured)	10 Sep 1984	Mullaittivu	North	(b)
Kilinochchi	2 Police (killed), 4 Police (injured)	17 Sep 1984	Kilinochchi	North	(c)
Mannar-Murunkan road	1 Army (killed), 7 Army (injured)	4 Dec 1984	Mannar	North	(d)
Kalawanchikudy	8 Police (killed), 1 civ (killed)	18 Dec 1984	Batticaloa	East	(e)
Padaviya-Pulmoddai road	4 Army (killed)	(probably) 19 Dec 1984	Mullaittivu	North	(f)

Note: STF were the Special Task Force, a commando type unit of the Police.

Sources:

(a) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 3 September 1984, 'Uneasy calm after North explosion'.(b) *Sun*, 11 September 1984, '9 soldiers killed in mine blast'.(c) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 18 September 1984, 'Policemen, terrorists killed'.(d) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 5 December 1984, '12 terrorists die in shoot-out: Landmine kills soldier'.

injures seven'.

(e) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 19 December 1984, 'Were they lured into a trap?: Terrorists landmine kills eight policemen'.

(f) *Sun*, 20 December 1984, 'Four soldiers killed'.

Insurgent Attacks During Year 1985

Table 4D: Insurgents Attacks on Police Stations, Army & Navy Camps, 1985

Target of Attack	Date	District	Province	Source
Police Station, Pulmoddai	15 Jan 1985	Trincomalee	East	(a)
SLAF Aircraft, Palali Airfield (RPG used for first time in Sri Lanka)	23 Jan 1985	Jaffna	North	(b)
Army Camp, Kokkilai	approx. 18 Feb 1985	Welioya	North	(c)
Police Station, Kilinochchi	1 Mar 1985	Kilinochchi	North	(d)
Navy Base, Karainagar	3 May 1985	Jaffna	North	(e)
Police Station, Mannar	10 May 1985	Mannar	North	(f)
Sacred Bo Tree, Anuradhapura, and the killing of many civilian pilgrims who were in the vicinity	14 May 1985	Anuradhapura	North-Central	(g)
Police Station, Eravur	2 Sep 1985	Batticaloa	East	(h)
4 attacks on Police Station, Vavuniya	From 14 to 30 Sep 1985	Vavuniya	North	(i)
4 attacks on Police Station, Pottuvil	From approx. 16 Sep to 1 Oct 1985	Ampara	East	(j)
Police Station, Kilinochchi	23 Sep 1985	Kilinochchi	North	(k)
Police Station, Villachchiya	27 Sep 1985	Anuradhapura	North-Central	(l)
Police Station, Vavuniya	27 Oct 1985	Vavuniya	North	(m)
Army Camp, Tondaimanar	30 Oct 1985	Jaffna	North	(n)
Police Station, Kuchchaveli	Around 5 Nov 1985	Trincomalee	East	(o)
Police Station Vellavelli	24 Nov 1985	Batticaloa	East	(p)

Note: RPG means Rocket Propelled Grenade

Sources:

(a) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 16 January 1985, 'Pulmoddai police repulse attack'.

(b) *The Island*, 24 January 1985, 'Terrorists shoot rockets at army plane'.

(c) *Sun*, 20 February 1985, 'After 5-hour gun battle: Posse of soldiers rout the Tigers'.

(d) *The Island*, 2 March 1985, 'Head-on clash with security forces: Terrorists killed in Kilinochchi Police station siege'.

(e) *The Sunday Observer*, 5 May 1985, '30 Terrorists, 3 Navy men killed: Attack on Karainagar Naval Base repulsed'.

(f) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 13 May 1985, 'Two hundred terrorists took part in Mannar attack'.

(g) *The Island*, 16 May 1985, 'Anuradhapura death toll 146'.

(h) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 4 September 1985, 'Twin strike by Tigers in North and East: Terrorists kill two TULF ex-MPs & seven policemen'.

(i) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 1 October 1985, 'Terrorists attack Vavuniya police with 500 men'. [Note: this news item mentions 4 attacks on Vavuniya police spread over 16 days. The last on 30 Sep 1985.]

(j) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 2 October 1985, 'Routed terrorists escape by sea: Hit-and-run attack on Pottuvil'. [Note: this news item mentions 4 attacks on Pottuvil police spread over 2 weeks.]

(k) *Sun*, 25 September 1985, 'First major violation of extended ceasefire: Massive attack on Kilinochchi'.

(l) *The Island*, 28 September 1985, 'Mortars used in surprise attack: Security forces repulse attack on Villachchiya'.

(m) *Sun*, 28 October 1985, 'Vavuniya police station attacked: Four terrorists shot dead in attempted ambush'.

(n) *The Island*, 31 October 1985, 'Terrorist attack on army camp repulsed'.

(o) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 6 November 1995, 'Attack on police station repulsed in 90-minute battle: Terrorists routed at Kuchchaveli'.

(p) *The Island*, 25 November 1985, 'In B'caloa: One-hour-shoot-out: Terrorist attack on Wellawali police repulsed'.

Table 4E: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1985

Location	Killed & Injured	Date	District	Province	Source
Train on 'Mankulam-Murigandy track	28 Army (killed), 17 civs (killed)	19 Jan 1985	Mullaattivu	North	(a)
Kalawanchikudy	3 police (killed)	23 Jan 1985	Batticaloa	East	(b)
Eastern Province	9 STF (killed)	3 Apr 1985	East	East	(c)
Dehiwatte	4 Army (killed)	20 Aug 1985	Trincomalee	East	(d)
Palampattaru	6 Navy (killed), 1 civ (killed), 2 Navy (injured)	27 Aug 1985	Trincomalee	East	(e)
Komari	5 Army (injured)	30 Aug 1985	Ampara	East	(f)
Pollonnaruwa-Batticaloa road	5 Army (killed), 4 Army (injured)	4 Sep 1985	Batticaloa	East	(g)
Pollonnaruwa-Batticaloa road	5 Army (killed)	4 Sep 1985	Batticaloa	East	(h)
Wilgamvehera	3 Army (killed) 4 Army (injured)	4 Sep 1985	Trincomalee	East	(i)
Punani	5 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured)	5 Sep 1985	Batticaloa	East	(j)
Morawewa	3 Army (injured)	15 Sep 1985	Trincomalee	East	(k)
Siripura	3 Army (injured)	24 Sep 1985	Trincomalee	East	(l)
Cheddikulam	3 Army (killed), 4 Army (injured)	24 Oct 1985	Vavuniya	North	(m)
Bakkiella	6 Police (killed), 2 Police (injured)	28 Oct 1985	Ampara	East	(n)
Sandiveli	2 Police injured	28 Oct 1985	Batticaloa	East	(o)
Palampattaru	5 Navy (killed), 2 civ (killed)	31 Oct 1985	Trincomalee	East	(p)
Trikonamadu	2 Army (killed), 4 Army (injured)	1 Nov 1985	Pollonnaruwa	North-Central	(q)
Seruwila	7 Police (killed)	6 Nov 1985	Trincomalee	East	(r)
Verugal	4 Army (killed)	6 Nov 1985	Trincomalee	East	(s)
Bar Road Batticaloa	4 Police (killed), 2 Police (injured)	16 Nov 1985	Batticaloa	East	(t)
Kokkuttoduvai	6 Army (killed), 7 Army (injured)	23 Nov 1985	Welioya	North	(u)
Kaluwanchikudi	STF none (killed)	23 Nov 1985	Batticaloa	East	(v)
Dehiwatte-Kantale Road	5 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured), 1 civ (killed)	3 Dec 1985	Trincomalee	East	(w)

Note: 'civ' means civilian.

Sources:

- (a) *The Island*, 22 January 1985, 'Yal Devi explosion: Death toll now 48'.
 (b) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 24 March 1985, 'Landmine kills 3 policemen'.
 (c) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 4 April, 1985, 'Landmine blast kills 9 policemen'.
 (d) *The Island*, 21 August 1985, 'Landmine kills 4 soldiers'.
 (e) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 28 August 1985, 'Landmine kills six sailors and woman in Trinco'.
 (f) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 31 August 1985, 'Five soldiers injured in landmine blast'.
 (g) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 5 September 1985, 'Five soldiers killed, 4 hurt in mine blast'.
 (h) *Sun*, 5 September 1985, 'As violence escalates in the East: Landmines kill eight soldiers'.
 (i) *Sun*, 5 September 1985, 'As violence escalates in the East: Landmines kill eight soldiers'.
 (j) *Sun*, 15 Sep 1985, '16 Hour Curfew in Trinco'.
 (k) *The Island*, 17 September 1985, 'Landmine blows up jeep: three soldiers injured'.
 (l) *Sun*, 25 September 1985, 'First major violation of extended ceasefire: Massive attack on Kilinochchi'.
 (m) *Sun*, 25 October 1985, '3 soldiers killed in blast'.
 (n) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 29 October 1985, 'Six policemen killed by terrorist landmine'.

- (o) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 29 October 1985, 'Six policemen killed by terrorist landmine'.
- (p) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 2 November 1985, 'Landmines kill navy wife & child, seven servicemen'.
- (q) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 2 November 1985, 'Landmines kill navy wife & child, seven servicemen'.
- (r) *The Island*, 7 November 1985, 'Two landmine explosions in Trinco & B'caloa: 7 policemen and four soldiers killed'.
- (s) *The Island*, 7 November 1985, 'Two landmine explosions in Trinco & B'caloa: 7 policemen and four soldiers killed'.
- (t) *The Sunday Observer*, 17 November 1985, 4 policemen 9 terrorists killed'.
- (u) *Weekend*, 24 November 1985, 'Militants wage war after letter to Delhi: Six soldiers killed in Mullaitivu ambush'.
- (v) *Weekend*, 24 November 1985, 'Militants wage war after letter to Delhi: Six soldiers killed in Mullaitivu ambush'.
- (w) *Sun*, 4 December 1985, 'Five soldiers killed in mine blast'.

Insurgent Attacks During Year 1986

Table 4F: Insurgents Attacks against Police, Army, Navy and Air Force Camps, Stations & Establishments, 1986

Target of Attack	Date	District	Province	Source
Police Station, Vellaveli	24 Jan 1986	Batticaloa	East	(a)
Army camp, Navatkuli	24 Jan 1986	Jaffna	North	(b)
Army camp, Kilinochchi	25 Jan 1986	Kilinochchi	North	(c)
Army convoy, Dharmapuram	31 Jan 1986	Kilinochchi	North	(d)
Police Station, Kuchchaveli	20 Feb 1986	Trincomalee	East	(e)
Police Station, Mannar	25 Feb 1986	Mannar	North	(f)
Police Station, Maha Vilachchiya	25 & 27 Feb 1986	Anuradhapura	North-Central	(g)
Navy Craft destroyed [sea-mine], Nainativu	3 Mar 1986	Jaffna	North	(h)
Palali Runway, Palali Air Base	13 Mar 1986	Jaffna	North	(i)
Police Station, Vavuniya	16 Mar 1986	Vavuniya	North	(j)
Naval Base, Karainagar	28 Mar 1986	Jaffna	North	(k)
Army Camp, Point Pedro	28 Mar 1986	Jaffna	North	(k)
Police Station, Valvedditturai	2 Apr 1986	Jaffna	North	(l)
Police Station, Kilinochchi	2 Apr 1986	Kilinochchi	North	(l)
Army Camp, Tondaimanar	7 Apr 1986	Jaffna	North	(m)
Army Camp, Kilinochchi (3-day attack)	4-6 Jun 1986	Kilinochchi	North	(n)
Army Camp, Kilinochchi	8 Jun 1986	Kilinochchi	North	(o)
Army Camp, Kilinochchi	19 Jun 1986	Kilinochchi	North	(p)
Navy Base, Karainagar	29 Jul 1986	Jaffna	North	(q)
Police Station, Kalkudah	21 Aug 1986	Batticaloa	East	(r)
Police Station, Jaffna	24 Aug	Jaffna	North	(s)
Army Base, Palali	31 Aug 1986	Jaffna	North	(t)
Mannar-Mainland Causeway	3 Sep 1986	Mannar	North	(u)
SLAF aircraft, damaged by RPG.	4 Sep 1986	Batticaloa	East	(v)
Police Station, Oddusuddan	7 Sep 1986	Mullaitivu	North	(w)
Police living quarters, Pannai	7 Sep 1986	Jaffna	North	(w)
Army Camp, Jaffna Fort	7 Sep 1986	Jaffna	North	(w)
Army Camp, Point Pedro	8 Sep 1986	Jaffna	North	(x)
Police Station, Point Pedro	8 Sep 1986	Jaffna	North	(x)
Police Station, Tondaimanar	8 Sep 1986	Jaffna	North	(x)
Army Camp, Jaffna Fort	8 Sep 1986	Jaffna	North	(x)
Army Camp, Nilaveli	24 Sep 1986	Trincomalee	East	(y)
Police Station, Kalmunai	17 Oct 1986	Batticaloa	East	(z)
Police Station, Akkaraipattu	1 Nov 1986	Ampara	East	(aa)
Army Base, Elephant Pass (Mortar fire)	15 Nov 1986	Jaffna	North	(bb)
Army Camp, Tondaimanar	15 Nov 1986	Jaffna	North	(bb)
Police Station, Mollipotana	25 Nov 1986	Trincomalee	East	(cc)
Army Camp, Wilgamvehera	7 Dec 1986	Trincomalee	East	(dd)

Sources:

- (a) *The Sunday Observer*, 26 January 1986, 'Police station attacked'.
 (b) *The Sunday Observer*, 26 January 1986, 'Attack on Navatkuli army camp repulsed'.
 (c) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 27 January 1986, 'Armoured thrust at K'nochchi smashes TELO attack'.
 (d) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 3 February 1986, 'Forces triumph in all-out offensives on North-East front: 60 terrorists killed in K'nochchi battle'.
 (e) *The Island*, 24 February 1986, 'Attack repulsed'.
 (f) *The Island*, 26 February 1986, 'Reinforcements rushed from Vavuniya: Terrorists attack Mannar Police'.
 (g) *Sun*, 28 February 1986, 'After three-hour gun battle: Terrorist raid on Maha Wilachchiya repulsed'.
 (h) *Sun*, 4 March 1986, 'Navy craft explodes: Four ratings killed'.
 (i) *Sun*, 15 March 1986, 'Aircraft saved'.
 (j) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 17 March 1986, 'Forces repulse attack on Vavuniya police'.
 (k) *Sun*, 29 March 1986, 'Landmine blast kills five soldiers: Naval base and army camp attacked'.
 (l) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 4 April 1986, 'Navy helps repulse terrorist attack'.
 (m) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 9 April 1986, 'Soldier dies in terrorist attack'.
 (n) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 5 June 1986, 'Jaffna-Colombo Road impassable: Curfew in K'nochchi'; *Sun*, 6 June 1986, 'Terrorists attack Kilinochchi camp again: Two soldiers injured'; *Sun*, 7 June 1986, 'Forces repulse attempt to over-run Kilinochchi camp'.
 (o) *Sun*, 9 June 1986, 'Terrorists launch fresh attacks: Sunday curfew in Kilinochchi'.
 (p) *Sun*, 20 June 1986, 'One Officer killed: Terrorists attack K'nochchi outpost'.
 (q) *The Island*, 31 July 1986, 'Terrorists attack naval base'.
 (r) *The Island*, 22 August 1986, 'Terrorist attack at Kalkudah repelled'.
 (s) *The Island*, 26 August 1986, 'Tiger attacks on Jaffna go on'.
 (t) *The Island*, 1 September 1986, 'Palaly army camp attacked from Vasivilan School'.
 (u) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 4 September 1986, 'Terrorists blast causeway'.
 (v) *Sun*, 5 September 1986, 'Two terrorists killed, one commando injured: Air Force planes shot at by Tigers'.
 (w) *The Island*, 8 September 1986, 'Police station, Jaffna Fort attacked'.
 (x) *Sun*, 9 September 1986, 'Terrorists continue major offensive in the north'.
 (y) *Sun*, 25 September 1986, '4 service personnel and 8 terrorists killed: Terrorists launch dawn attack in Trinco'.
 (z) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 20 October 1986, 'Shootout at Vakarai ... attack on Kalmunai police station'.
 (aa) *The Observer*, 1 November 1986, 'Troops repulse attacks'.
 (bb) *Sun*, 17 November 1986, 'Army bases attacked in the north'.
 (cc) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 26 November 1986, 'Police quell three-hour siege'.
 (dd) *Sun*, 8 December 1986, 'Terrorists attack Wilgamvehera Camp'.
 (ee) *The Island*, 30 December 1986, 'Terrorists attack army camp'.

Table 4G: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1986

Location	Killed & Injured	District	Province	Date	Source
Vavuniya -Omantai Road	6 Army (killed), 2 Army (injured)	Vavuniya	North	6 Jan 1986	(a)
Dehiwatte	3 Army (killed)	Trincomalee	East	17 Jan 1986	(b)
Kantale road	4 Army (killed), 32 civ (killed), 20 civ (injured)	Trincomalee	East	19 Feb 1986	(c)
Vavuniya-Mannar road	3 Army (killed), 7 Army (injured), 2 civ (killed)	Vavuniya	North	2 Mar 1986	(d)
Colombo-Trincomalee road	3 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured)	Trincomalee	East	25 Mar 1986	(e)
Vavuniya-Medawachchiya road	5 Police (injured),	Vavuniya	North	25 Mar 1986	(f)
Kinniya	5 Army (killed), 1 Army (injured), 2 Home Guards (injured)	Trincomalee	East	28 Mar 1986	(g)

Kokavil	8 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured)	Mullaittivu	North	2 Apr 1986	(h)
Talaimannar	2 Police (killed), 1 civ (killed)	Mannar	North	9 Apr 1986	(i)
Trincomalee-Sirimapura road	2 Army (killed), 4 Army (injured)	Trincomalee	East	10 Apr 1986	(j)
Pulmoddai	1 Police (killed), 8 Police (injured)	Trincomalee	East	30 Aug 1986	(k)
Murunkan	5 Army (injured)	Mannar	North	8 Sep 1986	(l)
Miyankulam	3 Army (killed), 4 Army (injured)	Batticaloa	East	15 Apr 1996	(m)
Gomarankadawala	7 Air Force (killed), 2 Air Force (injured), 2 civ (killed)	Trincomalee	East	18 Apr 1996	(n)
Kaddaiparichchan	2 Police (killed), 1 Army (killed), 13 Police or Army (injured)	Trincomalee	East	29 Apr 1996	(o)
Muttur	18 Army (killed), 15 Army (injured)	Trincomalee	East	30 May 1996	(p)
Pannai causeway	5 Army (injured)	Jaffna	North	1 Jun 1986	(q)
Vakarai	6 Army (killed), 7 Army (injured)	Batticaloa	East	11 Aug 1986	(r)
Kinniya	7 Army (killed)	Trincomalee	East	30 Aug 1986	(s)
Kaddaiparichchan	6 Army (injured), 1 civ (injured)	Trincomalee	East	31 Aug 1986	(t)
Pulmoddai	6 Police injured	Trincomalee	East	31 Aug 1986	(u)
Murunkan	6 Army (injured), 1 civ (injured)	Mannar	North	8 Sep 1986	(v)
Vinayagapuram	3 STF (killed), 1 STF (injured)	Batticaloa	East	16 Sep 1986	(w)
Padaviya-Anuradhapura road	6 Police (injured)	Welioya/Anuradhapura	North/North-Central	25 Jun 1986	(x)
Periya-Ilukulama, Poonawa-Medawachchiya road	42 civ (injured)	Anuradhapura	North-Central	25 Jun 1986	(y)
Sittaru	16 civ (killed), 6 civ (injured)	Trincomalee	East	25 Jun 1986	(z)
Manthai,	6 Army (killed), 6 Army (injured)	Mannar	North	13 Jul 1986	(aa)
Valachchenai	7 Police (injured)	Batticaloa	East	16 Oct 1986	(bb)
Arasiddy Junction, Batticaloa Town	2 Police (killed), 6 Police (injured), 3 civ (injured)	Batticaloa	East	28 Oct 1986	(cc)
Karadiyanaru	3 STF (killed)	Batticaloa	East	1 Nov 1986	(dd)
Kalawanchchikudy-Vellaweli road	8 Police & STF (injured)	Batticaloa	East	31 Oct 1986	(ee)
Eravur-Karadianar road	3 Police (killed)	Batticaloa	East	1 Nov 1986	(ff)
Uliyankulam	11 Army (injured)	Mannar	North	16 Nov 1986	(gg)
Silavathurai-Murunkan road	2 Army (injured)	Mannar	North	20 Nov 1986	(hh)
Omantai	2 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured)	Vavuniya	North	27 Nov 1986	(ii)
Uthmayakkulam, Thalladi-Mannar road	2 Army (injured)	Mannar	North	30 Dec 1986	(jj)
Valvedditturai	2 Army (injured)	Jaffna	North	30 Dec 1986	(kk)
Note: 'Civ' means civilian.					
Sources:					
(a) <i>Sun</i> , 7 January 1986, '7 die in landmine blast'.					
(b) <i>The Island</i> , 18 January 1986, '3 soldiers killed in landmine blast'.					
(c) <i>The Island</i> , 20 February 1986, 'Terrorists blast bus: four soldiers, 32 others killed'.					
(d) <i>Sun</i> , 3 March 1986, 'Landmine blast in Vavuniya: five killed: Troops foil Kach landing by terrorists'.					
(e) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 26 March 1986, 'Landmine blasts convoy, kills three soldiers'.					

(f) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 26 March 1986, 'Five civilians killed'.
(g) <i>Sun</i> , 29 March 1986, 'Landmine blast kills five soldiers: Naval base and army camp attacked'.
(h) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 3 April 1986, '8 Soldiers killed in landmine ambush'.
(i) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 10 April 1986, 'killed in ambush'.
(j) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 11 April 1986, 'Landmine kills two soldiers'.
(k) <i>Sun</i> , 2 September 1986, 'Pulmodai Police attacked'.
(l) <i>Sun</i> , 9 September 1986, 'Terrorists continue major offensive in the north'.
(m) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 16 April 1986, 'Three soldiers killed, 4 hurt in explosion'.
(n) <i>Sun</i> , 19 April 1986, 'Air Force suffers worst tragedy since outbreak of terrorism: 7 airmen & 2 civilians killed in landmine blast'.
(o) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 30 April 1986, 'Three killed, 13 injured in landmine blast'.
(p) <i>The Island</i> , 31 May 1986, 'Terrorists strike twice: 18 soldiers killed at Muttur; 9 dead in Cold Stores blast'.
(q) <i>Sun</i> , 2 June 1986, 'Jaffna mine blast injures 5 soldiers'.
(r) <i>The Island</i> , 12 August 1986, 'Landmine blast kills 6 soldiers'.
(s) <i>Weekend</i> , 31 August 1986, '7 killed by landmine'.
(t) <i>Sun</i> , 1 September 1986, '12 servicemen injured in landmine blasts'.
(u) <i>Sun</i> , 1 September 1986, '12 servicemen injured in landmine blasts'.
(v) <i>The Island</i> , 9 September 1986, 'Landmine blasts Army jeep'.
(w) <i>Sun</i> , 18 September 1986, '3 commandos killed in mine blast'.
(x) <i>Sun</i> , 26, June 1986, '16 killed & 55 injured in three blasts'.
(y) <i>Sun</i> , 26, June 1986, '16 killed & 55 injured in three blasts'.
(z) <i>Sun</i> , 26, June 1986, '16 killed & 55 injured in three blasts'.
(aa) <i>The Island</i> , 15 July 1986, 'Landmine kills six soldiers, injures six'.
(bb) <i>Sun</i> , 17 October 1986, 'Seven policemen injured'.
(cc) <i>Sun</i> , 29 October 1986, 'Two policemen killed in landmine explosion'.
(dd) <i>The Sunday Observer</i> , 2 November 1986, 'Bomb kills 3 STF men'.
(ee) <i>The Island</i> , 2 November 1986, '8 hurt in landmine blast'.
(ff) <i>The Island</i> , 2 November 1986, 'Landmine kills 3 policemen'.
(gg) <i>Sun</i> , 17 November 1986, 'Soldiers injured in blast'.
(hh) <i>Sun</i> , 21 November 1986, 'Two soldiers injured in land-mine blast'.
(ii) <i>The Island</i> , 28 November 1986, 'Landmine blast kills 2 soldiers'.
(jj) <i>Sun</i> , 2 January 1987, 'Army officer & three soldiers injured'.
(kk) <i>Sun</i> , 2 January 1987, 'Army officer & three soldiers injured'.

Insurgent Attacks During Year 1987

Table 4H: Insurgents Attacks on Army Camps, 1987

Target of Attack	Date	District	Province	Source
Army Camp, Navatkuli	9 Mar 1987	Jaffna	North	(a)
Army Camp, Iddaikkadu	25 Jun 1987	Jaffna	North	(b)
Army outpost, Nelliaddy	5 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(c)
Army outpost, Kurumbasitty	6 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(d)
Army outpost, Vasavillan	6 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(d)
Army outpost, Tholangetty	6 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(d)
Army outpost, Vallali	6 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(d)
Army Camp, Jaffna Fort	6 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(d)
Army outpost, Polikandi	10 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(e)
Army Camp, Point Pedro (Mortar fire)	10 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(e)
Army outpost, Nelliaddy	11 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(f)
Army outpost, Karaveddi	11 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(f)
Navy Base, Karainagar	11 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(f)
Army outpost, Polikandi	11 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(f)

Notes: (i) There are no attacks on Police Stations in the above list because all the police stations had been

abandoned by the government by 1987. This is an indication of the escalation of the insurrection.

(ii) From 26 May 1987 onwards the government's Operation *Liberation* (better known in the Sri Lankan press as the 'Vadamarachchi Operation') was underway in the Vadamarachchi area of Jaffna peninsula. The attacks in June and July 1987 occurred within the larger context of the fighting underway in the peninsula.

Sources:

- (a) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 10 March 1987, 'Five-hour attack on Navatkuli camp: Terrorists trounced in land-sea battle'.
- (b) *Sun*, 1 July 1987, 'Idaikadu army camp attacked: Terrorists ambush and kill 12 soldiers'.
- (c) *The Island*, 7 July 1987, 'Pitched battle at Nelliady Camp: 18 soldiers, two terrorists killed'.
- (d) *The Island*, 8 July 1987, 'Five Army outposts attacked: Terrorists launch fresh onslaught in North'.
- (e) *Weekend*, 12 July 1987, 'Counter-Offensive at Vadamarachchi'.
- (f) *The Island*, 12 July 1987, 'Fighting still on'.

(Note: From 26 May 1987 onwards the government's Operation LIBERATION (better known as the 'Vadamarachchi Operation') was underway in the Vadamarachchi areas of Jaffna peninsula. The attacks in June and July 1987 occurred within the larger fighting underway in the peninsula.)

(Note: There are no attacks on Police Stations in the above list because all the police stations had been closed down by this time.)

Table 4I: Insurgents Landmine Attacks, 1987

Location	Killed & Injured	Date	District	Province	Source
Thalladi	1 Army (killed)	14 Jan 1987	Mannar	North	(a)
Pt. Pedro	2 Army (killed)	22 Jan 1987	Jaffna	North	(b)
Uyilankulam	1 Army (killed)	22 Jan 1987	Mannar	North	(c)
Kokkadichcholai	12 STF (killed)	28 Jan 1987	Batticaloa	East	(d)
Avarantalawa	11 Army (killed), 1 Army (injured), 6 civ (killed), 1 civ (injured)	7 Mar 1987	Vavuniya	North	(e)
Poraitivu	2 STF (killed) 3 STF (injured)	25 Mar 1987	Batticaloa	East	(f)
Mannar island	4 Army (killed), 8 Army (injured)	16 Apr 1987	Mannar	North	(g)
Pulmoddai	15 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured)	22 Apr 1987	Trincomalee	East	(h)
Maliathivu	6 Army (killed), 2 civ (killed)	26 Apr 1987	Trincomalee	East	(i)
Vallankulam	1 Army (killed), 8 Army (injured)	27 Apr 1987	Mannar	North	(j)
Nilaveli & Trincomalee- Anuradhapura road	9 Army (killed), 6 Army (injured)	14 May 1987	Trincomalee	East	(k)
Lahugala	1 Army (killed), 4 Army (injured), 2 civ (killed)	20 May 1987	Ampara	East	(l)
Vakarai-Kathiraveli road	5 Army (killed)	25 May 1987	Batticaloa	East	(m)
Batticaloa Town	1 Police (killed), 2 Police (injured)	30 May 1987	Batticaloa	East	(n)
Tikkam	3 Army (killed) 10 civ detainees (killed)	11 Jun 1987	Jaffna	North	(o)
Mutur	12 civ (killed)	11 Jun 1987	Trincomalee	East	(p)
Kinniyadi	2 STF (killed), 1 STF (injured)	15 Jun 1987	Batticaloa	East	(q)
Pallachchenai	1 civ (killed)	15 Jun 1987	Batticaloa	East	(r)
Eravur	4 Army (injured)	18 Jun 1987	Batticaloa	East	(s)

Morawewa	3 Army (injured)	18 Jun 1987	Trincomalee	East	(t)
Mannar	3 Army (killed), 3 Army (injured)	27 Jun 1987	Mannar	North	(u)
Tondaimanar	2 Army (killed)	4 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(v)
Tondaimanar	10 Army (killed)	11 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(w)
Thikkam, near Pt. Pedro	6 Army (killed)	12 Jul 1987	Jaffna	North	(x)
Vakarai	6 Army (killed), 10 Army (injured)	7 Oct 1987	Batticaloa	East	(y)
Kumpurupiddi	9 Army (injured)	7 Oct 1987	Trincomalee	East	(z)

Sources:

- (a) *Sun*, 15 January 1987, 'Soldier killed in landmine explosion'.
- (b) *Sun*, 23 January 1987, 'Four army men killed' [an officer - not included - was killed by a sniper].
- (c) *Sun*, 23 January 1987, 'Four army men killed' [an officer - not included - was killed by a sniper].
- (d) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 29 January 1987, 'STF destroy main LTTE base, kill 20 Tigers: Landmine kills 13 commandos' [landmine killed only 12. The other was killed in a fire fight earlier].
- (e) *The Island*, 8 March 1987, 'Eleven Security Forces men among dead: Landmine blast kills 17'.
- (f) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 26 March 1987, 'Landmine blast kills STF men'.
- (g) *Sun*, 17 April 1987, '4 soldiers killed & 8 injured in blast'.
- (h) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 23 April 1987, 'Fifteen soldiers killed at Pulmoddai'.
- (i) *Sun*, 27 April 1987, 'Eight killed in landmine explosion'.
- (j) *Sun*, 28 April 1987, 'Soldier killed in landmine explosion'.
- (k) *The Island*, 15 May 1987, '9 security personnel killed in mine blast' [two landmine attacks].
- (l) *The Island*, 21 May 1987, 'Three killed in mine blast'.
- (m) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 27 May 1987, 'Five soldiers killed in landmine blast'.
- (n) *Weekend*, 31 May 1987, 'Landmine explosion in the East'.
- (o) *The Island*, 12 June 1987, '10 detainees, 3 soldiers and 12 passengers: 25 killed in two terrorist attacks'.
- (p) *The Island*, 12 June 1987, '10 detainees, 3 soldiers and 12 passengers: 25 killed in two terrorist attacks'.
- (q) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 17 June 1987, 'Landmine kills two constables'.
- (r) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 17 June 1987, 'Landmine kills two constables'.
- (s) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 20 June 1987, 'Troops wrest landing point from terrorists'.
- (t) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 20 June 1987, 'Troops wrest landing point from terrorists'.
- (u) *Sun*, 29 June 1987, 'Army officer, 2 soldiers killed in explosion'.
- (v) *Sun*, 6 July 1987, 'Landmine kills 2 soldiers'.
- (w) *The Observer*, 13 July 1987, 16 soldiers killed near Thondamanaru'.
- (x) *The Observer*, 13 July 1987, 16 soldiers killed near Thondamanaru'.
- (y) *The Island*, 8 October 1987, 'Terrorists kill six soldiers, wound 19'.
- (z) *The Island*, 8 October 1987, 'Terrorists kill six soldiers, wound 19'.

Annexure 4.2

Insurgent Attacks against the Colombo-Jaffna Railway link, 1984-1987

Incident	Govt Action	Date	District	Province	Source
Train services stopped earlier – consequent to an earlier attack – were resumed. But stopped immediately by Ministry of National Security due to renewed insurgent activity	No trains operated beyond Kilinochchi	2 Nov 1984	Kilinochchi & Jaffna	North	(a)
Insurgents attack train which hauled water tankers between Jaffna & KKS	Train could not proceed to Jaffna but terminated at Kilinochchi	3 Dec 1984	Kilinochchi	North	(b)
Insurgents damaged Kodikamam rail bridge	Govt sent supplies to Jaffna by sea. Military supplies sent by sea & aircraft	2 Jan 1985	Jaffna	North	(c)
200lb weight IEDs exploded under the <i>Yal Devi</i> train. A total of nine IEDs of which one did not explode. 28 soldiers & 1 civ (killed), 27 soldiers and 2 civ (injured). 11 carriages destroyed	Rail service to North stopped by Govt	19 Jan 1985	Mullaitivu	North	(d)
Rail track between Vavuniya & Puliyankulam blasted a few days after rail services resumed after a break of 5 months	Rail service to North stopped by Govt	16 Jun 1985	Vavuniya	North	(e)
n.a.	Govt stop all trains north of Anuradhapura	27 Aug 1985	All northern districts	North	(f)
Goods and passenger train blown up by landmines at Thampalagamam. Driver, guard, 4 persons injured. 2 engines and 9 coaches damaged. Insurgents set fire to engine and some coaches	Not reported. Rail services to north probably suspended for some time by Govt	14 Sep 1985	Jaffna	North	(g)
Govt stated that there had been 74 attacks on the Railway system during previous 11 months. Destruction of rail track, engines, carriages, abduction of train crews and passengers. Loss reported as Rs.97 million	All Govt policies mentioned in this entire column	From Jan to Nov 1985		North	(h)
Bomb blast inside inter-city luxury carriage (valued at Rs.4 million) which had arrived from KKS, Jaffna, after passengers had disembarked. At railway yard, Colombo	All train services beyond Anuradhapura stopped	12 Dec 1985	Colombo	West	(i)
Insurgents prevent <i>Udaya Devi</i> train leaving Batticaloa for Colombo with bombs on rail track and by intimidating train crew	n.a. (Note: this incident occurred in the East. Train services to the East were not severed by insurgents)	28 Jan 1986	Batticaloa	East	(j)
Train with food & fuel to KKS in Jaffna	Helicopter borne	5 Feb	Jaffna	North	(k)

hijacked. Diverted to Mallakam. Halted at Maviddapuram and unloading begun.	troops attacked insurgents and recaptured train. 7 insurgents killed	1986			
Culvert at Parantan blasted. <i>Yal Devi</i> train crashed into stream bed. 5 passengers killed, 30 injured, 5 carriages damaged beyond repair	n.a. (Probably culvert repaired and train service resumed after a few days, as evidence from below)	15 Mar 1986	Kilinochchi	North	(l)
<i>Yal Devi</i> train travelling to Colombo halted by insurgents between Puliyankulam & Omantai. 927 passengers ordered out. Engine and 11 carriages blasted with explosives, set on fire and wrecked beyond repair. Cost estimated at Rs. 100 million.	Train services to north suspended	25 Mar 1986	Vavuniya	North	(m)
Consequences of above attack	Army deployed to transport food & fuel to the north using military trucks. Trains and civilian trucks to the north suspended	From 25 Mar to 7 April 1986		North	(n)
Bomb in Batticaloa/Trincomalee train coming to Colombo exploded at Veyangoda (approx. dozen miles north of Colombo). 13 killed, 50 injured.	n.a.	31 May 1986	Gampaha	West	(o)
Train service resumed after 5 months. On the first day of resumption insurgents blew up two bridges in Jaffna district. 241 passengers stranded	Train services further suspended	29 Aug 1986	Jaffna	North	(p)
Govt announced that it would resume trains to Jaffna on 25 Feb 1987. On 24 Feb 1987 insurgents destroyed the rail track at two points; one, between Omantai & Vavuniya and the other between Murikandi & Kilinochchi.	Train services further suspended	24 Feb 1987	Vavuniya & Kilinochchi Districts	North	(q)
Insurgents removed toolboxes from Pallai railway station in Jaffna peninsula. Other insurgents removed 340 railway sleepers in Chavakachcheri area.	Govt forced to further suspend train services. Note: by this time Operation <i>Liberation</i> (a.k.a. 'Vadamarachchi Operation') had started	mid-May 1987	Jaffna	North	(r)
Insurgents blasted and destroyed 100 feet of track between Kilinochchi & Murikandi		early-Jun 1987	Kilinochchi	North	(s)

Sources:

(a) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 3 November 1984, 'No trains beyond K'nochchi'.(b) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 4 December 1984, 'Terrorists attack water train'.(c) *The Island*, 3 January 1985, 'Cabinet decisions: Food to Jaffna by Sea'.(d) *Sun*, 21 January 1985, '23 soldiers killed: Death toll rises in Yal Devi blast';*The Island*, 22 January 1985, 'Yal Devi explosion: Death toll now 48'(e) *The Island*, 22 January 1985, 'Yal Devi explosion: Death toll now 48'(f) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 28 August 1985, 'No trains beyond A'pura till further notice'

- (g) *Weekend*, 15 September 1985, 'Terrorist landmine destroys train'
- (h) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 28 November 1985, 'Crippling cost of terrorist action: Halt to North rail service?'
- (i) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 13 December 1985, 'Blast wrecks Inter city Carriage in rail yard'; *The Island*, 14 December 1985, 'Following Thursday's bomb explosion in Inter city Express: Train service to North beyond A'pura suspended'
- (j) *The Ceylon Daily News*, 30 January 1986, 'Terrorists bomb rail track, halt 'Udaya Devi''.
- (k) *The Island*, 6 February 1986, 'Security forces rescue hijacked train in North'
- (l) *The Island*, 16 March 1986, '5 dead 30 injured as terrorists blast Yal-Devi'
- (m) *Sun*, 26 March 1986, 'Explosions shatter week-long lull in the north: Yal Devi destroyed: Terrorists force passengers off & set fire to Colombo-bound train'; *Sunday Observer*, 30 March 1986, 'Damage estimated at Rs. 100m: Yal Devi wrecked beyond repair'
- (n) *The Sunday Observer*, 30 March 1986, 'Damage estimated at Rs. 100m: Yal Devi wrecked beyond repair'
- (o) *The Island*, 1 June 1986, 'Explosion at Veyangoda: B'caloa-Trinco train blasted; 13 dead, 50 injured'
- (p) *Sun*, 30 August 1986, 'Kilinochchi-bound Yal Devi grinds to a halt: Terrorists blast two rail bridges'
- (q) *Sun*, 25 February 1987, 'Terrorist blast northern track'
- (r) *The Island*, 15 May 1987, 'Tigers strip rail track sleepers'
- (s) *Sun*, 4 June 1987, 'Terrorists blast 100 ft. of northern railway track'

Annexure 4.3

Insurgent Bomb Attacks in Colombo City, 1984-1987

Target of Bomb	Injury / Damage	Location	Date	Source
1984				
Bomb exploded in room at Oberoi Hotel. Target possibly Israeli personnel in other Hotel rooms, although Govt denied this.	1 civ dead, 5 rooms damaged	Colombo City	28 Jun 1984	(a)
Bomb of 40 sticks of gelignite weighing 24 pounds found in store room in the 14 Story Insurance Corporation building. The Ministry of National Security located in this building. High profile Ministry newly created after the July 1983 riots. Minister was Lalith Athulathmudali.	None	Colombo City	28 Jun 1984	(b)
Two bombs exploded at Bloemendhal and Nagalagam streets along an oil pipeline linking Colombo harbour, Sapugaskanda oil refinery and Kolonnawa oil storage tanks. No damage to main targets. A third bomb found and defused.	15 slum houses damaged.	Colombo City	7 Oct 1984	(c)
Bomb exploded near Foreshore police station, Kotahena				(d)
Bomb exploded at Barnes Place, Colombo-7. Minister Cyril Matthew's residence located in the vicinity. Minister Matthew deeply implicated in July 1983 pogrom.	None	Colombo City	22 Oct 1984	(d)
Bomb discovered near Fort Railway station. Exploded before it could be defused.	Damage to windows of Station and nearby shops.	Colombo City	22 Oct 1984	(d)
Bomb exploded in Peliyagoda	2 men killed	Town just north of Colombo City	22 Oct 1984	(d)
Bomb exploded at Guilford Crescent, opposite Lionel Wendt Theatre, Colombo-7	None	Colombo City	22 Oct 1984	(d)
Bomb discovered at Olcott Mawatha near Fort Railway station. Exploded by army bomb disposal unit.	None	Colombo City	22 Oct 1984	(d)
Bomb discovered near Tower Hall, Maradana. Exploded by army bomb disposal unit.	None	Colombo City	22 Oct 1984	(d)
Bomb exploded at Independence Square, Colombo-7	None	Colombo City	22 Oct 1984	(d)
Bomb exploded at Saunders place near Colombo Kachcheri (i.e. Colombo's administrative centre)	None			(d)
1985				
Bomb exploded near the Army Headquarters, Colombo	None	Colombo City	29 Apr 1985	(e)
1986				
Bomb exploded within Air Lanka Tri-Star Airliner while parked at Katunayaka International Airport.	21 killed, 41 injured	International Airport, Approx. 18 Km north of Colombo City	3 May 1986	(f)
Bomb exploded in CTO (Central Telegraph Office)	11 killed, 114 injured	Colombo City	7 May 1986	(g)
1987				

Car bomb exploded near Pettah bus stand. Pandemonium in Pettah area - a dense commercial area in Colombo - as thousands fled the area. Some instances of anti-Tamil rioting occurred. These were quickly controlled by police and armed forces.	110 civ, 2 policemen & 1 soldier (killed); 298 (injured). 15 vehicles & 20 shops destroyed	Colombo City	21 Apr 1987	(h)
Sources:				
(a) <i>The Island</i> , 29 June 1984, 'Meant for Israelis in occupation?: Bomb blast at Oberoi kills room maid'.				
(b) <i>The Island</i> , 30 June 1984, 'Oberoi bomb not meant for Israelis - Douglas Liyanage'.				
(c) <i>The Ceylon Daily News</i> , 9 October 1984, 'To blow up oil pipeline & cause major fire: Terrorists plant 3 bombs in City'.				
(d) Sun, 23 October 1984, 'Bomb blasts leave trail of damage'.				
(e) <i>The Island</i> , 30 April 1985, 'Phones kept Colombo awake: Bomb blast near Army Headquarters, None hurt'.				
(f) <i>The Island</i> , 4 May 1986, 'Air Lanka explosion kills 21, injures 41'.				
(g) <i>The Island</i> , 8 May 1986, 'Bomb blasts CTO: 11 dead, 114 hurt'.				
(h) <i>The Island</i> , 22 April 1987, '15 vehicles mangled: 20 shops gutted: Thousands flee carnage'.				

Annexure 4.4

**‘Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and
Normalcy in Sri Lanka’,
&
‘Annexure to the Agreement’
&
the two Letters exchanged between
President J.R. Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi**

(Source: Hyndman, Patricia, 1988: 139-145, *Sri Lanka: Serendipity Under Siege*, England: Spokesman.)

(Note: emphases in **Bold and highlighted in grey** were added by the present author)

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The President of the Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, and the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and having met at Colombo on July 29, 1987.

Attaching utmost importance to nurturing, intensifying and strengthening the traditional friendship of India and Sri Lanka and acknowledging the imperative need of resolving the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka, and the consequent violence, and for the safety, well-being and prosperity of people belonging to all communities of Sri Lanka,

Having this day entered into the following agreement to fulfil this objective,

- 1.1 desiring to preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka;
- 1.2 acknowledging that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual plural society consisting, *inter-alia*, of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims (Moors) and Burgers;
- 1.3 recognising that each ethnic group has a distinct cultural and linguistic identity which has to be carefully nurtured;
- 1.4 also recognising that the **Northern and the Eastern provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples, who have at all times hitherto lived together in this territory with other ethnic groups;**
- 1.5 conscious of the necessity of strengthening the forces contributing to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, and preserving its character as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious plural society, in which all citizens can live in equality, safety and harmony, and prosper and fulfil their aspirations;

2.Resolve that:

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2.1 Since the Government of Sri Lanka proposes to permit adjoining Provinces to join to form one administrative unit and also by a Referendum to separate as may be permitted to the Northern and Eastern provinces as outlined below:

2.2 During the period, which shall be considered an interim period (i.e. from the date of the elections to the provincial council, as specified in para 2.8 to the date of the Referendum as specified in para 2.3), **the Northern and Eastern provinces as now constituted, will form one administrative unit, having one elected Provincial Council. Such a unit will have one Governor, one Chief Minister and one Board of Ministers.**

2.3 There will be a referendum on or before 31st December 1988 to enable the people of the Eastern Province to decide whether:

(a) The Eastern province should remain linked with the Northern province as one administrative unit, and continue to be governed together with the Northern Province as specified in para 2.2 or:

(b) The Eastern Province should constitute a separate administrative unit having its own distinct provincial council with a separate governor, chief minister and board of ministers.

The President may, at his discretion, decide to postpone such a referendum.

2.4 All persons, who have been displaced due to ethnic violence or other reasons, will have the right to vote in such a Referendum. Necessary conditions to enable them to return to areas from where they were displaced will be created.

2.5 The Referendum, when held, will be monitored by a committee headed by the Chief Justice, a member appointed by the President, nominated by the Government of Sri Lanka, and a member appointed by the President, nominated by the representatives of the Tamil speaking people of the Eastern province.

2.6 A simple majority will be sufficient to determine the result of the Referendum.

2.7 Meetings and other forms of propaganda, permissible within the laws of the country, will be allowed before the Referendum.

2.8 Elections to Provincial Councils will be held within the next three months, in any event before 31st December 1987. Indian observers will be invited for elections to the Provincial Council of the North and East.

2.9 The emergency will be lifted in the eastern and Northern provinces by 15 August 1987. A cessation of hostilities will come into effect all over the Island within 48 hours of signing of this Agreement. All arms presently held by militant groups will be surrendered in accordance with an agreed procedure to authorities to be designated by the Government of Sri Lanka. Consequent to the cessation of hostilities and the surrender of arms by militant groups, the army and other security personnel will be confined to barracks in camps as on 25 May 1987. The process of surrendering arms and the confining of security personnel moving back to barracks shall be completed within 72 hours of the cessation of hostilities coming into effect.

- 2.10 The Government of Sri Lanka will utilise for the purpose of law enforcement and maintenance of security in the Northern and Eastern Provinces the same organisations and mechanisms of Government as are used in the rest of the country.
- 2.11 The President of Sri Lanka will grant a general amnesty to political and other prisoners now held in custody under The Prevention of Terrorism Act and other emergency laws, and to combatants, as well as to those persons accused, charged and/or convicted under these laws. The Government of Sri Lanka will make special efforts to rehabilitate militant youth with a view to bringing them back into the mainstream of national life. India will cooperate in the process.
- 2.12 The Government of Sri Lanka will accept and abide by the above provisions and expect all others to do likewise.
- 2.13 If the framework for the resolutions is accepted, the Government of Sri Lanka will implement the relevant proposals forthwith.
- 2.14 The Government of India will underwrite and guarantee the resolutions, and cooperate in the implementation of these proposals.
- 2.15 These proposals are conditional to an acceptance of proposals negotiated from 4.5.1986 to 19.12.1986. Residual matters not finalised during the above negotiations shall be resolved between India and Sri Lanka within a period of six weeks of signing this agreement. These proposals are also conditional to the Government of India cooperating directly with the Government of Sri Lanka in their implementation.
- 2.16 These proposals are also conditional to the Government of India taking the following actions if any militant groups operating in Sri Lanka do not accept this framework of proposals for a settlement, namely:
- (a) India will take all necessary steps to ensure that Indian territory is not used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka**
 - (b) The Indian Navy/Coast Guard will cooperate with the Sri Lankan navy in preventing Tamil militant activities from affecting Sri Lanka.**
 - (c) In the event that the Government of Sri Lanka requests the Government of India to afford military assistance to implement these proposals the Government of India will cooperate by giving to the Government of Sri Lanka such military assistance as and when requested.
 - (d) The Government of India will expedite repatriation from Sri Lanka of Indian citizens to India who are resident there concurrently with the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from Tamil Nadu.
 - (e) The Governments of Sri Lanka and India will cooperate in ensuring the physical security and safety of all communities inhabiting the Northern and Eastern Provinces.
- 2.17 The Government of Sri Lanka shall ensure free, full and fair participation of voters from all communities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in electoral processes envisaged in this

Agreement. The Government of India will extend full cooperation to the Government of Sri Lanka in this regard.

2.18 The official language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala. Tamil and English will also be official languages.

3. **This agreement and the annexure thereto shall come into force upon signature.**

In witness whereof, we have set our hands and seals hereunto. Done in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on this the twenty-ninth day of July of the year one thousand nine hundred and eighty seven, in duplicate, both texts being equally authentic.

Junius Richard Jayawardene
President of the Democratic
Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Rajiv Gandhi
Prime Minister of the
Republic of India

ANNEXURE TO THE AGREEMENT

1. His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India agree that the Referendum mentioned in paragraph 2 and its sub-paragraphs of the Agreement will be observed by a representative of the Election Commission of India to be invited by His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka.

2. Similarly, both heads of Government agree that the elections to the Provincial Council mentioned in paragraph 2.8 of the Agreement will be observed by a representative of the Government of India to be invited by His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka.

3. His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka agrees that the Home guards would be disbanded and all paramilitary personnel will be withdrawn from the Eastern and Northern Provinces with a view to creating conditions conducive to fair elections to the Council.

The President, in his discretion, shall absorb such paramilitary forces, which came into being due to ethnic violence, into the regular security forces of Sri Lanka.

4. The President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India agree that the Tamil militants shall surrender their arms to authorities agreed upon to be designated by the President of Sri Lanka. The surrender shall take place in the presence of one senior representative each of the Sri Lankan Red Cross and the Indian Red Cross.

5. The President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India agree that a joint Indo-Sri Lankan observer group consisting of qualified representatives of the Government of India and the Government of Sri Lanka would monitor the cessation of hostilities from 31 July 1987.

6. The Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka also agree that in the terms of paragraph 2.14 and paragraph 2.16(c) of the Agreement, **an Indian Peace Keeping contingent may be invited by the President of Sri Lanka to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities, if so required.**

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

President of Sri Lanka

July 29, 1987

Excellency,

Please refer to your letter dated the 29th of July 1987, which reads as follows:

Excellency,

1. Conscious of the friendship between our two countries stretching over two millennia and more, and recognizing the importance of nurturing this traditional friendship, it is imperative that both Sri Lanka and India reaffirm the decision not to allow our respective territories to be used for activities prejudicial to each other's unity, territorial integrity and security.

2. In this spirit, you had, in the course of our discussions agreed to meet some of India's concerns as follows:

(i) Your Excellency and myself will **reach an early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel** with a view to ensuring that such presences will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

(ii) **Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interests.**

(iii) **The work of restoring and operating the Trincomalee oil tank farm will be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka.**

(iv) Sri Lanka's agreements with foreign broadcasting organizations will be reviewed to ensure that any facilities set up by them in Sri Lanka are used solely as public broadcasting facilities and **not for any military or intelligence purposes.**

In the same spirit India will:

(i) **Deport all Sri Lankan citizens who are found to be engaging in terrorist activities or advocating separatism or secessionism.**

(ii) Provide training facilities and military supplies for Sri Lankan forces.

India and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a joint consultative mechanism to continuously review matters of common concern in the light of the objectives stated in para 1 and specifically to monitor the implementation of other matters contained in this letter.

Kindly confirm, Excellency, that the above correctly sets out the agreement reached between us. Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

(Rajiv Gandhi)

His Excellency

Mr. J. R. Jayawardene

President of the democratic Republic of Sri Lanka,

Colombo

This is to confirm that the above correctly sets out the understanding reached between us.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(J. R. Jayewardene)

President

Annexure 4.5

The Head of the Indian Army's Briefing to the Most Senior Officers of the IPKF, sometime in early 1988

The text below is reproduced below exactly as in the original source. Any errors in the original are indicated via footnotes inserted by the present author.

Source: Singh, Major General Harkirat, 2006: 161-165, *Intervention in Sri Lanka: The IPKF Experience Retold*.

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APPENDIX 3 General Sundarji's Briefing on Sri Lanka*

*This paper was used by the Indian Army's then Chief of Army Staff, Gen. K. Sundarji to brief the Core Group after the first round of fighting between the Indian Army and the LTTE sometime in early 1988. [Major General Harkirat Singh]

1. **COAS [Chief of Army Staff] in his briefing said that the Indian Army has not been employed in Sri Lanka for the protection of any one community or to fight Sri Lanka's war with the LTTE but has been deployed for safeguarding the Indian national interest. [The] Sri Lankan Government had openly invited other countries to assist and in the bargain was prepared to give base facilities, which would have threatened Indian security at some time. Therefore, before the situation went out of hand, [the] Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE were pressurized to accept terms and conditions, which were slightly diluted to their published stand. LTTE aspirations were primarily kept in mind. [emphases in bold added by author of Thesis]**
2. Initially it was anticipated that [the] role of the Indian Army as IPKF would be mostly ceremonial and was accordingly tasked to take the surrender of arms by Tamil militants, but later its role was changed to 'secure' surrender of arms and for this purpose, use force if need be.
3. The salient features of the Accord are as under:
 - (a) The Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka are to form one administrative unit with the Provincial Council, one Governor, one Chief Minister and one Board of Ministers. Elections to the Provincial Council will be held within the next three months, in any event before 31 December 1987. Indian observers will be invited for elections in the Northern and Eastern areas. Till the elections are held, an interim government will be formed to run the administration of these two provinces as one administrative unit.
 - (b) A cessation of hostilities to come into effect all over the Island within 48 hours of the signing of the Accord. This has already come into being.

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- (c) Surrender of arms by all Tamil militants and grant of general amnesty to them by the Government of Sri Lanka.

- (d) The Government of India will undertake and guarantee the resolutions of the agreement and will cooperate with the Government of Sri Lanka in the implementation of the Accord.
- (e) If requested, India will send a peacekeeping force to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities in Sri Lanka and ensure physical security and protection of all communities.
- (f) A referendum will be held on or before 31 December 1988 to enable the people of the Eastern Province to decide whether [the] Eastern Province is to remain one administrative unit or constitute [a] separate administrative unit having its own Provincial Council.
- (h)⁸ All persons displaced due to ethnic violence or other reasons, will have a right to vote on the referendum. Conditions to enable them to return to [the] area from where they left will be created. A simple majority will be sufficient to determine the result of the referendum.
1. The Accord was widely appreciated the world over but the Sinhalese had reservations and vowed to undertake armed struggle.
 2. The IPKF was profusely welcomed by members of all communities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka, and indications of return of peace in the effected area was evident.
 3. Surrender of arms was symbolic. Contrary to our hopes, LTTE, the dominating militant group, surrendered only old vintage weapons, maybe hardly 15 per cent of their known holding. Since securing a forcible surrender was not part of the Accord it was hoped that once the political process starts, LTTE would also come round the corner and surrender.
 4. During this period LTTE tried to organize themselves politically but to their surprise they found that they had hardly any following. Most of their meetings specially in the Eastern Province were very thinly attended compared to other functions. The futility of the political effort dawned on them and they decided to continue their armed struggle, which they were better placed to wage in Jaffna.
 5. The LTTE has been administering the Northern Province which they were fully in control [of] and had their whole cadre intact. Therefore, they were probably waiting for an opportunity to wriggle out of the Accord so that their dominating position in the struggle is not undermined by other militant groups.

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6. LTTE was not consistent in their actions. They created hurdles in implementation of [the] Accord by being unreasonable in their demands specifically, the representation in Interim Administrative Council for change of Chief Administrator selected by the Sri Lankan President out of the three names recommended by LTTE, without substantial reasons.
7. LTTE also accused IPKF for acting in a partisan manner against LTTE.
8. From various indications, like making allegations against the IPKF and reluctance to accept the Accord, it was evident that LTTE is desperately trying to wriggle out of the Accord and were looking for an excuse. When 13 LTTE persons, captured with weapons at [sic] sea by Sri Lankan forces, committed suicide, while they were being taken to Colombo, they alleged this as a serious violations of Accord and indulged in large scale violence. They killed a large number of Sinhalese in the Eastern Province and also members of other Tamil Militant organizations.
9. President J.R. Jayewardene wanted the IPKF to put LTTE down. But the IPKF did not act, as taking an offensive action was not part of the Accord.
10. Later after talks between President J.R. Jayewardene and the Indian Government representative, it was decided to act, and terms of IPKF were accordingly changed to

⁸ Should be 'g'. The Mistake is in Major General Harkirat Singh's book (page 162). Reproduced here without any change.

secure surrender of arms by force. This led to IPKF's present offensive against LTTE in Northern and Eastern Province.

11. The LTTE was fully prepared and dug in at Jaffna. The salient features of various offensives taken by IPKF from 13 October 1987 onwards were as under:

- (i) Jaffna
- (ii) It was planned to encircle and simultaneously enter from multiple directions. This plan did not cater for rescue operations and certain changes were effected by COAS.
- (iii) Commando action was planned to take control of the University Area, the HQ of LTTE, and destroy the TV Station run by LTTE. The commando base protection force comprising platoon strength of Sikh LI was landed next to the University and they came under very high fire. Whereas commandos were erroneously landed three Km. away near the railway line. These groups never met each other. All personnel of the Sikh

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LI platoon were killed by the LTTE except one which indicates that they died fighting.

- (iv) Troop of tanks was sent to build up and rescue commandos. They went along railway line and fired all their ammunition en route and were left with 1 round of main gun, when they established contact with commandos.
- (v) No effort was made by commanders to establish a link with Sikh LI platoon dropped near the University.
- (vi) Six commandos and the whole platoon of Sikh LI were killed in this operation. They were successful in destroying the LTTE run TV station.
- (vii) Instead of building up on armour and commandos inside Jaffna, commandos were withdrawn which delayed clearing of Jaffna for many days.
- (viii) Various Units of IPKF suffered maximum losses in their initial advance. Later, troops learnt their lessons and casualty figures came down appreciably.
- (ix) Armed helicopters were employed for operations on the outskirts of Jaffna whereas inside Jaffna only infantry operations were carried out.
- (x) IPKF, all through the operations [was] under immense constraints, i.e. avoiding civil casualty and destruction to civil property so use of heavy weapons was rested, whereas LTTE well entrenched in build-up area caused casualty (sic) on IPKF at will. They made extensive use of land mines and booby traps for this purpose.
- (xi) Maximum portion of Jaffna was cleared and LTTE stronghold captured by 26 October 1987. Occasionally sniping continues and Jaffna is now fast returning to normal.
- (xii) Eastern Province: IPKF is now carrying out search operations and uses [of] force if fired upon. LTTE has not been offering organized resistance in this area any more.
- (xiii) The top brass of the LTTE is still intact. Their command system has suffered badly. The IPKF has also suffered badly. The IPKF has captured large-scale weapons, ammunition, stores and destroyed the LTTE HQ, training school, printing press and large number of their men have been killed.
- (xiv) All LTTE men are not as dedicated as is being projected. Large numbers did not use cyanide and were captured alive.

(xiii)⁹ Operations are being coordinated by GOC-in-C, Southern Command now located at Madras.

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(xiii)¹⁰ There are approximately 30 thousand IPKF troops now in Sri Lanka.

12. Jaffna town was being governed by the LTTE for the last four years. They were collecting tax from public. Jaffna has suffered large-scale damage mainly due to Sri Lankan Army operations and some by destruction caused by LTTE while withdrawing in the face of Indian Army onslaught. Re-construction and restoring civil administration has been undertaken by the IPKF on a war footing.
13. A large number of relief camps have been opened where food and essential commodities are distributed to civilians. Hospitals have started working. Civilian administration of the area is being organized by the IPKF with the help of IAS officers. There are no volunteers for this job.
14. Essential services like electricity and water supply have been partially restored and will be fully restored shortly.
15. LTTE has vowed to fight IPKF till the end.
16. On the other hand Sinhalese militants are also organized and propose to resist the Accord by force. This of course would be looked after by Sri Lankan Army.
17. The LTTE has been offered peace and cessation of offensive by the IPKF if they accept [the] Accord and lay down arms, which at present they have shown no inclination whatsoever [of doing].
18. Even after disarming LTTE, the IPKF is to ensure that both sides implement the Accord. If there is hesitation on Sri Lankan part, they it may have to be forced. Thus the IPKF is likely to continue in Sri Lanka for quite some time. There are no chances of its withdrawal in near future.
19. The Sri Lankan Peace Accord has been signed purely in the national interest and Indian Army is an instrument to ensure its implementation. Therefore propaganda launched in [the] media is quite biased as it is based on half facts.
20. The Indian Army is carrying out its tasks commendably. There have been certain cowardly acts which have been suitably dealt with. By and large the forces were not experienced for battle in built-up areas, as a result [we] suffered certain casualties. Now they are fully in control and going about their task quite systematically. Efforts to influence public opinion not to support militants has been undertaken on [a] large scale. It has started bearing fruit, which is evident from the resistance being offered to the LTTE activities against IPKF.

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9 Wrong numbering in original.

10 Wrong numbering in original.