

MISSION FROM ANTI-TERRORISM TO PEACE IN SRI LANKA

BY

MAJOR GENERAL LAKSIRI AMARATUNGA
Sri Lanka Army

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MISSION FROM ANTI-TERRORISM TO PEACE IN SRI LANKA

by

Major General Laksiri Amaratunga
Sri Lanka Army

Colonel Eric L Ashworth
Project Adviser

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U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

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The Sri Lankan government and its forces are involved in a war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE), considered by many as the most ruthless terrorist organization in the world during the past two decades. This paper discusses briefly the origins of this terrorist group, the problem they present to the world, the overall goals the LTTE plans on achieving and the peace efforts made by various successive governments to solve the dispute. The paper also discusses the efforts made during past two decades to suppress the LTTE militarily and why a military solution seems appropriate. The paper concludes with a recommended approach that presents a viable solution to the problem and achieves a sustainable peace.

MISSION FROM ANTI -TERRORISM TO PEACE IN SRI LANKA

Terrorism is a developing challenge faced by most democracies in the world. Extremists groups achieve their goals of different aims globally through the use of terror tactics. Defined in many different terms, Terror tactics can be found well before the 17th century. By the 21st century, more groups had adopted this form of warfare to achieve their goals. Violence is viewed as being able to solve problems over democratic means. In most contexts, it has become a way of life. Terrorism is more common in developing countries than in developed countries. It has become an obstruction to the progress of these nations, especially if it develops into a prolonged conflict. Today more developed countries are facing a rising threat mainly from Islamic militant groups. The solution to terrorism has not been found and continues to be a growing threat in most countries. It has become time to address terrorism as a collective effort.

Background

The Sri Lankan government and its forces are involved in a war against terrorism with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE), believed to be the most ruthless terrorist organization in the world, for more than two decades. Successive governments have been making many attempts to arrive at a solution using both military and political means. On its journey to arrive at a lasting solution the Sri Lankan government has had to face both international and local challenges. One of the international challenges is how to counter the action of the Tamil diasporas widely dispersed all over the world. The diaspora supports the organization financially, and plays as a powerful lobby on the international political arena and media. A second is the pro-LTTE stance taken by the

southern Tamil Nadu state of India, which has obstructed the counter terrorism efforts of the Sri Lankan government.

Sri Lanka is a democratic island-nation located 27 miles off the southeast coast of India. The conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE has been commonly identified as an ethnic conflict by external sources. Although it has been branded in this manner, the Tamil and the Muslim minorities lived in harmony with the Sinhalese majority during the pre-colonial era. Though the dominant ethnically based interpretations describe the Sri Lankan problem, a pure domestic matter, it has its roots in South India. It is more appropriate to portray the problem as a regional conflict in South Asia. Further, there is evidence to show that the roots of the idea began after an unsuccessful bid to establish a separate Tamil state in the southern portion of India was abandoned after India amended its constitution against it in 1963.

The current crisis is also an aftermath of the British Colonial rule from 1815 to 1948. After Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 and with the emergence of democracy, there was a shift of power from the privileged Tamil minorities to the majority Sinhala Buddhists who were deprived of their rights under the “divide and rule policy” of the British.¹ After regaining independence, the Sinhalese tried to enforce their political supremacy. Clashes between the Sinhalese and the Tamils irrupted during the first post independence constitution that proposed to make the Sinhala the official language.

There are other arguments to say that the problem between the Sinhalese and the Tamils are much more deep rooted. The long standing uneasiness and at times confrontational tragic relationship can be dated back to pre-colonial history. There had been Indian invasions by the Tamil Chola kings in the 12th century and battles between

the Sinhala and the Tamil kings Dutugemunu and Elara. After the Independence in 1948, a subsequent demand for a greater autonomy by the Tamil leaders developed in to a war demanding a separate state.²

To support the ongoing political demands of a separate state, youth from the North and East parts of Sri Lanka took up arms by forming independent militant groups. These groups subsequently destroyed the Tamil political leadership. LTTE under the leadership of Vellupillai Prabhakaran was the most organized of all groups. The LTTE commenced its insurgency initially to acts of violence such as targeting police officers and Tamil politicians who had close ties with the government.³ LTTE later annihilated the other Tamil groups to gain supremacy. The grand strategic aim of the LTTE is to gain absolute control of the North and East provinces through political and military means in order to establish a traditional and autonomous homeland for the Tamil people, ruled by self-determination. The LTTE has fought a prolonged war for this homeland with the Sri Lankan forces since 1983. What has identified the LTTE for its ruthlessness has been a history of civilian massacres, suicide bombings, killing of political leaders on both Sri Lankan and Indian soil.

In July 1983, LTTE ambushed and killed 13 Sri Lankan army soldiers in the North. The majority of the population in Sri Lanka is Sinhalese from the southern and western parts of the island. This act triggered communal violence in the Southern parts of Sri Lanka between the Sinhalese and Tamils. Communal clashes occurred in 1958, 1977 and in 1983 between the two communities.⁴ The most violent uprising was in 1983, after the killing of the 13 Sri Lanka Army soldiers, when many Tamils lost their lives and property. After the 1983 clashes many Tamils moved to western nations such

as Canada, UK, Australia and Scandinavian countries seeking political asylum. Other Tamils moved to the northern and eastern Tamil dominated areas in Sri Lanka. It also paved the way for the LTTE to gain more sympathy for their cause to recruit the Tamil youth, and build up their force to a fully-fledged militant organization. Prior to the communal riots of July 1983, the total numbers of terrorists were estimated at less than 200 members.⁵ The United National Party government was blamed for its delay in taking prompt action to stop the violence in the predominantly Tamil areas in the south.⁶ Two decades of conflict have resulted in the loss of approximately 80,000 lives. In addition, it has negative effects on the Sri Lankan island nation socially and economically, with a heavy requirement on defense expenditure. There is a continuing threat to the peace, stability, territorial integrity and the sovereignty of Sri Lanka.

The LTTE has developed its terrorist methods to the point that it is considered by the FBI as one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations in the world. Its activities include money laundering, drug trafficking, human trafficking, gunrunning as well as running its own commercial ships for fundraising and arms smuggling. The LTTE has become a transnational and a regional threat. LTTE terrorism endangers the regional stability and will eventually become a global threat.

When the United National Party government gained power in 1977, President J.R. Jayewardene adopted a foreign policy more allied to the west and estranged relations with India who was the regional power. India's security interests wanted to reduce foreign intervention and opted to convey a warning to the Sri Lankan government; which had close links with United States, China and Pakistan. It was in India's best interest to conduct an armed intervention in support of the Tamil terrorists, if

Sri Lanka could not solve the issue diplomatically. The LTTE and other Tamil separatist organizations made use of this opportunity to make the southern Indian state their safe haven. The central government of India under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and later Rajiv Gandhi initially supported the Tamil cause, and even provided Tamil terrorists training camps in South India making the LTTE stronger.⁷ Retired members of Indian Forces, under the arrangements made by Research Analysis Wing (RAW), trained militants using many camps in southern India. India's unwillingness to discourage these activities strained the relations between the two countries. Later the Indian government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, made attempts to improve relation with its neighbors while providing clandestine support to the Tamil terrorists.

Since the beginning of the Tamil insurgency, South Indian politics has played a dominant role in the Sri Lankan issue. India has often interfered and imposed a tremendous impact on the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) by intervening in the domestic political or military issues of Sri Lanka. Tamil Nadu politics have always displayed a pro-LTTE stance to suit its political objectives. The killing of the former Indian Prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi in Tamilnadu in 1991 is ample evidence of this stance, and further confirms that the Sri Lankan issue goes beyond the island. Further Indian involvement included India sending Peacekeeping Forces to Sri Lanka in 1987. This occurred without the sanctions of an international body.⁸

Since 1985, Sri Lankan governments have made efforts to suppress the LTTE militarily and attempted many peace efforts. First attempt of negotiations was held in Thimpu, Bhutan but it soon failed and the fighting commenced again.⁹ The LTTE

consistently used the periods of negotiation to regroup and reorganize. Typically the LTTE has been the first to break the established truce, often causing heavy damage and casualties to security forces. On 29 July 1997, the Sri Lankan government signed the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord and under the accord was meeting many of the demands of the Tamils. These demands included devolution of power in the north and east, merger of the two provinces, and granting the 13th amendment which provided official status of the Tamil language. India agreed to establish control through the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF). LTTE reluctantly agreed to disarm but later refused to cooperate and commenced fighting with the IPKF. This effort ended terribly for India. By the time the Indian Prime minister, V.P. Sing, withdrew the Indian troops, 1100 Indian soldiers had been killed in Sri Lanka and the cost to the Indian government was over 20 Billion Rupees.¹⁰ In 1991, during the election campaign in Tamilnadu, a LTTE suicide bomber killed Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, expanding the Sri Lankan conflict beyond its boundaries.

Military efforts of the Sri Lankan forces have weakened the LTTE on many occasions, but the terrorists have always survived and reorganized by either drawing support from government of India to pressurize the Sri Lankan government (GOSL) or on the pretext of a cease-fire proposal and negotiations. The GOSL no longer trusts the LTTE peace efforts. Whenever peace was broken, the terrorists would claim and demarcate their own areas free from the domination of military and government administration. In their attempts to keep the peace, the GOSL was unwilling to enforce any pressure during negotiations, in fear of a collapse in the ongoing talks, and breaking the truce.

In February 2002, the United National Party government, conducted fresh peace negotiations with the LTTE and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) with the support of the Nordic facilitators. GOSL held Peace talks in Phuket, Thailand; Norway; and Berlin, Germany. The two parties agreed to explore the possibilities of a Federal solution and the LTTE indicated its willingness to discard the demand of a separate state. Similar to earlier negotiations the LTTE did not act genuinely even during the CFA and continued with their killing of the members of the rival Tamil groups, smuggling of arms, collection of taxes, recruitment of child soldiers and other violations of the agreement.¹¹ Additionally, there were many lapses in the agreement, as it did not represent the interests of all parties especially the majority Sinhalese, the moderate Tamils and the Muslims. The LTTE did not allow the peace monitors to establish offices in the heartland of LTTE dominated areas, thus giving freedom of action for the terrorists. There were many violations of the MOU and the CFA by the LTTE during the period often due to the Scandinavian Monitoring Mission inability to stand against the LTTE. During these occasions, the monitors simply overlooked many of these violations with a 'Nelsonian eye'.¹² As a result, the majority Sinhalese in Sri Lanka lost the confidence of the Scandinavian Monitors, deeming the mission as a failure.

As the LTTE has expanded its organization, it standardized its fund raising process in order to ensure the continuous inflow of funds to meet the ever-increasing expenditures required to procure arms. Currently, the Tamils collect funds from the homeland, the diaspora overseas, and by devising different other means like running its

own business organizations, regulating shipping lines, investing, drug trafficking, human smuggling and extortion.

Front organizations in European countries provide a significant Tamil diaspora and play a major role in the LTTE fund raising campaign. Tamils who migrated to western nations seeking political asylum after the July 1983 communal riots voluntarily contribute while LTTE agents operating in those countries intimidate others. The Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), which was recently denounced by the United States for funding terrorists, was registered as a charitable organization under the pretext of collecting funds for the rehabilitation of people affected by the Tsunami. However, this fund raiser collected large sums of money to procure arms for the LTTE. Another means of fund raising is the LTTE offer to relocate Tamil refugees to a safe country and even find employment for each refugee who in turn pays a sum of money to the agents of the LTTE. This provides a steady source of revenue.

The LTTE has established bases in countries from the far east, south Asia, the Middle East, the former Soviet Union and North Korea to procure clandestine arms trade. It has also established close links with various international arms agents and other terrorist organizations.

But progress was made during the MOU in 2004 when the senior most leader of the LTTE in the east province, Vinayagamurthy Muralidaran, broke away with approximately 5000 militants from the LTTE and joined the democratic stream in support of the GOSL.¹³ There have been many differences between the northern Tamils and the eastern Tamils in the past. This breakaway could be identified as a reemergence of age old disparities.

The LTTE is one of the most ruthless terrorist organizations in the world. This is because the Sri Lankan issue affects not only the region but the globe. Killing of the Indian Prime Minister on the Indian soil is a clear indication that terrorism is not an issue within the peripheries of one's country but an issue with few boundaries; geographic, temporal and societal.¹⁴ LTTE has mastered the tactics of using explosive laden suicide boats against the Sri Lankan Navy. As described by Rohan Gunaratna, a vessel may be used as a bomb, a means, a weapon, a disruption tool, or as a target. The LTTE has mastered each use effectively against their enemy, and has influenced other terrorist organizations in the world. The LTTE were the pioneers in developing these methods and they were later adopted by other terrorist groups. They could use the suicidal boats even against foreign vessels in desperation, to threaten and achieve their demands. The attack against USS Cole, an example of a LTTE style maritime attack and a Hamas attempt within a month are clear indications of terrorist groups copying effective methods from each other and adding renewed ideas to their tactics.¹⁵ The LTTE has a history with Palestinian instructors in the Bekka Valley in Lebanon and other foreign terrorist groups to receive training on anti-aircraft weapons. In 1978 and 1983, the LTTE conducted training in Beirut, Lebanon and in Damascus, Syria with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). Later the LTTE terrorists joined the Arabs in face-to-face confrontations with the Israelis.¹⁶ This is a clear indication how non-state actors exchange ideas and tactics, weaponry, training and even provide assistance in combat in exchange for training facilities and opportunity to gain realistic experience.

Current Operations

With the forming of the present United People's Freedom Alliance government that came into power in 2006, the LTTE broke the truce that had been effect since February 2002 and attacked Sri Lankan forces. In the east, the terrorists closed the gates of a major irrigational project, which provided water to approximately 30,000 farmer families. The GOSL conducted humanitarian operations and planned for Sri Lankan forces to drive the LTTE out of the eastern province to liberate civilians in the area from the clutches of the terrorists. Troops operating in small groups launched assaults from three different directions and succeeded in defeating the LTTE force in the east. Loss of the eastern province cut of supply routes between northern terrorists and eastern groups and weakened the already diminishing grip in the east.¹⁷ Many terrorists were killed and arms and ammunition worth millions of dollars were seized.

The government held free elections in the eastern province and an ex-militant, Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan, was appointed the chief minister. These elections restored hope of peace to the eastern population. The ex-LTTE leader in the east, Vinayagamurthy Muralidaran, was also absorbed to the democratic stream of politics.¹⁸ The government also commenced stability operations without delay resettling internally displaced personnel (IDPs) to reduce the number of refugee camps to the minimum. The loss of the eastern front weakened the terrorists diplomatically as they were fighting other Tamils. Thus they could no longer support the claim for a separate Tamil state.

Subsequently, the government shifted its security forces to clear areas in the North, opening a five divisional front. In January 2008, the GOSL officially pulled out of the cease fire agreement and began conducting offensive operations. Since 2006 the

LTTE has lost a large number of its members and has lost control of the north western portion of the island. In January 2009, the key administrative town of Kilinochchi fell under the control of the Sri Lankan army. Once again the LTTE leadership has sought assistance from the Tamil Nadu state, which in turn pressured the central government of India to act. The coalition government of India, with its reliance on the southern Indian region for stability, is pressuring the Sri Lankan government to cease operations and to commence peace negotiations. Should the GOSL accept the Indian request this action would give the LTTE another opportunity to regroup as it has in the past.

Developing Solutions

Wars do not create permanent enemies. After World War II, relations between the United States and both Japan and Germany were better than they were before the war. Sri Lankans could learn the lessons from this bitter experience to develop a spirit of good will to all the people of the island.¹⁹

Finding a lasting solution to solve the ongoing conflict is a great challenge for Sri Lanka. The government of Sri Lanka has forced the LTTE to a defensive posture by breaking its military might. But even with the LTTE military setbacks and a war weary Tamil population there is work to be done to achieve peace. The LTTE, like other revolutionary groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Sri Lanka Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP), Tamil Eela Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) and the Communist insurgent groups Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna(JVP), Nepal Maoist and Free Aceh Movement of Indonesia must join the political process. These organizations met their ultimate death due to failing to achieve their military and political goals or

because their goals become outdated.²⁰ As stated by General V.P. Malik, former Chief of Army Staff of the Indian army,

“There is no quick solution to a terrorism problem and there is no military means. Military can pave the way and create suitable conditions when the terrorist group is a strong military force. Finally, it has to be a political solution within the existing national constitution and few modified constitutions that will bring an answer to the problem. South Asia should build up a comprehensive strategy combining political, economical, social, perceptual, psychological, operational and diplomatic issues at regional and national levels.”²¹

The Sri Lankan government as a member of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) should persuade the member nations to extend their support to achieve this solution. A genuine Indian role is essential to the solution. Though it considers itself the regional power, it has not been successful in its efforts to promote peace in Sri Lanka. However, India must continue to assist in solving this problem to keep the terrorist issue in Sri Lanka from becoming a greater regional and a global issue.

International assistance and cooperation is also an important factor for finding a lasting solution. The United States, Canada, India, the European Union and many other democracies have banned the LTTE as a terrorist organization, after Sri Lanka vigorously lobbied the United Nations (UN) general assembly. On September 2001, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1373 against terrorist fund raising, financing, harboring, aiding, and supporting terrorists by supplying weapons. Chapter VII of the UN charter also states this and is mandatory for all members to implement.²² By restricting these resources to terrorists through international cooperation, freedom to operate is lost and their ability to recruit new members is decreased. In the war against terrorism South Asia can be a second front. It must be countered through multilateral

cooperation.²³ Therefore, all regional countries must seriously focus on resolution 1373 to defeat international terrorism.

As of January 2009, the civil war on Sri Lanka looks the most favorable in a long time to end. However, nation building steps must be taken to eradicate suspicion between the two contending sides, once the hot war ceases. The people should feel they live in a nation where truth and justice is a priority. A sense of justice will come when all ethnic groups in Sri Lanka feel that they have the same rights. Majoritarian and supranism lead to hostilities and will only provoke further violence. Sri Lankan political leadership and opinion makers must counter these views by assuring the minority that Sri Lanka belongs equally to all the citizens, that all have equal rights and equal protection in the state. The media must be free to comment on discrimination. In the past, there has been an appalling silence by good people and it should be accepted that those who passively accept evil are as much involved in it, as those who help to perpetrate it. In South Africa, people were encouraged to confess their crimes with the assurance that no punishment would follow. The hate that is generated, yet kept within a person's heart has to be given therapeutic treatment. Truth will lead to healing and a healthier relationship between estranged ethnic communities. The state must not isolate the minority cultures. Instead it must find ways to represent their views and minimize the damage and the loss of lives when disagreements exist. The minority Tamils should not feel that they will lose everything if the LTTE is eliminated as an organization. The minds of the citizens are important to the prosperity of Sri Lanka. The LTTE on the other hand have been contributing to the people's terrible plight because of its totalitarian

ends. Their cadres have repeatedly spurned opportunities to reach a political settlement. The people's relationship with the LTTE is complex.²⁴

Recommendations

While seeking ethnic harmony and decentralization of power for the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims should have availability to access the resources in the region and make decisions over governance. Sri Lanka should not be divided as per the ethnic or religious groups. All citizens should be able to live in any region of the country rather than being forced to belonging in a particular area according to race or nationality. Poverty and property issues have deep links with the problem, and Sri Lanka should make greater emphasis to eliminate them.²⁵ There is a great distrust among all communities specially the Sinhalese and the Tamils due to two decades of conflict. The Sinhala political leadership must build the confidence of the Tamil population on security. This will reduce the need for the Tamils to defend themselves. If the two major political parties set aside political gains and work together for the national interest in consultation with the Muslim and the Tamil elected political leaders, a joint political package can ensure peace and justice to all the people of Sri Lanka. All Party Representative Committee (APRC) must not be allowed to become a wasted time stalling exercise. The political leaders have the 2000-consensus proposals to work around and they must develop proposals that will end the meaningless loss of lives, end the tragic displacement of people and restore dignity and justice for all.²⁶

Sri Lanka cannot depend on India to achieve this but must make every possible effort to bring an environment of unity among its people. This will ensure a lasting peace and reduce the dependence on military victories which brings only short-term

solutions.²⁷ Addressing the grievances of the Tamils will find lasting remedies. Part of the solution may be disappointing and painful but changes in the mind set of all communities, must take place to restore the socio-economic structure and finally win the peace.²⁸ Reforms similar to those taken by the government of the United States after their civil war will not work as complete liberty of black slaves did not occur for another century. Reforms will be quite a challenge for the government of Sri Lanka, and the lessons learned from the termination of the Angolan, Nicaragua or El Salvador civil wars should be studied on how these counties reconciled their differences.

Like many political parties, LTTE will be treated as undesirable and the Tamils should be weaned away from their present mindset that the LTTE represents their best interest. Only a united undivided Sri Lanka will ensure a lasting peace and ensure that the terror experienced under the LTTE does not return. The Sinhalese as the majority must educate civilians to act with a sense of responsibility and maturity. Defeating the LTTE militarily is not the end of terrorism and it can always resurface as small pockets of violence. The legitimate grievances of the minorities must be continually addressed and their representatives must have the confidence that they can freely voice their interests.²⁹

There is need for reforms in education to of future generations. The mindset of the adult community must understand both sides of the issue and learn that violence cannot solve ethnic problem. Adult education is important as adults influence the next generation and can only be achieved with unbiased planned learning programs. Amended constitutions should also have flexibility to make room for ethnic differences and allow for the means to address these differences peacefully. After years of war and

broken cease fires there should be opportunities to demonstrate how all parties have compromised to build consensus and confidence of the people. There should be planned awareness programs bound by a strong code of conduct with the aim of maintaining ethnic harmony. Political leaders must show an unbiased attitude towards all races of Sri Lanka.

Again, the Tamil state of South India is approximately 27 miles from Sri Lanka. This situation forces the Indian government to act with certain amount of sympathy towards the Tamils and has rescued the LTTE in the past from difficult situations and military defeat. There should be close bilateral dialogue to convince the central government of India and the southern Tamil politics that the reasonable offers to the Tamils that a united, undivided Sri Lanka is the best opportunity for regional peace.

The Sri Lanka civil war has the potential of ending hostilities as GOSL forces continue to gain military victories in the field. As of late January 2009, LTTE had been defeated with the exception of forces near the city of Mullaitivu. Later in February of the same year, this last city came under GOSL control. However will Sri Lanka see peace in the future? To achieve peace several issues must be addressed.

Since early 1983, the Tamils in western nations especially in Canada, Australia, UK and Scandinavian countries have supported the LTTE financially. Successful military operations have reduced this support and the second generation of these communities living abroad carries different values and ideas than the initial immigrants.³⁰ Blocking LTTE fund raising from the Tamil diasporas will reduce the need to continue fighting. Dialogue and education programs designed to peacefully address disagreements in these Tamils communities should remind the Tamils about the

negative aspects of the war and the consequences of the prolonged conflict. Tamils living overseas must see that the suffering and the loss of lives in the Tamil community living in northern and eastern Sri Lanka is due in part to their funding. Their monetary contributions to the LTTE are being utilized to prolong the Tamil suffering in Sri Lanka, not reduce it. Extensive media coverage of the GOSL programs that are working towards a reasonable resolution could reduce the support of the diasporas and a greater accountability towards the use of funds that are sent would be major setback to the LTTE but a greater use to the Tamil people.

Bringing an end to the long drawn military conflict requires a political option with strong economical development in the areas most affected by combat. During the last two decades northern and eastern areas have become the poorest areas of Sri Lanka. The government has commenced nation building and stability operations in the east after conducting local government and provincial council elections. Northern areas will require more development as they were under LTTE control for a considerably longer period of time and there were only few organized development campaigns run by the state. Therefore the GOSL should commence the following socio-economic activities with international assistance before frustration sets in among the people in the war torn areas.

First, institutional policy reforms are necessary at the national level to achieve the social objectives of eradicating poverty and providing to the people the right to health. The reforms should include economic reforms such as micro-credit, particularly for women as an income-generating scheme. Labor-intensive public service programs designed to develop infrastructure and house the poor are needed as well. Social

safety net and cash transfer programs from the establish government to private sector factories, such as garment industry, would permit large scale job opportunities for Sri Lanka.

Second, agricultural reforms are required to include the development of policies designed to maximize opportunities for farmers; medium, small and micro enterprises; agricultural extension programs directed towards small farmers; reform and redistribute land ownership to eradicate poverty; and equal opportunities for jobs to all poor to reduce extreme deprivation. Furthermore, development of dairy and poultry farming and establishing collection centers for products will improve cooperative systems for villages to sell their products, purchase fertilizer, pesticides, etc. Also, repair to irrigation tanks and canals are needed to improve agriculture land throughout the island.

Third, there is a critical requirement of social development and change of the mindset of the Tamil civilians who lived in isolation from the rest of the country. Rehabilitation of child soldiers and war widows by providing medical care by psychological therapists should be given priority. It is also important to address attention on educational reforms to improve schools and provide systematic education. Especially important is the focus on children who were employed as child soldiers. Train youth on community development activity and technical education for skilled work that will pave the way for them to seek job opportunities locally and overseas. Training ex-militants and absorbing selected personnel for local police duties will assist in the rehabilitation of youth, especially ex-militants. Education, training and confidence building for youth and school age children can be achieved by arranging tours to other areas in country and buildup interaction with other communities. Also, there should be arranged community

development seminars involving local and foreign educators. Finally, there should also be development in other infrastructure facilities such as roads and bridges to improve access to all areas while developing small industries, promote handy craft and small entrepreneur business.

Long-term effects of the war have made considerable damage in other areas in the south as well. The GOSL military is manned mainly from the southern areas of Sri Lanka and their families have been traumatized by the long conflict. Over 26,000 forces personnel have lost their lives leaving quite a number of war widows and children with a single parent. Many wounded soldiers from battle will need long term care. There are other civilian communities that have suffered due to LTTE atrocities in the southern parts of Sri Lanka. Therefore, reconstruction programs will be required throughout the island in order to maintain a balance and avoid isolation of other communities during this decisive period of the complicated conflict.

Conclusion

Though many argue that a political solution is the best to solve an insurgency, the GOSL failed to engage in meaningful negotiations with a militarily strong terrorist organization opposing its efforts. More than five political attempts to solve the issue were jeopardized by the LTTE, drawing GOSL to resort to a military option. Furthermore, the moderate Tamils willing to support peaceful solution could not voice their opinion due to fear. A need for the military to suppress the LTTE became clear and the government forces have been successful in the process. This will afford avenues for unhindered progress in seeking a lasting solution by means of diplomatic efforts and more meaningful negotiations. Poorly neglected areas where development

was at a standstill, with infrastructure existing devastated, should be restored. With a ruthless terrorist organization being brought to its knees, the GOSL along with the peace loving Tamil citizens could commence reconciliation efforts, win the once hostile populace back, and focus on nation building. What is most challenging is to defuse hatred between the communities.

The process of nation building, which began after Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948, had a solid socio and economic base to build on. In the early 50s, the harmony that prevailed in the multi-racial and religious society pointed to a promise of greater things to come. Lee Kuan Yew, a former Prime minister of Singapore, cited Sri Lanka as that model that should be followed by his own country. However shortsighted politicians seeking personal gains and power along with the problem of racist policies and economic adventurism finally broke the progress of Sri Lanka. This breakup of society and attempt to end this civil war has been experienced for a generation now. After decades, an effort to solve the LTTE issue is nearing an end and peace is seen as a viable goal. If a fundamentally racist military group that refuses to compromise could be militarily defeated, the potential exist for nation building to proceed. It has been pointed out that the LTTE does not live up to its claims that it represents the minority ethnic group it belongs to. In fact it has ignored the plight of the people they are supposed to be defending and has used them as human shields. The writing is clear. Defeat stares the LTTE in the face, and the most they can hope for fair negotiations. However this will require them to comply with the government's request that lay down their arms first.

The fallout from the war has been going on ever since it started over two decades ago. Moreover, all the wounds and scars of war can be seen in the wounded from both sides and the horrendous death toll and the displacement of the people caught in the crossfire. Add to this the psychological traumas experienced by the whole population of Sri Lanka and the victimization of children through the recruitment by the LTTE. There is misery and brokenness in an ethnic scale. This long conflict requires compromise, hard work, inspiration and guidance to scale of the reconstruction efforts of Japan and Germany after World War II. Although difficult, Sri Lankans deserve a lasting peace and the prosperity that can come from the efforts of all its citizens working together.

Endnotes

¹ Asoka Bandarage, "The Sri Lankan Conflict a Multi-Polar Approach," *Harvard International Review*, 15 June 2008, available from [Gttp:www.harvardir.org/articles/1725/1/](http://www.harvardir.org/articles/1725/1/); Internet; accessed 10 October 2008.

² Rohan Gunaratna, *Indian intervention in Sri Lanka* (South Asian Net Work on Conflict Research, 1993), 55.

³ Wikipedia, *Sri Lankan Civil war*, 2, available from http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Civil_War; Internet; accessed 15 October 2008.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Rohan Gunaratna, *Indian intervention in Sri Lanka* (South Asian Net Work on Conflict Research, 1993), 93.

⁶ Ibid, 78.

⁷ Wikipedia, *Indo-Sri Lankan Accord*; Internet; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/Indo-Sri_Lanka_Accord; accessed 20 October 2008.

⁸ Asoka Bandarage, "The Sri Lankan Conflict a Multi-Polar Approach", *Harvard International Review*, 15 June 2008, available from [Gttp:www.harvardir.org/articles/1725/1/](http://www.harvardir.org/articles/1725/1/); Internet; accessed 10 October 2008.

⁹ Wikipedia, *Sri Lankan Civil war*; available from http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Civil_War; Internet; accessed 15 October 2008.

¹⁰ Ibid, 3.

¹¹ Ibid, 6.

¹² Wikipedia, "Nelsonian Eye," available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Nelson; Internet; accessed 12 Jan 2009. Admiral Nelson had only one operational eye. Once he turned to his flag Captain Foley, and said "You know, Foley, I only have one eye — I have the right to be blind sometimes," and then holding his telescope to his blind eye, said "I really do not see the signal!" Therefore a Nelsonian eye is often defined as to willingly neglecting something.

¹³ Wikipedia, *Sri Lankan Civil War*; available from http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Civil_War; Internet; accessed 15 October 2008.

¹⁴ Rohan Gunaratna, *Terrorism in the Asia- Pacific, Threat and Response*. (Eastern University Press,2003), 46.

¹⁵ Ibid., 70.

¹⁶ Rohan Gunaratna, *Indian intervention in Sri Lanka* (South Asian Net Work on Conflict Research, (1993), 131.

¹⁷ Wikipedia, *Sri Lankan Civil War*; available from http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lankan_Civil_War; Internet; accessed 15 October 2008.

¹⁸ Editorial, "Eradicating Terrorism," *Daily News of Sri Lanka*, 13 October 2008.

¹⁹ Gomin Dayasiri, "Amity after the War," *Sunday Observer, Sri Lanka*, 31 August 2008.

²⁰ Ranjith Gunaratna, "How will the LTTE end?" *Sunday Observer, Sri Lanka*, 12 October 2008.

²¹ General V.P. Malik, "Anti-Terror Policy," lecture, Anti-terror Conference, Colombo, 2007, cited in *The Island, Sri Lanka*, 6 November 2007.

²² Dr Palitha Kohona, "Terrorism: A Global Menace Challenging Democracies", *Daly News, Sri Lanka*, 16 November 2007, 9.

²³ Rohan Gunaratna, *Terrorism in the Asia- Pacific, Threat and Response*. (Eastern University Press, 2003), 222.

²⁴ H. Kaunaratna. BA (Ceylon) University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, interviewed by author, 25 November 2008.

²⁵ Asoka Bandarage, "The Sri Lankan Conflict a Multi-Polar Approach", *Harvard International Review*, 15 June 2008, available from <Gttp:www.harvardir.org/articles/1725/1/>; Internet; accessed 10 October 2008.

²⁶ H. Kaunaratna. BA (Ceylon) University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, interviewed by author, 25 November 2008.

²⁷ Colonel (retired) H Hariharan, "Sri Lanka: An Analysis of Military Solution". *The Compass, Sri Lanka Guardian*, 30 November 2008.

²⁸ Dushy Ranetunge, "Winning the Peace", *Saturday Island, Sri Lanka*, 29 November 2008.

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³⁰ Ranjith Gunaratna, "How will the LTTE end?" *Sunday Observer, Sri Lanka*, 12 October 2008.

