THE POLITICS OF THE NORTH-EAST
Part of the Sri Lanka Strategic Conflict Assessment 2005
2000 – 2005

Liz Philipson and Yuvi Thangarajah

Award-winning photographs by Annuruddha Lokuhapuarachchi, Dominic Sansoni and Gemunu Amarasinghe
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PART OF THE

SRI LANKA STRATEGIC CONFLICT ASSESSMENT 2005

By Liz Philipson and Yuvi Thangarajah
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Acknowledgements

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<td>Bharatiya Janata Party</td>
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<td>CFA</td>
<td>Ceasefire Agreement</td>
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<td>EPDP</td>
<td>Eelam People’s Democratic Party</td>
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<td>EPRLF</td>
<td>Eelam People’s Revolutionary Liberation Front</td>
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<td>GA</td>
<td>Government Agent</td>
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<td>GoSL</td>
<td>Government of Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>HSZ</td>
<td>High Security Zone</td>
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<td>ISGA</td>
<td>Interim Self-Governing Authority</td>
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<td>JVP</td>
<td>Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna</td>
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<td>LTTE</td>
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<td>NEPC</td>
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<td>PLOTE</td>
<td>Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam</td>
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<td>P-TOMS</td>
<td>Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure</td>
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<tr>
<td>SIHRN</td>
<td>Sub-Committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs in the North-East</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLAF</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Armed Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLMC</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Muslim Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLMM</td>
<td>Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>STF</td>
<td>Special Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>TELo</td>
<td>Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>Tamil National Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRO</td>
<td>Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation</td>
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<td>TULF</td>
<td>Tamil United Liberation Front</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report is part of a broader study entitled "Aid, Conflict and Peacebuilding in Sri Lanka" (Goodhand and Klem 2005). Its focus is exclusively the North-East1 of Sri Lanka since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in February 2002. The report explores changing issues, relationships, and trends at a micro level and provides a critique of the macro-level analysis that has informed the peace process in Sri Lanka to date.

BACKGROUND

The events after the LTTE capture of the Elephant Pass army base in April 2000 brought peacemaking to the fore, with the Norwegian brokered ceasefire of February 2002 as the result. Negotiations commenced six months later, and there were six rounds of talks before the process was stalled again in April 2003 by the withdrawal of the LTTE. They had become frustrated and feared they were in a "peace trap," while other actors feared that the LTTE were simply using the peace process to obtain total dominance of the North-East population. The publication of their proposals for an "Interim Self-Governing Authority" in the North-East, which elaborated a maximalist negotiating position, resulted in a backlash in the South from pro-Sinhala nationalist forces and the process remained stalled. Nevertheless, the trust that had been built between the Wickremesinghe administration and the LTTE helped maintain the placement of the CFA.

In April 2004 a general election was brought about prematurely by the president’s usage of her executive powers; the president’s party, together with several allies, formed a government. The main government partner was the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a party that has consistently opposed the peace process and has mobilized under the banner of Sinhala nationalism. Furthermore, relations between the LTTE and the president were not good. Post-election Southern politics remained quite turbulent and did not appear very favorable toward accommodation with the LTTE.

The elections resulted in a new coalition of Tamil politicians, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which, for the first time, included direct LTTE nominees alongside older politicians of the traditional Tamil constitutional party, and the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). This caused a split in the TULF; its leader, Anandasangari, remained independent of this grouping. Northern politics, and particularly the LTTE, were rocked by the defection of their Batticoloa commander, Karuna, just before the election. So after the 2004 elections, both the North-East and the South of Sri Lanka were extremely politically unstable and remain so to date.

The tsunami of December 26, 2004 affected all communities and initially inspired compassion and cooperation. However, insensitive distribution of post tsunami relief re-awakened old enmities and created new contours of conflict.

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1 The use of North-East throughout this report recognizes the contested nature of the term. "Northeast" or "North and East" would denote different political approaches to the aspirations of Tamil nationalism.
MAIN FINDINGS

Analysis

The design of the peace process is inadequate. The official peace process is narrowly focussed on the LTTE and the GoSL and fails to include other interest groups, in particular, non-military actors. This is not a new critique, but it is now clear that the process needs a broader base if it is not to topple. Furthermore, immediate prospects and problems have consistently eclipsed longer-term goals in relation to the peace process and the politics of the North-East and South.

Analyses of the process have been largely two-dimensional and very short term, particularly at crisis times. Thus, the analyses failed to be sufficiently predictive, not exposing the dangers inherent in a bilateral process until they were manifest. The changing nature of asymmetry of the conflict parties, which is particularly dynamic during a change from the battlefield to the negotiating table, was not a strong element in analytical thinking. There has been a failure to develop mechanisms for micro-analysis, which has further undermined predictive capacities and resulted in the national political-level processes becoming more remote from reality and the needs of the people. The national processes are also inadequate in addressing local conflicts and needs, and these grow until they threaten the process itself. The need for sub-regional analysis throughout the island is key to moving forward productively.

Issues change and develop, and new issues intervene throughout the conflict period; these also need to be properly brought into an analysis and addressed. Developments in land, livelihood, political space, and caste have all been subject to change during different cycles of war and peace in Sri Lanka. The tsunami is a new issue that has certainly not been ignored--quite the reverse--but, in both development and conflict terms it has been dealt with neither appropriately nor helpfully in the medium term.

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

The LTTE came to the negotiating table as the international response (particularly from India) following their victory in taking Elephant Pass Army Camp in April 2000 convinced them that they could not gain anything from proceeding militarily. The government came to the table for a similar reason. However, the LTTE began to complain about the pace of progress in the talks and the lack of delivery on previous agreements; despite the high levels of trust that had been established, confidence began to erode. The void of a stalled process resulted in frustration turning to cynicism in many quarters. So, for the LTTE, the 2004 elections may have ended any hope of negotiating a settlement in terms acceptable to them in the foreseeable future. As a result, many commentators argue that the tsunami saved Sri Lanka from a return to war last December. Certainly the November 2005 speech by Prabhakaran reveals a high level of impatience at the situation. He also clearly states that the LTTE are prepared to choose the battlefield once more, though he also states that the organization does have a commitment to the process.

The LTTE have also had problems with their own constituency. They exert control over the population in areas nominally under government authority as well as in the areas acknowledged to be under LTTE jurisdiction. This control has generally proved to be coercive and authoritarian throughout the ceasefire period. Indeed many people in the East believe that the climate of fear has increased since the ceasefire. Coerced donations have continued and new areas of "taxation" have emerged (for example, on A9 checkpoints).

It is the recruitment of child soldiers and the murder of political opponents that has attracted the most outrage in the international sphere. The former has resulted in a backlash within the Tamil community itself, but the murders stilled almost all critique of the LTTE and compounded the climate of fear. It will take considerable support and determination at the political
level to empower local investigations into the killings, but the reassertion of due process of law is the only way to change the current norm of impunity.

Tensions have emerged around the CFA, and early controversial findings by the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) were not helpful in maintaining confidence in the agreement. Considerations of maintaining the military balance have bedevilled the controversial High Security Zones (HSZs), seen by many as a purely humanitarian issue centered around returning the displaced to their homes. The LTTE have also found the restrictions on personal security a problem when traveling in areas of government authority. Meanwhile the army, which feels that it is watching the LTTE take control of areas which it fought hard to control, is also frustrated. Though the army is obeying orders to the letter, it should be noted that there is little active support for the current CFA among the armed services.

The LTTE is a military organization, but the stalling of the peace process forced them to find alternative political channels, resulting in the emergence of the TNA. Though this development is lamented by those Tamils who believe that the independent pacific voice of the TULF has now been totally silenced, it has provided a channel through which the LTTE can directly nominate younger Tamils into mainstream politics. However, most Tamils believe that they will have to live with the LTTE as a military organization until the specter of war has finally been laid to rest.

Where the LTTE has control, it mirrors state institutions such as courts, police, etc., but its control over government bodies in areas of government authority is not so obvious - for example, there is a perception of the North-East Provincial Council (NEPC) as an instrument of the LTTE.

The ruthless authoritarianism of the LTTE has always been accompanied by the incorruptibility, discipline, and sacrifice of their cadres. However, resentments over LTTE “taxation” have risen as the experience of war has receded and nothing has changed more than this perception of incorruptibility. The perception is now more often one of “greed” both among Tamils in North-East Sri Lanka and among expatriate Tamils. There are also suspicions as to their honesty in relation to development activities. Nevertheless, it is impossible to characterize resource issues in North-East Sri Lanka purely in terms of greed. Control over resources and population represents the power and legitimacy the LTTE have sought for many years, and they will not give either up lightly.

The LTTE are using development projects to gain support and have thwarted any substantial development efforts lest that create a dependency away from LTTE influence. The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) is the LTTE flagship in this regard, particularly in the East where the LTTE is trying to reassert hegemony through the power and influence of reconstruction. Diaspora Tamils have also been used within the development ambit of the LTTE. They need their technical expertise, and the result has been a slightly different dynamic. During the war, the Diaspora simply followed the LTTE instructions, but after the ceasefire there was a greater opportunity for expatriates to influence the organization. This has closed somewhat since the Karuna defection, and the Diaspora are feeling the resulting pressure.

Non-military actors

The failure to incorporate non-military actors in the peace process after the ceasefire was negotiated is a failure of the process. However, there is a lacuna of middle level political activity in the North-East that has been marred by emigration, isolation, wartime dangers, and LTTE coercion. The response of the three universities from where such activities might be expected to emanate, either directly or through graduates, has been poor. The quality of technical, critical, and political academic activity is very poor, and the latter
may well be fraught with danger. Even the LTTE themselves feel the lack of available up-to-date technical knowledge. Jaffna University is situated in the seat of Tamil culture and nationalism. Muslims are looking to the South Eastern University to provide leadership to Eastern Muslims, and Batticoloa University’s mix of Northern and Eastern Tamils could play a different role. All are technically backward and isolated.

**Eastern Dynamics**

The Eastern province has been the most unstable and continually contested area throughout the war. Ceasefires have previously floundered in this multiethnic province where, most recently, the site of intra-Tamil rivalry has been housed. The conflict dynamics are complex and micro-level differences shape the outcomes within the region. Trincomalee, Batticoloa, and Amparai have varying sub-district dynamics related to community, geographical, and socioeconomic variations. Military balance within districts also varies.

The defection of Karuna from the LTTE has been felt militarily, politically, socially, and economically. Equally, it has brought the peace process itself into question. There are many theories as to why the split occurred. There has always been a Northern - Eastern Tamil difference and competitiveness, but it is known that Karuna had personal as well as political issues that may have been influential with regard to the timing of the split. The Wanni and Karuna factions of the LTTE are now both engaged in a terror campaign to eliminate each other’s cadres and supporters in the East, particularly in the Batticoloa district. No one (including the organizations themselves) is clear about who is supporting whom and the civilian population is caught in the line of fire. Consideration of what the outcome may be reveals a series of contradictions. Karuna is an Eastern Tamil who first made public the resentments of the East toward the North and is appreciated for that. He was also a ruthless military eastern commander, exacting taxes, coercing the population, and recruiting children. The Wanni Leadership spurned the efforts of eastern civil society to mediate, insisting on a military response while replacing eastern leaders with northern leaders and flooding the East with the feared intelligence wing of Pottu Amman. But if Karuna is taking refuge with the army (and he appears to have little choice), he will likely be rejected by Eastern Tamils as other Tamil groups working with the army have been. These contradictions will be exploited, positively and negatively, by other actors, which will help legitimize or de-legitimize Karuna. Furthermore, this delicate situation plays directly into the CFA and the military balance. In the meantime, there is likely to be a long drawn-out battle for power over the Tamils. The whole population will suffer, but the youth are particularly vulnerable.

Tamil-Muslim relations have been tense for many years, but in the late 1980s and early 1990s these tensions were exacerbated by the recruitment of Muslim youth by military intelligence, which resulted in them being targeted by LTTE. However, this did not happen north of Trincomalee, thus there has been less tension there. Consequently, Muslims in that area are less interested in Muslim autonomy and seek a solution based on Tamil-Muslim political interdependence. However, in the north of Batticoloa tensions have erupted, often over land issues, but the Muslim leadership there has been confident enough to defy and negotiate with the LTTE to accommodate local needs. South of Batticoloa, Muslims are highly disillusioned and feel they have reaped no benefits from the CFA. They oppose any LTTE-dominated political arrangement. The perception of Tamils in this area is that Muslims interests are supported by the state to the detriment of Tamil interests.

Muslim youth are highly politically conscious throughout the East. They are more educated than twenty years ago and they feel the injustices and humiliations to their community more keenly. Conversations with the Muslim youth had the eerie deja vu quality of speaking with Tamil youth groups in the
late 1970s. Their rhetoric is also much more reminiscent of those days than of the jihadi style groups from other countries.

The traditional politics of the Sinhalese in the East are being disturbed by the intense activities of the JVP in the area in the wake of the tsunami. There were already fears that the government of the day might "sell them out" to the LTTE, and these fears are being inflated by competitive hartal politics between the JVP and LTTE. This move toward the extremes is leaving less political space for the majority, which broadly favors accommodation with the LTTE within a unified Sri Lanka. The large number of armed service personnel within Trincomalee swells the numbers of Sinhalese and, together with the police, is an important stakeholder in the conflict. Relations between the people and the police, who tend to be more multiethnic, are generally quite good. The military are very bitter about the operation of the CFA and are delighted about the Karuna split, which they see as a potential opportunity to oust the LTTE from the East.

International engagement in the North-East

The single most important external player is India, and Indo-Lanka relations have a complex history. India has always had, and continues to have, a multi-faceted engagement with Sri Lanka through trade, cultural relations, diplomatic relations, and intelligence activity. Everyone agrees that there can be no sustainable settlement of the problems in Sri Lanka without the acquiescence of India, which reluctantly accepted Norwegian facilitation and bitterly resents the internationalization of the conflict (with the inclusion of Japan, the U.S., and the EU in the process).

Though the Norwegians should be commended on their commitment to peace in Sri Lanka, their narrow bilateral conception of the process is stultifying. The Norwegian leadership of the SLMM, which is almost entirely Nordic, has led to questions of a conflict of interest between mediation and monitoring. The CFA is an adequate separation of forces agreement, but less adequate as a human rights agreement. The lack of a human rights agreement and the limited human rights role of the SLMM have not been helpful over the last 12 months, particularly in the Eastern province.

International donor conditionality has largely been a failure as both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government are wily enough to play off each other the variance in foreign policy interests and approaches. Differing policy objectives also challenge aspirations to donor coordination, and the attempt at a unified approach should be abandoned in favor of complementarity with a clear understanding that whatever transitional arrangements are necessary, donors will require a settlement based on international norms.

Donor intervention has also tended to be driven by timetables emanating from their capital cities, rather than by and responsive to the situation on the ground in Sri Lanka. As a result, messages have been less than timely, and their impact lessened.

The LTTE has not yet proven its ability to represent and care for all Tamils, let alone all the communities of the North-East. This failure cannot be ignored, yet it must be understood that a military organization that perceives itself as beleaguered by other forces cannot switch to democratic controls immediately. Nor can the LTTE transform independently of other actors, institutions, and contexts. Transformation and development of the LTTE has to be seen in the context of development and transformation of the North-East and not in the context of donor conditionality. All parties in the North-East should be required to observe international norms with respect to human rights, but also those associated with development (for example, public participation, open tendering, and transparent local financing).

In the North-East, powers of leverage, economic greed, and legitimacy all feed into conflict dynamics at the level of politics and people. The local, national, and internal dynamics surrounding economic resources in Sri Lanka
have become extremely complex. This complexity has been increased post-tsunami by the plethora of international organizations involved and the increase in money available. Unfortunately, these complexities and conflict sensitivities have been largely ignored.

The pattern of exclusion, violence, and political attention has itself become habit-forming in Sri Lanka, and encourages violence as a means of problem-solving. The pattern needs to be broken and principles of inclusion need to be incorporated into the design and implementation of the peace process in Sri Lanka.

**IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

**The peace process**

The peace process in Sri Lanka is based on conflict management—not conflict transformation—and needs to be better understood. To change this there must be a greater emphasis on localized, nuanced, sustained, and timely analysis. The analysis should underpin prompt action to grab windows of opportunity and keep the process moving. However, actions should not be in the context of short-term agendas but focused on the longer-term needs of the peace process. The exclusionary nature of the peace process must be corrected if there is to be any hope of transformation. Trust issues are fundamental to getting the process moving, but should be done in the context of international norms underpinning the process.

**The international community**

The international community is made up of many different interests, a fact that limits its impact. This has made conditionality on both the government and the LTTE ineffective; in fact, the attempts at unitary action should be abandoned in favor of complementary approaches. Donors are also guilty of short-term thinking—as evidenced by the shocking impact post-tsunami aid had on the conflict—an issue that needs greater examination and correction. Too often timing of actions and reports is dictated by events in donor capital cities or the international arena, rather than being in tune with and responsive to events within Sri Lanka.

Donors also need a better understanding of conflict analysis, for which they require better institutional memories and conflict transformation. They need to understand that conflict transformation is a much more holistic concept than simply transforming the LTTE from a military to a political organization. Any transformation must be based on international norms.

Donors should develop strategies to ensure the application of international development norms and best practices across Sri Lanka.
1. Introduction

This report looks at changes in relation to the peace process since the signing of the CFA in February 2002 and the current dynamics and trends within the North-East, both within and between Tamils, Muslims, and Sinhalese. It is based on interviews conducted throughout the North-East of Sri Lanka in March 2005. The report, although considered a snapshot, is informed by historical perspective and local experience. It is complementary to a Southern study that focused on Southern politics and informed the Sri Lanka Conflict Assessment (2005) commissioned by the World Bank and the governments of the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and Sweden.

The study upon which this report is based consisted of over one hundred interviews. Focus group discussions were held in the districts of Jaffna, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Amparai. The informants interviewed consisted of members and leaders of the community, officials of NGOs and INGOs, academics, government officials, members of the army and navy (including officers and lower ranks), and members and elected representatives of political parties. These interviews and discussions were held both within and outside the North-East.

It should be stressed that this brief was meant to look solely at the North-East, so the paper inevitably examines and criticizes the LTTE, as the de facto government there, rather than the Sri Lankan government. However, both authors are acutely aware of the long struggle of Sri Lankan Tamils for equality, and the repression they suffered at the hands of successive governments. Furthermore, the LTTE and other political formations in Sri Lanka are the product of that struggle and that repression. Their behavior and character today continue to be determined by their interactions with GoSL and other actors. Peace in Sri Lanka requires that the LTTE be acknowledged as, and behave as, a responsible partner in a comprehensive process.

The peace process in Sri Lanka is currently delicately poised between stasis and degeneration. The CFA has held, but with reports of increasing breaches. The hope and faith that the original agreement inspired have turned to cynicism and frustration. It is hoped that the production of this report at such a critical moment will influence all the key actors in the Sri Lankan peace process to strive for more positive dynamics. For this to happen, a deeper understanding and sensitivity to the experiences of the people of the North-East and greater attention to excluded voices is required.

Chapter 2 of the report outlines the political processes that led to the ceasefire agreement of February 2001, which was the culmination of some long-term political changes. The rest of the paper outlines the slow crumbling of the high hopes engendered by this agreement and cites some of the reasons why it occurred.

The central critique of this paper is stated in Chapter 3, which is primarily a critique of shallow and narrow analyses that have frustrated the process to date. The authors contend that the short-term nature of the analyses and the failure to place the armed parties within a wider context have contributed to the failure to identify threats to the process before they become crises.

Chapter 4 looks at changes in conflict issues and the impact of the CFA, both in terms of changing conditions (i.e., land and caste) and new intervening issues (i.e., the tsunami). The discussion indicates the need for regular re-analysis on how conflict issues continue to develop against the new contexts of an evolving, or degenerating, peace process.
The LTTE, the major actor in the North-East, and its relationships with other actors and its own constituency, are the subjects of Chapter 5. This section breaks down simplistic, monolithic characterizations of the organization and relocates them in the context of their long-term goals of legitimacy and power. This chapter also illustrates some of the commensurate effects on the population of the North-East.

Chapter 6, by contrast, focuses on non-military actors, specifically the universities of the North-East. The lacuna of independent middle-level actor activity in the North-East is a serious problem for the region's political development. This short section looks at universities--often the engine of development--and finds them lacking.

Eastern Sri Lanka has been the most volatile and consistently contested area throughout the war. It has also been the site for the breakdown of previous ceasefires. This report concentrates on the dynamics of the East and, in the course of doing so, underscores the need for more fine-tuned microanalysis. Chapter 7 outlines the challenges to the LTTE and the peace process posed by issues, events, and actors in the Eastern Province.

The increasing international engagement in the North-East is the subject of Chapter 8. Chapter 8 also examines the implications of the report for the peace process and the international community.
2. From War to No-War

2000: A DECISIVE YEAR FOR SRI LANKA

The LTTE leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, announced in his Heroes’ Day speech in November 1999 that they had won the “greatest military victory” after the capture of Elephant Pass and were extending the hand of peace (Tamilnet, 1999a). Anton Balasingham, in his address to commemorate the same event in London, added that they would “take care” of Jaffna soon (Tamilnet, 1999b). Yet in December 1999 President Chandrika Kumaratunga revealed in a BBC interview that the LTTE had agreed to a Norwegian facilitation “after the election.” The next twelve months saw some heavy military offensives and strong indications of steps toward negotiation. For example, the LTTE operated a unilateral ceasefire from December 2000 to April 2001. This apparent vacillation between war and negotiation continued until the UNF Government, led by Ranil Wickremesinghe, was elected in December 2001.

In April 2000, the LTTE captured an army base at the entrance to the Jaffna peninsula from the Northern Province. The Elephant Pass army base had passed from the British to the Sri Lanka army, and had remained in their hands ever since. It was considered virtually impregnable, primarily because of the surrounding terrain. The operation was a costly one in lives and equipment for both the army and the LTTE. But this was not the only reason that the collapse of Elephant Pass sent shock waves through the Southern establishment. The collapse of Elephant Pass left Jaffna vulnerable to the LTTE. In the forthcoming weeks the LTTE fought their way town by town to the outskirts of Jaffna. They used conventional military tactics, cutting off any land escape; their missile capability severely inhibited aircraft movement and their Sea Tigers patrolled the sea. Thousands of citizens and the military were driven further and further north and became trapped between the LTTE advance and the Palk Straits. The bulk of the citizens were crowded into Jaffna, and the military personnel into the Palaly air force base. A humanitarian crisis was fast developing and the Southern establishment faced the possibility of a large part of the Sri Lankan army being killed or returning to Colombo having surrendered to the LTTE.

Pressure mounted internationally on India to give assistance - either military or mediatory help. The international community mobilized diplomatically, and development agencies began to make humanitarian plans. International pressure, especially from India, halted the LTTE advance and the humanitarian crisis and military surrender were both averted.

This demonstration of LTTE military capability was a turning point in the war. The Southern establishment

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3 The LTTE declared that they are observing a month long ceasefire for the Christmas season on December 21, 2000. “LTTE declares month long ceasefire” (www.tamilnet.com). Subsequently, there was momentum on this front reflected in activity by Norway. In a statement, the LTTE said that it welcomed the “positive” proposals for “mutually reciprocated confidence building goodwill measures” suggested by the government of Norway to be undertaken on both sides - see “Negotiations cannot be held under conditions of war,” December 16, 2000 (www.tamilnet.com). A statement was also issued by European Union, “EU urges easing of embargo,” December 19, 2000 (www.tamilnet.com); Britain also responded positively, “Britain welcomes LTTE ceasefire,” December 22, 2000 (www.tamilnet.com).

4 After the fall of Elephant Pass, the LTTE advanced toward Jaffna. LTTE shelling of Palaly airstrip and Kankesanthurai port made troop and supply induction impossible. All air and sea movements by the military became impossible. See “Artillery fire closes Jaffna air, sea ports-LTTE,” May 19, 2000 (www.tamilnet.com). On May 19, 2005 the LTTE issued a statement from its London office urging the army to surrender “to avoid a bloodbath.” See, “Tigers urge SLA surrender” (www.tamilnet.com). The following day, the fortified camps in the town of Chavakachcheri fell to the LTTE advance. All supply routes to the military in the Thenmaradchchi sector were cut off.
could no longer harbor ideas of successful military pressure against the LTTE. Even centers of Sinhala nationalism, which have been inherently anti-Indian, saw a role for India. The series of battles that began in April 2000 forced India to reevaluate its policy. This resulted in a more active diplomatic involvement with the LTTE and an initially greater acceptance of the Norwegian facilitation. It was an opportunity for an increase in international pressure for negotiations. Perhaps the most important effect, however, was the impact on the LTTE. The international reaction finally convinced the LTTE that, whatever their capability, they would not be allowed to win militarily, even within the North-East.

Faced with this conclusion, the LTTE re prioritized guerrilla actions that would have economic impact and cause severe disruption for the Sri Lankan state, which was already faced with the failure of their "Peace through War" strategy. The LTTE forced international attention on Sri Lanka again in July 2001. A highly planned attack, executed with acute military discipline, disabled Sri Lanka’s only international airport at Katunayake with devastating losses for the island’s small air force and substantial damage to its national carrier. The fact that they achieved this without any civilian loss of life resulted in as much admiration as approbation for this act of war, which had heavy economic and political impact.

September 11, 2001 and the rise of the international anti-terrorist agenda, gave the Sri Lankan state greater confidence in dealing with the LTTE. The aftermath of Elephant Pass resulted in the LTTE realizing that they had come as far as they could with a solely military agenda; but the international context may have helped to persuade them that there was no going back on that decision, at least until now.

**PEACE TALKS**

A bilateral ceasefire was announced on December 24, 2001. On February 22, 2002 a long-term ceasefire agreement was signed, brokered by the government of Norway. The CFA was to be monitored by the SLMM, led by Norway and composed largely of Scandinavian personnel. During the next few months both the government and the LTTE produced many careful confidence-building statements and some concrete changes; perhaps the most important of these was the opening of the A9 highway between the North and South, thus ending almost 20 years of near isolation.

Sri Lankan Tamils across the world were jubilant at the news of a permanent ceasefire and nowhere more so than in the North-East. However, this ceasefire was not greeted with the absolute euphoria that the 2004 ceasefire provoked; this time, people were more measured. Nevertheless, there were disappointed expectations due to the length of time before progress was made at the political level. The LTTE, though well aware of the need for a long process, had anticipated they would soon be able to take control of Jaffna by negotiation - a process that had been denied them when they were in a position to take it militarily.

It was not until September 2002 that the first formal talks took place between the LTTE and the GoSL. These had been preceded by much informal contact. For example, in May the head of the Peace Secretariat held discussions in the LTTE headquarters in Wanni regarding implementation of the CFA. The Norwegians were also involved in intensive shuttle diplomacy during that period.

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5 The Heroes’ Day speech delivered on November 27, 1999 by the LTTE leader clearly illustrates that the LTTE has reached the high point in the war and that they are ready for negotiations. He states: “Our current military successes have surprised and astounded the world. This is a unique historical achievement in the art of contemporary warfare. The dimensions of this military victory have not only amazed our enemy but also astonished several international countries that have been actively helping Sri Lanka’s war effort by providing training, arms, and funds...Though the LTTE stands today as a formidable force...with the military capability to liberate our homeland, we have not abandoned the path of peace. We want to resolve the Tamil conflict through peaceful means; through civilised methods without recourse to bloodbath and destruction of life.” See “Sri Lanka must end oppression for peace,” November 27, 1999 (www.tamilnet.com).

There were six rounds of talks between September 2002 and March 2003. The commencement of formal talks again fuelled expectations in the North-East, but the talks proceeded slowly. However, at the third round of talks in Oslo in December 2002, the LTTE indicated that they were willing to consider federal solutions. The "Oslo Declaration" was made much of in the press and became a baseline in many discussions by NGOs. Though it was a major change in LTTE rhetoric (as well as a shift in the position of the Sri Lankan government), it was never further developed between the conflicting parties. This seems to have been a missed opportunity, particularly in view of the statement by Velupillai Prabhakaran, the LTTE leader, in his annual Heroes’ Day speech in 2004 that "[t]he people of Tamil Eelam [are]…entitled to the right of self determination, including the right to secede" (Tamilnet, 2004).

Subsequent meetings moved on to other subjects, but in the North-East the failure to meet expectations was causing problems on the ground. Twelve months after the signing of the ceasefire, people were still displaced and there were still security issues. People living in the North-East laid blame for the failure to tackle these issues both at the door of the GoSL and the LTTE.

At the international level, the LTTE were faced with a donor consultation meeting on Sri Lanka from which they were effectively debarred. It was held in Washington, and because of the U.S. anti-terrorist ban on the organization, they could not attend. The GoSL did attend. At the same time, there was a rising international discussion about conditionality and benchmarks in respect of donor funding to the LTTE. The next formal round of talks between the government and the LTTE was planned for June 2003 in Japan. Japan was one of the four chairs appointed to the peace process (the others being the European Union, the U.S. and, of course, Norway). This was to be a meeting where the donors would pledge post-conflict funding - hence the discussion on conditionality. Despite immense pressure, the LTTE did not attend the Japan meeting. Many international observers had thought that the money being pledged would be a sufficient draw for them. They were wrong. There were several reasons posited by analysts as to why they did not attend. One was that they wanted to avoid the conditionality discussions, another that they would lose too much face (particularly in relation to the government) after having been denied access to the Washington meeting. Yet another was that they were under too much pressure to deliver on security issues at home and had to be seen to take a stand.

THE PROCESS STALLS

On April 21, 2003 the LTTE announced their withdrawal from negotiations, at the same time giving many reassurances, from a range of their spokespeople, that they were not abrogating the ceasefire. Anton Balasingham, the LTTE’s chief negotiator, stated that the LTTE had been marginalized by their exclusion from the Washington meeting, that there had been a failure of the military to move out of the HSZs in the North-East, and that the government document “Regaining Sri Lanka” equated poverty across the country, when it should have recognized the special post-conflict needs of the North-East. The high levels of trust evident at the beginning of the process between the LTTE and the GoSL had unravelled, but not altogether. The ceasefire was still in place, and a return to negotiations at a future date was on the table.

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7 The six rounds of peace talks were as follows:

8 LTTE agreed to explore an alternative that was eventually submitted in the form of a proposal for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA), on the principle of “internal self-determination.” In a statement, the TNA MP for Jaffna stated that “[t]he LTTE and the Tamil people have during the course of the Oslo talks expressed…willingness to look at the idea of federalism as a possible solution to the ethnic conflict.” November 2004 (www.ltteps.org).

The LTTE, assisted by a small independent international organization,\(^{10}\) drew up its own proposals for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA). This was the first time that the LTTE has published any comprehensive proposals of its own in relation to forging a new political settlement for Sri Lanka. These were presented to the Sri Lanka government on October 31, 2003 and released to the press by the LTTE the following day. Their reception in the Sri Lankan South was stormy. Sinhala nationalist groups, including the JVP were outraged, and sections of the opposition Peoples’ Alliance and the president also objected.\(^{11}\)

**APRIL 2004 ELECTION**

In April 2004 a general election, contrived by the president using her executive powers to remove ministers and declare a state of emergency, unseated the UNF government. The president’s party, together with several allies, formed a government under the name “Peoples’ Alliance.” The government partners included the JVP, a Sinhala nationalist leftist party that has been implacably opposed to accommodation with the LTTE.

This election also altered the nature of parliamentary representation from the North-East that had been long marginalized by the predominance of guns in Tamil politics. Majority parties in the South have sought election pacts with Tamil parliamentarians since the advent of proportional representation,\(^{12}\) but between elections they have been largely ignored. The TULF, the traditional Tamil constitutional party, is led by Anandasangari - an outspoken independent Tamil leader. Many TULF representatives had to some extent been cooperating with the LTTE for some time, though several of its leaders were assassinated by the LTTE in earlier years. A proposal to make an electoral alliance with some “LTTE independents” and some smaller ex-militant Tamil parties split the TULF. Anandasangari, a very courageous man, is still its leader but it is now virtually a one-man party. A new Tamil political grouping, the TNA has emerged, which - at the parliamentary level - includes the majority of former TULF MPs, some LTTE nominees, and an Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students’ leader. This grouping appears to be following an LTTE line and could be the precursor to an LTTE parliamentary presence. Meanwhile, in the East, just before the election, Karuna (the eastern Commander) split from the LTTE causing instability from the top to the bottom of the organization. After the 2004 elections, both the North-East and the South of Sri Lanka were extremely unstable and remain so to date.

**POST-TSUNAMI**

The tsunami of December 26, 2004 engulfed the shores of Sri Lanka killing over 30,000 people. All communities were affected and, initially, the disaster provoked compassion and cooperation among and between communities. This did not last as the politicization of relief, both in terms of the capture of resources and benefiting communities, reasserted old enmities and created new contours of conflict. The international community and international NGOs, overloaded with money and deadlines, appear to have been totally conflict blind in relation to tsunami relief.\(^{13}\)

At the political level, attempts to negotiate a “post-tsunami mechanism” between the GoSL and the LTTE appeared to follow patterns that had already been established through previous attempts to negotiate with the ISGA; this approach appears to be foundering.

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\(^{10}\) The International Working Group on Sri Lanka facilitated a workshop in Ireland with several international resource people focused solely on this issue.

\(^{11}\) The Heroes’ Day speech of the LTTE leader delivered on November 27, 2004 analyses the significance of a proposal by the LTTE in writing and the response from the various sections of Sri Lanka’s political spectrum. See "Tamil Tigers will launch freedom struggle if peace talks are further delayed - LTTE leader," November 27, 2004 (www.tamilnet.com).

\(^{12}\) Earlier, under the “first past the post” system, the majority parties had both utilized communal platforms as they vied for the majority Sinhala vote, which, if mobilized, was sufficient to guarantee a majority under this system.

\(^{13}\) The conflict insensitivity with regard to the INGOs and NGOs is well illustrated in a report by Prof. R.L. Stirrat (2005), "Tsunami in Sri Lanka" (unpublished).
3. Analytical Perspectives

THE PROCESS

Everyone interviewed in March 2005, even those who were critical of the terms of the CFA, welcomed the ceasefire. But the peace process itself is more controversial. From the beginning, the peace process has been predicated on the assumption that the GoSL would have the capacity to deliver the Sinhala constituency, the LTTE would have the capacity to deliver Tamil constituency, and that Muslims would eventually accommodate this. None of these assumptions have ever been true.

Furthermore, the process has been frustrated by short-term political expediencies eclipsing longer-term peace objectives. This is perhaps to be expected from politicians when they are gauging their ability to capture or retain immediate power. But too many of those involved in the broader peace process at both the international governmental and non-governmental levels have been motivated by immediate prospects, which have eclipsed longer-term goals.

This approach has caused problems politically in the South as the peace process is manipulated to achieve and maintain political power. But in the North-East, particularly in the Eastern Province, this has caused continued insecurity and misery for the people. At the political level, the objective is that the stalled peace process between the GoSL and the LTTE should recommence and agreement should be reached regarding an interim administration and, more recently, a joint tsunami mechanism. There are fears that if this does not happen, the ceasefire will deteriorate and civil war will recommence, which would be detrimental to all Sri Lankans. Nevertheless, for the people of the Eastern Province, even an agreed upon and implemented interim administration or joint mechanism would not begin to solve the problems they are currently facing (some of which are outlined in this report).

The absence of non-military actors and interests within the peace process results in civilian issues escalating into major problems before they are addressed. This is of particular concern in the North-East where the peace process substitutes for peaceful politics and the question of law and order is largely absent.

The LTTE entered talks as a honed military organization with a reputation for discipline and sacrifice backed by a strong international organization and a supportive diaspora. The political-military stalemate masked the inherent asymmetry of the conflict. However, conflict asymmetry is a more complex conception than a simple matter of power imbalance based on conventional conceptions of power, which are heavily reliant on military and economic criteria. This is not simply a matter of helping the LTTE operate within international fora. A broader conception of power resources would include: "soft" and "hard" political power; the commitment of constituencies, combatants, and politicians; communication and bilateral relationships; and the political will to apply resources to war and peace. The relative symmetries of overt structural power are more easily determined than the power of hidden informal relationships. The shift from the battlefield to the negotiating table entails

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dynamic change in all aspects of asymmetry. In Sri Lanka, the failure to account for the relative political weaknesses of both sides in relation to their own communities is now very clear. The failure to include the changing asymmetries in analyses has hampered the development of an effective peace process.

**GEOGRAPHICAL LOCALES**

The historic differences and resentments between Tamils of the North and the East have been dramatically exposed by the Karuna split. While there is no doubt that this is one of the major geographical fissures, it is far from being the only one. In the North, aspects of distinctiveness may be based on tradition but these have been changed and deepened by the experience of 20 years of war. Mannar, Valvettiturai (VVT), Jaffna, Vavuniya, and the Wanni differ quite fundamentally, creating some tension. For example, Jaffna has traditionally been seen as "above" the Wanni socially. During the war, however, people in the Wanni bore greater hardship resulting in a moral cachet. The LTTE have based their administration at Kilinochchi, which has increased the importance of the Wanni, particularly in the post-CFA period; this draws some criticism from those academics and professionals based in Jaffna who wish to be more involved with the administration or consulted by the LTTE.

The analyses, particularly at the informal and operational level, that have determined action in Sri Lanka have often been from a narrow perspective, too short-term and, in the case of the conflict actors, predicated solely on their short-term self-interest. Many non-governmental and community-level initiatives have invested heavily in seminars and training around conflict analysis - particularly mapping of interests. The donor community has also invested in developing much deeper conflict analysis; however, little of this appears to have been translated into what has actually happened in the political peace process.

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15. The asymmetry of the development of Tamil nationalism and its northern orientation is discussed in Thangarajah 2002.

16. The strict caste hierarchy had given way to a more fluid situation because of the large scale displacements and the destruction of stable social formations in the traditional Jaffna society. Pirbaharan, the leader of the LTTE, being of the Karaiyar fishermen caste has also boosted the social role of this caste.

17. The peculiarity of the Jaffna society is that in terms of caste, Jaffna has had a numerical dominance of the higher "Vellala" caste that was also politically and socially powerful. This segment of society was powerful in the religious sphere as well, both in Hindu and Christian denominations. See Pffafenberger.

18. It must be noted that during the major exodus from Jaffna in 1990, many Tamils from Jaffna moved to the Vanni region including Vavuniya and have established themselves permanently. Hence, the Vanni of today is much of a mixed society with large numbers of Tamils from the peninsula.

19. Even though Vanni has gained military importance, Jaffna still remains the symbolic focus of Tamil nationalism. Despite the fact that today it may be seen as an intellectually emaciated institution in comparison to the early 1980s, the academic community at the University of Jaffna still sees itself as important.

20. Even the development of Tamil nationalism had regional character; the contours of the conflict between the various militant groups are symbolic of these regional differences. See Thangarajah 2002 for a detailed discussion.

21. Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment (PCIA) has become a major focus of Sri Lanka's development agenda. The Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies and German Agency for Technical Cooperation are two of the organizations that have already been developing material on PCIA for Sri Lanka. See Goodhand and Atkinson 2001 and Thangarajah 2004.
4. New and Changing Issues

Conflict is about change and some of the basic "root causes of the conflict" develop in different ways as the conflict develops. In Sri Lanka, this has happened in many complex ways over the years of the conflict. This section of the report cites land and caste as examples of these changes. Land is a cross-cutting issue for all communities. Caste is an often unnoticed issue within Tamil and, to a much lesser extent, Sinhala communities. However, new issues can also deepen and intersect with existing conflict fissures and, in Sri Lanka, the impact of the tsunami is overwhelming in this respect.22

**Land, Livelihood, and Voice**

Land is a critical conflict issue throughout Sri Lanka, and intersects and underpins ethnic and other community conflicts. In the East, Sinhala land colonization has historically been the material base for Tamil separatism. During the nearly two decades of conflict, the question of land colonization by the "Sinhala state" has, in some places, been replaced by tensions between Tamils and Muslims resulting from community displacement due to violence. Second, the uneven development that was another basis of Tamil separatism in the East as a whole has been replaced with the perception that Muslims are developing at the expense of Tamils.

For example, in the predominantly Muslim Kinniya and Muttur and surrounding Tamil villages, the relations between Tamil and Muslim communities have been tense. The two decades of ethnic conflict in the south of Trincomalee has seen many "traditional" Tamil villages being abandoned by Tamils. Most of the middle-class Tamils from the villages of Muttur, Kiliveddy, and Tampalakamam have moved into Trincomalee and the Batticaloa district. These areas have effectively been settled by Muslims and Sinhalese. With the CFA, the LTTE has been attempting to re-establish dominance in these areas. They have tried to "resettle" Tamils in these areas, which are seen as Tamil lands lost during the past two decades of war and colonized by Sinhalese and Muslims. They also use these areas to expand their control to areas that are militarily strategic, particularly along the coast, establishing new camps, such as the controversial "Kurnagupanchan camp."

The Muslim position is that the agreement between the LTTE and the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) must re-establish normalcy and a return to the status quo of the late 1980s. They interpret normalcy as the release of, and free access to, all their lands in the areas now controlled by the LTTE. The LTTE is reluctant to allow such access lest their military interests be compromised. They are also attempting to expand their territory of dominance to pre-war status - something resisted by Muslims. Furthermore, there is a perception among Tamils that the transformation through demographic changes and land ownership patterns that have taken place during the period of war (when the security forces were in control) has tilted in favor of the Sinhalese and Muslims.

Muslims, on the other hand, have been expanding their facilities and control due to political influence achieved by working with successive governments. They have bought up paddy lands owned by Tamils. On the other hand, they have also lost many areas of paddy farming that were scattered among Tamil areas due to restrictions imposed by the LTTE. In reality, both Tamils and Muslims have been denied lands that were either in LTTE-controlled or contested areas. While for Tamils there is no political space, the Muslims have a political voice to express their view.

22 Thangarajah forthcoming.
Nevertheless, the fear of Sinhala colonization remains. In the northern and southern parts of Batticaloa, the JVP has been involved in re-establishing Sinhala settlements with support from the army. It is precisely the state’s establishment of such permanent settlement for the migrant fishermen in the 1970s and early 1980s that was one of the factors fuelling ethnic conflict in the Batticaloa district. These communities, viewed as “Sinhala settlements,” eventually became targets for LTTE attacks. The re-establishment of these settlements with new fishermen has touched a nerve creating fears of an ethnic state supported by the army, which feeds Tamil insecurity vis-à-vis the state. The JVP is effectively playing the politics of championing the cause of the voiceless Sinhalese in the North-East, who were driven away by war.23

Thus the changes in the contours of ethnic land disputes in the East have far from obliterated the original problem of colonization. They have, however, complicated it. That gradual change has been eclipsed by the impact of the tsunami. The confusion around the post-tsunami coastal building restrictions is exacerbating previously existing tensions around land, as well as creating new local conflicts.

CASTE

At the beginning of the war the two distinctive caste patterns of the North and the East were pervasive, and caste was particularly enforced in the North in terms of temples, water sharing and, of course, marriage. The LTTE issued directives against caste and dowry during the course of the war, and though dowries are now more secret (primarily to avoid LTTE taxation), they are still required. A bank manager in Batticoloa told the author some years ago that the main advantage of the new telephone exchange there was that dowries could be confirmed by fax within 24 hours rather than taking weeks. However, change in such traditional practices is difficult. Even the LTTE respect caste in practice and they have not enforced their own anti-caste directives strictly.

Nevertheless, caste is less rigid in certain circumstances. Inter-caste marriages are still very rare among Jaffna Tamils who have not emigrated, but in the diaspora it is becoming increasingly common, thus joining families in Jaffna across caste lines, whether they like it or not. These changes in social relations contribute to a more modern and open society and increase the development capacity of their war-isolated society.

POST-TSUNAMI AID AND NEW CONTOURS OF CONFLICT

One of the areas of communal tension throughout the North-East is the preferential treatment given to the tsunami victims over war-affected people. This has created bitterness, resentment, and division within the communities. One example is the temporary shelters given to the tsunami victims, which are constructed at a cost of Rs.40,000 to 50,000 while war victims live in cadjan shacks built years ago for Rs.5,000. Muslims were disproportionately affected by the tsunami but less affected by the war than Tamils. Muslims feel that they have been discriminated against in favor of the Tamils in the distribution of tsunami relief generally. All fishing communities have been devastated and are now struggling with threats of relocation away from the coast. But, for the Tamil community, two decades of the war have been particularly harsh and caused colossal damage. Tamil-Muslim violence also has impacted both Tamil and Muslim communities. There are a substantial number of Tamil and Muslim families who have languished in the refugee camps for over ten years without any form of relief or resettlement.

23 Colonization has been the foundation of Tamil nationalism in eastern Sri Lanka. The establishment of permanent settlements for seasonal migratory fishermen from the South was one of the strategies of successive governments to alter demographic balance of the East. These settlements became the focus of attacks by Tamil militant groups in the 1980s, which led to the evacuation of these areas by the Sinhalese. Any attempt to resettle them with military assistance will escalate the conflict to a level that includes civilians, and was seen in the mid 1980s. See Thangarajah 1997 and 2002 for a detailed discussion.
WHY DID THEY GO TO THE TABLE?

The LTTE have been involved in negotiations in 1985, 1987, 1990, and 1994. Each time, the negotiations have involved progressively greater complexity that has demanded greater commitment from the conflict parties. There were also several of the current leadership, notably Prabhakaran, Anton Balasingham, and Adele Balasingham were involved in all these negotiations. Adele Balasingham probably has the most complete set of first hand notes in existence regarding negotiations in Sri Lanka. In several countries, a series of failed peace processes have provided an incremental learning process for the elites of all conflict parties, but the rebels generally learn more quickly than governments as they have more flexibility and no state responsibility.

The LTTE—which had come under strong international pressure—talked about commencing negotiations once conducive conditions had been created for some years prior to the late-1990s, when they became progressively more nuanced in their discussions with third parties. In her broadcast to the BBC in December 1999, President Chandrika Kumaratunga revealed that the Norwegians (and for a time the Commonwealth) had been involved in secret shuttle diplomacy between herself and the LTTE for two years. At that time, many inside the LTTE were extremely skeptical of the bona fides of the government in respect to negotiation, as well as of the government’s ability to deliver.

The events of 2000 were the turning point. The unilateral ceasefire from December 2000 until April 2001 bore no results for the LTTE, resulting in a return to military pressure. After the LTTE took Elephant Pass, observers in the peninsula stated that the Sri Lankan military melted before their advance, although the rubble of Chavakachcheri suggests a rather harder won passage. Nevertheless, several Tamil analysts are of the view that although the planning for Elephant Pass was exemplary, the LTTE did not have an advance plan afterward, as they had not expected to reach the gates of Jaffna so quickly. Thus, they were unexpectedly faced with appeals from the international humanitarian community, threats regarding the military situation, and the prospect of being responsible for the civilian population of a severely overcrowded Jaffna. They were aware of the weight of that responsibility from the 1990-1995 period when they administered the whole of the peninsula.

The reaction of the international community, particularly India and the U.S., made it clear that the LTTE would not be allowed any sort of military victory in the peninsula. But, it also opened channels to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Indian government—something the LTTE had been trying to do for some time. Furthermore, the incident focused the attention of the whole international community, not just India, on the urgent need for a negotiated settlement and made it clear that there was no longer any support for the

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26 Interviews with the authors during 2001 and 2002.

27 In fact, the LTTE was aware of the human and subsequent political cost in terms of civilian deaths of its Jaffna campaign. The LTTE offered to declare a ceasefire to evacuate civilians after the capture of Chavakachcheri on May 27, 2000. See “Ceasefire to evacuate civilians,” (www.tamilnet.com). But, the government did not respond positively and there was a danger of large-scale death of civilians in Jaffna.
government’s “War for Peace” strategy at the international level. Rather, international support focused on the Norwegian initiative.

From the LTTE’s perspective, their successful conventional warmaking couldn’t take them much further strategically, though they could continue to harry the army through conventional attacks on army camps. They needed to convince the “Sinhala state,” not only to enter negotiations, but to do it with serious intent, treating the LTTE as an equal negotiating partner. In the past, guerrilla actions in the South had risked them being labeled as “terrorist” and they wanted the international community to continue to support them. So they mounted a set piece attack on the airport in July 2001. They were careful, but also extremely lucky, that they managed such a dramatic hit without any loss of civilian life.

Contrary to many analysts, this report considers that the post-9/11 anti-terrorist climate was not instrumental in bringing the LTTE to negotiations. However, it almost certainly helped keep them there, particularly as things began to unravel during 2004. Furthermore, the international anti-terrorist agenda may have increased the confidence of the GoSL, which had been severely criticized for its confrontational policy with the LTTE in the aftermath of Elephant Pass.

It took a change of government to bring about the mutual ceasefire. While in opposition, Ranil Wickremesinghe and the UNF had developed direct relations with the LTTE and built a level of confidence that lasted throughout their period in office, despite the withdrawal from negotiations. That the LTTE would still be at the negotiating table three years later despite, in their view, little progress at the political level, demonstrates tenacity for negotiations few would have expected. However, internal events in the North-East and within the LTTE during 2004 have accelerated the degradation of the CFA that a static political process had already started. In this context, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the “peace or war?” debate within the LTTE has been renewed.

**TENSIONS AROUND THE CFA**

The LTTE claim the North-East as the Tamil homeland and control pockets of territory there. Figures vary, but some suggest that the percentage of Tamils living in LTTE areas is as low as 15 percent. However, the LTTE controls a Tamil population much larger than that within the North-East and, to a lesser extent, within southern Sri Lanka and the diaspora. During the war, control was exercised through a mixture of loyalty to those fighting the “Sinhala State” and covert coercion. Coercion included extortion, suppression of criticism, and recruitment.

This is not to say there were, or are, no voluntary contributions to the LTTE, or voluntary recruitment and willing support. But in the conditions of fear that prevail throughout the North-East, support for the LTTE is impossible to assess and the situation remains very dynamic.

There is a social, and perhaps cultural, chasm between Tamil civilians and the LTTE cadres - despite kinship relations. There is surprisingly little information about the LTTE within the Tamil community, especially since the Karuna split. However, there have always been some individuals who have acted as interlocutors when there have been problems. Sometimes these have been public figures, such as prominent members of the clergy, but often they are people who have shunned public recognition of their role. However, the LTTE themselves have a honed and feared intelligence wing under Pottu Amman and are usually well aware of the mood of the people. They are also quick to stamp out any public dissent against the LTTE.

The CFA ended hostilities between the government and the LTTE and largely, but not totally, released the people from the weight of government’s militarism. Despite this, the number of army checkpoints in the East and North has recently increased compared to immediately after the initiation of the CFA. However, the climate of fear induced by the LTTE has persisted and many people in the East feel it has increased. The
CFA allows the LTTE to move freely, without arms, among government areas to do political work. Though it is legitimate for the LTTE to develop political activities during a transition to peace, it appears that they have continued to operate in the same political manner toward the people as prior to the initiation of the CFA, but with increased freedom. Thus, coercion for large donations (plus the standard taxation they now levy, for example, on the entry to Jaffna on the A9), enforced recruitment (including child recruitment), and suppression of dissent are facts of life in the North-East. However, recruitment, particularly of children, has produced a backlash among the Tamil community since the ceasefire.

Of particular concern and outrage is the murder of political opponents, most of them fellow-Tamils. The LTTE have used political assassination throughout the war. In addition to killing several nationally recognized Sinhala leaders, they have also systematically wiped out the leadership of opposing Tamil political parties - including the TULF, Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP). This policy has continued within the North-East since the ceasefire, with many killings occurring prior to the defection of the eastern leader Karuna. The LTTE does not officially acknowledge responsibility for killings, which are rarely investigated. LTTE representatives state, "The shooting war is over, now there is an intelligence war," and justify killings on the basis that those targeted had been traitors by collaborating either with Sri Lankan or Indian intelligence services. Since the defection of Karuna, killings of both Karuna and LTTE cadres and suspected civilian supporters have mounted considerably.

It would take considerable support and determination at the political level to empower local investigations into the killings. But until that happens, impunity will continue to be the norm and there will be no serious attempts to try or convict those responsible.

LTTE penetration into government areas is not only through access to civilians. Military encroachment is occurring in several areas in the East. In one instance, the SLMM had been asked to determine whether a LTTE camp established in a village that had been occupied near Kinniya by Muslims for many years was a violation of the ceasefire. There are also many accusations that the LTTE is re-arming.

The question of armaments is difficult. The CFA is based upon the concept of maintaining military parity as it stood in February 2001. It is possible that bringing in arms could be construed as a breach of the CFA. However, one presumes that the Sri Lankan military are having their ammunition replenished and bringing in new guns as necessary. The logic is that the LTTE needs to do the same - the war is not over until peace has come. The SLMM have also been asked to investigate reports that the LTTE have developed an airstrip in the Wanni and that the sea tigers have acquired small planes since the ceasefire. However, there were reports in the 1990s that the LTTE were developing a prototype small aircraft. It was not required that weaponry and weapons development be declared by the two parties in 2001, and this is by no means as clear as territorial encroachment or breaches of separation of forces.

While similar considerations apply to training and re-arming, the training of new recruits raises many other issues in the context of Sri Lanka. The LTTE have become synonymous with child soldiers and, despite repeated assurances to various U.N. officials and others, the evidence suggests that this recruitment continues. Forced recruitment of children and adults has also been an ongoing issue, particularly in the East.28

The LTTE are also faced with the frustrations of their own constituency. People are still displaced, over three years after the signing of the ceasefire, and are bitterly disappointed. The continuation of the HSZs within the

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28 For details, see Human Rights Watch (2004), "Living in fear: Child soldiers and Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka." After the tsunami, there has been accusation that the LTTE is recruiting children from the camps for the displaced tsunami victims. See Human Right Watch News, January 14, 2005, "Sri Lanka, Child Tsunami Victims Recruited by Tamil Tigers: LTTE May Seek Children to Replace Lost Forces" (www.hrw.org).
North-East was specifically referred to as a consideration when the LTTE withdrew from talks. However, the Sri Lanka Armed Forces (SLAF) argues that to move the HSZ would itself breach the CFA by disturbing the military balance. This is why it has become such a sensitive issue. It is also a good example of how stasis at the political level degrades confidence within the peace process and the CFA and raises issues that have no solution without progress. If there was some confidence that the HSZs were temporary, that the peace process was proceeding, and in the not too distant future, that people from the HSZ areas could return home, then it might be tolerable. In the current situation, there is no such hope, and the HSZ population has become a political football - all the while remaining displaced, angry, and disillusioned.

Meanwhile, the army is also extremely frustrated. Having fought to maintain control over parts of the North-East they have been forced to watch the LTTE regain unimpeded access and control in those areas. Many army officers assert that the CFA has been a licence for the LTTE to print money. One officer stated that the A9 generated Rs. 6 million per day, Jaffna Rs. 4-5 million, and the East Rs. 3-4 million. There has also been a perception within the army that the SLMM favors the LTTE. One or two of their earlier determinations bolstered this view, although those officers interviewed for this report were careful to state that the problem was the SLMM mandate, not the implementation. Furthermore, JVP criticisms of the peace process have played well with many in the army, particularly when it was a partner in government. Thus, there is much greater support and sympathy for the JVP among military personnel than there was in the past. This is not to suggest that they have deliberately breached or undermined the ceasefire, but it should be noted that active support for the current CFA and process is low within the military services.

The LTTE is increasingly frustrated by the lack of development of the peace process, and the armed forces are increasingly frustrated by the constraints of the CFA. The people, though they do not want a return to war, are increasingly skeptical about the success of the peace process and are resorting to strategies of survival, rather than risking investment in the process.

**DECEMBER 2004 - WAR AVERTED BY CALAMITY?**

In December 2004, Jehan Perera, a peaceworker and political commentator, wrote an article appealing “to halt the drift from proxy war to real war,” citing the closure of the A9 highway for one day for the first time since the CFA commenced as an alarming indicator. He went on to explain that this “was not due to any clash between the Sri Lankan military or the LTTE. Rather it was the deterioration in the general conditions on the ground that coincided with the LTTE’s celebration of Heroes Day” (Perera, 2004).

In addition to the ceasefire violations against unarmed citizens by the LTTE through targeted killings and coercion, there are two other areas of concern in relation to the degradation of the peace process. They are the "no-war confrontational politics" of the North-East and the increasingly hard-line political rhetoric between the LTTE and the GoSL, visible throughout 2004.

While arms were the means of gaining control over ethnically claimed territories, the post-CFA scenario is characterized by another kind of contest - that of events staged by particular groups with particular ethnic affiliations. In Jaffna, where the LTTE are the only force organizing, these events are irritating to LTTE critics and are seen as a necessary demonstration of continuing discontent against GoSL by supporters. However, in Trincomalee, there is constant tension between communities created by the LTTE and the JVP seeking to mobilize and secure constituencies through the occasional organization of "incidents." These events are in areas where communities live side by side, provoking security forces and ethnic communities and leading to confrontations. Both the LTTE and JVP also organize hartals in the town.
A similar situation of inter-communal tension exists in areas of Tamil-Muslim cohabitation all along the east coast. Since Muslim and Tamil villages are next to each other, ensuring mobility is important to maintain livelihood activities. Any hartal organized by one community disrupts normal day-to-day activity of the other community. Adding to the tension are resentments over non-return of paddy lands, access to forests, taxing of bullock carts used for firewood collection in the forests, restriction and taxing on timber, paddy fields, and accusations of the LTTE taking over Muslim lands. Further, every hartal that disrupts one community’s livelihood activity leads to counter-hartals by another community in retaliation. More recently, peace committees that have been organized in such areas have recommended that prior notice be given before hartals are organized.

In Jaffna, people connected to the university who are supportive of the LTTE suggested that the increase in hartal politics is part of pacific politics. There is some basis in this argument in principle. However, the essentially ethnic nature of hartals in the volatile multi-ethnic East is extremely confrontational. Throughout the North-East these confrontational politics are about the often coercive control of populations. As such, they threaten the management of the peace process and provide opportunities for peace spoilers. However, they also illustrate how there is little other space for organized pacific politics. As one source stated, “If the LTTE were going to war they would not bother with organizing hartals - they would get on with war preparations. Hartals are civilian politics.” This raises the question of how can transformation be demonstrated by any of the militant or ex-militant groups in the North-East?

At the political level, the government is being checked by the JVP, whose representatives made virulent anti-peace statements and who have become very active in the East around Trincomalee. This was matched by increasingly hard-line statements by the LTTE. Anton Balasingham said that the LTTE was prepared for war and had already achieved its separate state. But it was Prabhakaran in his Heroes’ Day message of November 2004 who revealed the extent to which the LTTE believed the peace process had unravelled and their sense of frustration, as the following extracts from the English translation show:

- “Three years have elapsed since we entered into a ceasefire with the Government of Sri Lanka, after three decades of armed struggle…The six sessions of negotiations held over the duration of six months turned out to be futile and meaningless.”
- “As never before, this general election has polarised the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic formations into two distinct nations, as two separate peoples with divergent and mutually incompatible ideologies, consciousness, and political goals.”
- “Over a long period of time, we…entered into pacts and agreements, which were later torn apart and abrogated. Our liberation organization is not prepared to walk the path of treachery and deception once again.”
- “None of the Sinhala political organizations are prepared to recognize the fundamentals underlying the Tamil national question.”
- “We cannot continue to be entrapped in a political vacuum without an interim solution or a permanent settlement, without a stable peace and without peace of mind.”
- “There are borderlines to patience and expectations. We have now reached the borderline. At this critical moment we wish to make an urgent appeal to the Sri Lankan Government. We urge the government to resume the peace negotiations without conditions, based on our proposal for an Interim Self-Governing Authority” (Tamilnet, 2004).

Several people interviewed in the North-East believe that the LTTE was preparing to return to war in November and December. In support of their view they cited Prabhakaran’s speech and its London interpretation by Anton Balasingham, and cadre behavior. However, one LTTE cadre stated that they had been told to ”prepare
the people for the idea of war,” which supports an alternative view advanced by several younger people in Jaffna. Namely, that though they will not return to war, they do not want that possibility to be dismissed, particularly in relation to negotiations.

However, it should be remembered that the LTTE has always been an organization that has based its political-military strategies on what was happening inside Sri Lanka. The political base, the support or coerced acquiescence of the people, is critical to its project. The long ceasefire, particularly since the ceasefire stalled, is eroding the war imperatives that give the LTTE their military supremacy and moral authority within Tamil society. It should be remembered that their reputation is based on the fact that they fought their way to the negotiating table. When Karuna chose to function independently of the LTTE (see next section of this report), their support base was further damaged in the East. Moreover, they may well have decided to “have a small war,” as one Tamil interviewee suggested, to galvanize support around them against the “Sinhala state,” regardless of the approval of the international community. Those who feel this is impossible given the atmosphere of international anti-terrorism should remember that this is the organization that took on the fourth largest army in the world when the Indian peacekeeping force was in the North-East. Of course, the size of the war once begun is not in the control of the LTTE and the response would be likely to be an escalatory one.

This war scenario was dramatically changed by the tsunami and we may never know whether it was the real intention of the LTTE to return to the battlefield. Similarly, how badly the LTTE’s war-preparedness was affected by the tsunami is only a point of speculation - though it must have suffered some reduction. However, the negotiations around the tsunami mechanism have mirrored those of the ISGA and the frustrations of the LTTE expressed in November 2004 can have changed little, as both the process and the other actors’ responses have remained the same.

**PEOPLE AND POLITICS**

The LTTE is, and always has been, a military organization, though they aspire to represent the Sri Lankan Tamils in all fora - military, political, developmental, social, and cultural. Between 1991-1995 they administered the Jaffna peninsula through what was described as a “civilian administration,” though all positions of power remained with the LTTE and the administering was largely done by cadres. During the negotiations with President Premadasa in 1990, the LTTE did register a political party, but once negotiations broke down it withered. The People’s Front of Liberation Tigers is still a registered political party in Sri Lanka. After Prabhakaran’s speech of 2002, the LTTE initiated discussion with other groups and indicated that they could work alongside the LTTE, but that turned out to be under LTTE direction, for example, Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), EPRLF (Suresh wing).29

The need for a political outlet and a strong political voice has been impressed upon the LTTE by their own frustrations with the negotiation processes. At the formal political level the response was the creation of the TNA. At the informal level, the LTTE engages in Southern politics through a series of relationships and encounters with peace organizations, NGOs, journalists, and other members of Southern civil society. The LTTE’s international engagement has always had a two-pronged focus - legitimacy for themselves and building international pressure on the Sri Lankan government.

Launching of the TNA has given the LTTE the opportunity to directly nominate parliamentary candidates of their choice, e.g., Kajendran, MP for Jaffna and a former president of the pro-LTTE Eelam International Students Union. Thus, for the first time,

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young Tamil people whose memory is only of isolation and war, have the responsibility to perform in national and international bodies in a meaningful way. This is obviously useful and positive in terms of transformative approaches. But, the creation of the TNA also resulted in the elimination of the TULF as independent voices, with the exception of the indomitable Anandasangari. Several long-term supporters of the TULF expressed disgust that the experienced politicians were simply supporting the LTTE line. The pressure upon these politicians and other people to do nothing other than support the LTTE line intensified after the Karuna split.

People still see the LTTE as a military organization, not as a civilian organization. They believe that the LTTE must maintain military alertness and therefore military discipline until a settlement is reached. However, views about the capacity of the LTTE to change and become a civilian political organization after a settlement are very mixed. Some interviewees who have lived, worked, and interacted with the LTTE throughout its existence, believe that they are changing and that engagement, particularly at the international level, is the key to continuing that change. “Foreign trips are good for the LTTE, it is just a pity that Mr. Prabhakaran does not go on them too.” Others were totally pessimistic that the LTTE either aspired to be, or had the capacity to transform into, a pacific political party.

Perhaps, the most common feeling was that people felt that they would have to live with the LTTE as a military organization until the specter of war had finally been laid to rest. Then, they could begin to think about wider issues. In the meantime, they hoped, with differing degrees of expectation, that the international community would pressure both parties to stay at the table and find a settlement within which they could live freely.

OTHER TAMIL PARTIES

The history of internecine warfare between Tamil militant groups began in 1986 and has continued ever since. After 1997, all except the LTTE transformed themselves into political parties and the EPRLF gave up arms. The rest of the “non-LTTE armed parties” were disarmed at the beginning of the 2002 ceasefire.

The EPDP first gained parliamentary seats in 1994 from a base in Kytes Islands with so few votes that they lacked credibility. Since then, and despite strong criticisms against the EPDP for human rights abuses in the 1990s, the EPDP leader, Douglas Devananda, a former militant fighter, has become the most prominent non-LTTE Tamil leader. A strong ally of President Kumaratunga during the PA’s “War for Peace,” he was made a minister in her administration. Devananda quickly became adept at mainstream Sri Lankan politics. As a minister, his access to funds enabled him to distribute largesse in Jaffna where, unlike other Tamil party leaders, he did not cross over to the United National Front (UNF) platform; rather he fought a strong election campaign in Jaffna. His implacable opposition to the LTTE has resulted in several serious attempts on his life, during one of which he lost an eye. The LTTE regard the EPDP as traitors and collaborators with the Sri Lankan military. They have hunted several EPDP cadres down and killed them in the North-East since the ceasefire and continue to do so, despite the fact that, as a party, they were disarmed at the beginning of the process.

Other Tamil groups, though they have not joined with the LTTE, have not put up the same continued vocal opposition and have, in recent years, not been such targets for the LTTE. Peoples Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), for instance, has not been targeted in the same way. Indeed, for several years PLOTE cadres have slowly been leaving the organization, some of them to join the LTTE.

STATE STRUCTURES

In those areas where the LTTE has control, it mirrors Sri Lankan state institutions with agencies for immigration, taxation, police, and human rights; as well as courts, a
peace secretariat, etc. However, with the exception of those that reach out to the South or the international community, these are primarily monolithic enforcement agencies. What is not so obvious is the control that the LTTE exercises over government bodies in government-controlled areas.

In Trincomalee, the Government Agent (GA) and the army feel that the Provincial Council is an LTTE instrument dominated by Tamils. They say that despite the mandate of the NEPC to work on the entire North and East, they have very little coordination with the national agencies. This is also a view held by Muslims in all three districts who feel excluded from this limited devolution process, thus undermining faith among Muslims in an LTTE-managed devolution arrangement. Furthermore, the preponderance of Jaffna Tamils on the council administration also feeds into the resentment between Northern and Eastern Tamils. It was suggested in many interviews that officials from NEPC have bought lands from the peripheral areas of the town as a personal crusade to prevent lands being taken over and settled by the Sinhalese from outside. They tend to identify closely with the LTTE activities and are staunch supporters of the Joint Mechanism and ISGA.

Among Tamils of Trincomalee, there has been a unified position against what they perceive as an attempt by the government to turn the town into a Sinhala-dominated area. However, there is also an intra-Tamil dynamic. Most of the people who belong to the "original Trincomalee" category feel that the provincial council and other high posts are controlled by Jaffna Tamils and some Batticaloa Tamils. The people of Trincomalee occupied these posts during the time of central government. However, they see the influx of Tamils from outside as a necessary evil that they have to accept, to act as a bulwark against Sinhala domination.

There is a subtle contest in Trincomalee, between the GA who favor the Sinhalese and the NEPC officials who counter that. Most of the development work undertaken by the NEPC, it is alleged by some central government officials, favors Tamils and excludes Sinhalese and Muslims. Thus, administrative arrangements created to deal with ethnic problems will always be a reflection of local politics unless they are part of a settlement that is backed by local support, national agreement, and enforcement.

**ECONOMIC INTERFACES: A CULT OF HONESTY?**

During the violent conflict, the LTTE’s ruthless authoritarianism was perceived as extending to the enforcement of incorruptibility and sacrifice in their cadres. This was described as “a cult and creed of honesty in the disbursement and utilisation of resources” by a former Indian ambassador to Colombo (Dixit, 1998). This perception of the LTTE has changed among its own supporters, perhaps more than among other groups. Since the CFA, the LTTE have been taking contributions from a much less willing population. “Taxation” has become a problem in Jaffna and Batticaloa. Demands for large contributions from businesses and the wealthy continued after the CFA. Within a year of the CFA, expatriate Tamils were beginning to talk of the greed of the LTTE, as return visits became popular among the community. Even in the field of development activities, government officials in the North-East see the LTTE as corrupt, though no one can afford to articulate this view publicly.

Supporters point to the huge numbers of cadres, orphanages, martyr families, and others who rely on the LTTE for subsistence. Critics point to the enhanced lifestyle of some LTTE members, stating that the girl
cadres who used to travel on bicycles now all use motorcycles and alleging that some of the hierarchy have bought or built houses. This may not be true, but the perception that the LTTE as an organization is enriching itself at the expense of the people is quite widespread, and reflects a changing perception of the organization.

However, it is impossible to see resources in the North-East simply in terms of greed. Control over resources and population represents power and legitimacy and the LTTE struggle has been for legitimacy since the Thimpu negotiations. The rest of this section details instances where the LTTE, striving for power and legitimacy, has maneuvered for resource control and denied that control to others.

THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The CFA gave rise to the Sub-Committee on Immediate Humanitarian and Rehabilitation Needs in the North-East (SIHRN). The objective of this bipartisan committee was to undertake major reconstruction programs that, it was hoped, would give substantial influence to the LTTE in the form of control of funds and indirect power over state machinery. After SIHRN collapsed and the ISGA became stalemated, the LTTE put forward the idea of a joint mechanism for post-tsunami reconstruction. This shows the importance that the LTTE places on the reconstruction domain as a means of maintaining influence over the Tamil community. The LTTE have thwarted any substantial development efforts by the government lest they create a direct or indirect system of benefits to the people that may wean them from the LTTE’s influence.

Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, NGO Linkages

Before the split, the LTTE controlled NGOs through NGO consortia. In Batticaloa, the NGO consortium and the District Development Committee were the major organizations, post-CFA, through which Karuna was carrying out development planning for the district on behalf of the LTTE. After April 2004, the president and all members were seen as Karuna loyalists and were either intimidated into leaving the area or killed. Today, the NGO consortium is run by a person with little influence and no control over the NGOs. Although this suggests a lack of control by the LTTE, both NGOs and government officials feel that development activities are being thwarted by the LTTE, particularly in the East. They feel that until the joint mechanism is established giving the LTTE control, they will deny any opportunity for development in Batticaloa and Amparai, which they see as a vital dimension of their influence, particularly after the defection of Karuna.

The Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) seems to have been entrusted with reclaiming the lost region of the East. The LTTE is trying to use the power and influence of reconstruction to regain political hegemony over the region. The appointment of the eastern head of TRO as the political chief of the East is indicative of the unity between the two entities. The LTTE has been unable to force NGOs and INGOs to work with them or accept their dictate, as in the pre-split period. Now, NGO and state officials argue that while the LTTE is busy attempting to re-establish their military dominance, TRO will gradually ensure compliance of all NGOs operating in the East, particularly in the context of the environment of terror. Thus, the exercise of terror forms a vital link in the LTTE’s strategy to re-establish overall dominance.

The role of the TRO seems to have greatly expanded after the tsunami and it has been making inroads into rehabilitation and attempting to dominate reconstruction. This was achieved by forcibly taking over relief camps or by simply filling the vacuum left by the inefficiency of state machinery. A member of a local NGO said that the TRO simply took over the refugee camps and prevented any other people from providing relief, insisting that everything be handed over to them. Today, it is not uncommon for the LTTE military
commander and TRO chiefs of the district to jointly summon NGOs and INGOs to review the progress of the reconstruction work. In the Amparai district, interestingly, the Special Task Force (STF) has prevented any attempt by the TRO to control tsunami refugee camps. The STF ensures that relief work is done on a day-to-day basis and that the TRO does not establish a permanent presence. This leads to continuous tension between the LTTE and the STF.

According to NGOs operating in Amparai, there had been greater stability recently, until it was shattered by a spate of killings, allegedly by both groups but particularly the Divisional Secretary of Thirukkovil. Since the split, the LTTE has been brutal in trying to ensure compliance of the government administrative machinery. The weakness of this machinery throughout the East seems to have been underlined by the split and government civil servants are subject to similar fears and pressures as the rest of the population.

Since the Karuna split, the LTTE has been attempting to use reconstruction as a means of re-establishing their influence in the East. The TRO has been playing a significant role in making inroads into rehabilitation work after the tsunami. The LTTE also has been very watchful of any attempt by the government to use rehabilitation and development programs as a means of further undermining the LTTE in both the North and the East. Government officials complain that while the LTTE has lost its previous position of control, they have become more unpredictable in the post-split period. In short, it is unlikely that the LTTE will allow any development work to take place without their active participation, particularly in the context of post-split uncertainty. Among the accusations against Karuna is that he undertook unilateral action to develop the East without coordinating or consulting with Wanni. It is not surprising then, that government servants and the population of the East both notice concentrated efforts by the LTTE to re-establish control.

Since the establishment of the TNA, Tamil politicians have not participated in government-sponsored meetings on development, and much of the recent development in the East has been instigated by Muslim politicians. This increases the perception among Tamils that Muslims are receiving disproportionate benefits from the government and gives added weight to the LTTE claim that they cannot meet the needs of the people until the ISGA, or the joint mechanism, is implemented.

### THE DIASPORA

The relationship between the LTTE and the diaspora has been based on guilt, dreams, and the pressure of relatives still in the North-East on ex-patriot Tamils. Presently, the growth of post-conflict diaspora in some places enables the LTTE to operate with much more direct coercion (for example, Toronto). The diaspora has always been the LTTE’s most lucrative subscription base, and the continued emigration of the middle and upper classes throughout the war consolidated that.

During the war, the diaspora generally supported the LTTE in a hostile international environment. The LTTE were astute at using well-placed Tamils in foreign countries and international organizations to advocate their cause. The diaspora communities followed the LTTE and there were very few ex-patriot Tamils who attempted to influence the LTTE. However, the CFA has changed the relationship between the diaspora and the LTTE. Expatriate Tamils have visited and seen the reality of the North-East. This has led to disillusionment in some and added commitment from others who are offering their services to the organization. In this way, opportunities for influence from the diaspora are created.

Fallout from the Karuna split has also been felt outside Sri Lanka. Wanni cadres have been sent outside to undertake functions previously undertaken by trusted expatriots in important Tamil diaspora centers. This has
resulted in a closing of political space for debate among the diaspora community, whose members are more fearful of voicing criticism. But those who have opposed the LTTE have found the Karuna split an advantage, particularly among the non-northern constituencies. The proliferation of anti-LTTE websites in the post CFA period is an example of this trend. However, nothing has shaken the LTTE supporters abroad more than the detention and solitary confinement of London expatriate Tamil Jayadevan for 66 days in the Wanni. This has dominated the attention of Tamil centers across Europe, North America, and Australia.

Though during the war the diaspora had a very limited engagement or influence with the Wanni, the CFA has resulted in opening up those relationships. Attempts to close down and repress thinking in the diaspora centers are likely to be much less docilely received than during the war.

33 See “The case of Rajasinghan Jayadevan,” [http://www.tamilnation.org/ltte/05jayathevan.htm].
6. Non-Military Actors

Ceasefire agreements by necessity concentrate on the armed actors. It seems obvious that the peace process must be broader than the armed actors and that it is necessary for other elements of society to contribute. Yet, the results suggest that this still needs to be emphasised. The roles of civil society and business, as well as opposition parties, are critically important and this is well known in Sri Lanka. This report expands upon one non-military actor - academia. This is not because of any prejudice of the authors — though both are attached to universities. Rather, it is because of the crucial role played in any conflict by the ideas of mid-level civic leaders, many of whom are from or have attended university.

The isolation of the North-East of Sri Lanka resulted in academic thinking being frozen in the 1970s - with some honorable exceptions. Even the LTTE find this a problem, particularly at the technical levels, and are forced to bring in expatriates to fill this gap. The following quick overview highlights the security dilemmas that academics face, but there is also a wider question. Internal critical engagement with the structures of the North-East is necessary, not only for the development of pacific politics there, but for economic development too. Can a new generation of Tamil thinkers emerge to take the North-East forward within a non-violent political framework?

THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY IN THE NORTH-EAST

All three universities of the North-East have been influenced according to the political environment in which they are situated and have lost many of their better intellectuals to universities in the South or abroad. The isolation of the war resulted in a failure to keep up with current thinking in many of the disciplines. This lacuna of intellectual debate across the North-East affects the development of the region economically, politically, and socially. It is from the intellectuals that one would expect to find some agents of transformation - particularly those with applied skills that can contribute to reconstruction of the North-East.

JAFFNA UNIVERSITY

The Jaffna University had an open political environment in the early to mid 1980s that resulted in diversity of opinion among the staff and students within the university. But, over the next two decades, the university community largely reflected only pro-LTTE opinions and views. The LTTE has been particularly careful to ensure that the oldest seat of higher learning in the North-East, which would usually reflect the views of the community, is not antagonistic to the LTTE; this act undermines its role to contribute effectively to intellectual and development debates. The university continues to reflect the pessimism of any negotiated settlement for the Tamil question. Today, there are a substantial number of students from the Wanni who are loyal to the LTTE and who influence much of the political activity in the Jaffna Eastern University.

EASTERN UNIVERSITY

Eastern University began as a national university in the 1980s, but gradually the Sinhala students and staff left the university after the killing of a Sinhala security guard in 1984. The emergence of Tamil-Muslim tensions led to the Muslim demand to move the university from its present location of Vantharumoolai (where there were frequent confrontations between the militants and the
SLAF) to Batticaloa. When that was resisted, the Muslim students refused to return to Eastern University, which eventually led to the establishment of the South Eastern University. Eastern University attempted to give material and political expression to an “eastern culture,” incorporating social and cultural activities of the east into the curriculum. In addition, there were also accusations of Jaffna domination, particularly in academic administrative positions. In 2000, a separate trade union by staff from Eastern University was inaugurated, which was eventually disbanded on the order of Colonel Karuna. It was considered damaging to the Tamil nationalist struggle and staff were advised to work under a common union.

The Karuna defection reverberated in Eastern University. The first meeting, when the rift was officially announced by the Karuna faction, was held there. In the days following the split, there was much speculation in the Tamil national press about the role of Eastern Tamil academics in encouraging “eastern regionalism” and indeed masterminding the split. The acting vice-chancellor of the time, an Easterner, was allegedly shot by LTTE’s intelligence wing. This was the first act of armed intervention within the civilian population by the LTTE to quell any expression of popular support to the split. Subsequently, many staff members from the East working at the university were intimidated into leaving. There was low-level violence between Northern students and those from the East, leading to the closure of the university. A few days later, the Karuna faction allegedly killed a lecturer for switching sides to the LTTE. Later, after the LTTE reasserted its dominance, the students from Vanni returned and tensions persisted.

Today, the threat from both sides has made the university an uncertain and highly dangerous place for any political activity. Political activity of any kind is almost non-existent due to the threat. The university staff will continue to assist development and relief agencies in providing basic consultancy services, but it is unlikely that the university will play an active role in the peace process or make any substantial contribution in terms of research knowledge and leadership in view of the anxiety that prevails since the Karuna defection. It is unlikely that the LTTE will allow such a space for political activity.

**SOUTH EASTERN UNIVERSITY**

One of the reasons for the establishment of the South Eastern University was that Eastern University, where most of the Muslim students from the North-East study, is located in a conflict area. The South Eastern University has always remained at least symbolically an institution that represents the interests of the Muslims in the North-East beyond the contours of national political parties. This need has been felt more acutely since the SLMC fragmented after the demise of founder M.S.M Ashroff. Muslims of the East have been feeling that Muslim interests have been compromised by the present leadership. There have been demands that the role of representing the interest of the Muslims must be taken over not by politicians but by Muslim intellectuals. A meeting held in December 2002 in Akkaraipattu adopted a resolution along such lines.32

In the post-CFA period, South Eastern University has become the representative voice of Eastern Muslim concerns surpassing internal political differences. The university, which draws students and staff from all over the North-East, reflects the micro-situations of the districts where Muslims live. Thus, concerns regarding power-sharing are voiced by the student community of the South Eastern University. Today, the view of exclusion of Muslims in the Post-Tsunami Reconstruction Mechanism Structure (P-TOMS) has led to the South Eastern University community taking a critical role and spearheading an opposition campaign,

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32 The Muslim leadership that opposed the present Colombo based leadership of SLMC was particularly vocal on this issue and voiced this demand at a meeting in relation to setting up a separate Muslim Council in the event of an administrative arrangement with the LTTE. See “Intellectuals must represent Muslims at peace talks-Athaullah faction,” December 25, 2002 (www.tamilnet.com).
which has become the center of a unified opposition to the P-TOMS. Since the university does not have senior and experienced academics to give decisive leadership, it is possible that a more militant campaign may gain recognition. The university community represented by students from all over the North-East is strategically placed to lead this campaign, just as Jaffna and Eastern Universities did for Tamil Nationalism 20 years ago.
7. Eastern Dynamics

Jaffna is perhaps the most stable part of the North-East. This has little to do with whether the government or the LTTE are in charge, but rather with the inherently conservative, virtually mono-ethnic nature of Jaffna. By contrast, the East probably contains the most unstable regions due to its ethnic diversity, and is prone to conflict. It is in the East that ceasefires were broken in 1990 and 2004. It is the East that experienced the most vicious of the bloody internecine battles between the various Tamil armed groups in the 1980s. The East is also the site of Trincomalee town and harbor that neither Tamils nor Sinhalese could allow the other to totally control - whether for geostrategic reasons or for ethnic pride and politics. The East is also the site of battles between the Muslims and Tamils. More recently, intra-ethnic conflicts have become visible and, more importantly, armed. There are real fears that the current ceasefire could also founder in the East, so this report has concentrated on the conflict dynamics there.

THE COMPLEXITIES OF COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The three eastern districts of Trincomalee, Batticaloa, and Amparai have varying problems and sub-district dynamics linked to their geographical, community, and socioeconomic variations. They are also predicated on the military balance of the area. These finely drawn relations produce volatility that is unknown in the northern districts, which are relatively stable, and challenge even the most continuous analysis.

In the case of Trincomalee, three geographical and community-oriented categories can be discerned. Geographically, there are the peripheral areas lying outside the main urban council area in the north of Trincomalee, such as Kuchchavelly, up to Van-ela or Manal Aru. The second area is the town of Trincomalee, and the the third is the area south of Trincomalee. Overall, Trincomalee can be seen as a district where all three communities feel that they are under siege by the other two. In Batticaloa, there is relatively greater willingness than in the other districts on the part of Muslims to negotiate the difficult situations with LTTE. But the Karuna split has increased the complexities of intra-Tamil dynamics in Batticaloa. In the Batticaloa and Amparai districts, one of the insecurities of Tamils is the potential violence from Muslims. As one community leader from Amparai pointed out, if there is violence from Muslims affecting the Tamil community, then the vulnerability is likely to unite them behind the LTTE. In Amparai, intra-Muslim politics are important in some areas but the aspirations of Muslim politics are mostly articulated in respect to the south-east.

INTRA-TAMIL RELATIONS: THE KARUNA DEFECTION FROM LTTE

The Karuna defection was not the first split by an LTTE leader. Mahathaya and Kittu, both very popular leaders with their own cadre following, had problems within the organization. However, Karuna’s defection, taking place during a ceasefire, has affected the Tamil struggle more substantially. It has been felt militarily, politically, socially, and economically - and not only in the Eastern Province. Equally, it has brought into question the peace process itself and highlighted the issue of Northern Tamil domination and Eastern Tamil resentment at national and international levels.
CAUSES OF THE DEFECTION

There are many theories about the split within the LTTE, including financial irregularities, indiscipline related to women, and internal discrimination and Jaffna domination within the organization. But even these suppositions have complexities. The financial irregularities, some argue, are to do with greater military expansion and the development of a naval wing under Karuna’s command, for which he is reported to have spent a large amount of money. Both the intelligence wing and second-tier leadership have been alarmed by the degree of freedom of operation given by Prabhakaran to Karuna. They feared that this could presage a more independent eastern military machine. At the development level, Karuna used his trips abroad to lobby for direct investment in developing the East, and Batticaloa in particular. Karuna is also reported to have felt some resentment over the dominant focus of Jaffna and Kilinochchi in the LTTE development agenda, according to some Tamils who were contacted by Karuna during his travels abroad.

Eastern Tamils have traditionally resented the superior attitude of Northern Tamils and they suggest that there is a domination of Jaffna Tamils in public service and education. This perception is still widely prevalent despite the advancement of non-Jaffna Tamils in both domains. Within the Tamil national movement in the early days, there was a consciousness of the complexities of the East. The emergence of the LTTE claiming “sole representative” status combined with the brutal terror campaign by the state marginalized that perspective. But there has always been unease between the LTTE political leadership and the military wing about the complexity of the situation in the East and the military wing’s single-track approach. During the period immediately following the CFA, these differences between the military and political wings of the East—particularly regarding the Muslim question—became more acute.

FEARS, DILEMMAS, AND IMPUNITY

There have been clear differences of opinion expressed openly by the LTTE’s eastern leaders against agreements signed by the Wanni leadership with Muslims. The LTTE eastern leadership also accused Wanni leadership of systematically and deliberately cultivating the image of an unruly eastern leader, such as political assassinations of non-LTTE candidates standing for elections in Batticaloa, while such candidates were freely allowed to contest in the Vanni and Jaffna. Despite these rumblings in the political section, the overall command (under Karuna) kept these resentments in check. These resentments and contradictions eventually led to some demotions in the political section of the LTTE cadres in the East and to the open expression of their views. Some supporters of Karuna advance the theory that the LTTE intelligence wing has been masterminding an elaborate plan to target the eastern leadership and replace it with a weaker one. Whatever the reasons, the split, when it came, was unexpected and shocking for all, including the LTTE themselves.

Northeast Tamils have traditionally resented the superior attitude of Northern Tamils and they suggest that there is a domination of Jaffna Tamils in public service and education. This perception is still widely prevalent despite the advancement of non-Jaffna Tamils in both domains. Within the Tamil national movement in the early days, there was a consciousness of the complexities of the East. The emergence of the LTTE claiming “sole representative” status combined with the brutal terror campaign by the state marginalized that perspective. But there has always been unease between the LTTE political leadership and the military wing about the complexity of the situation in the East and the military wing’s single-track approach. During the period immediately following the CFA, these differences between the military and political wings of the East—particularly regarding the Muslim question—became more acute.

Neither the Karuna faction nor the LTTE know who supports them within the community. This has resulted in a dangerous situation where both are asserting their strength by killing suspected opponents with impunity, whether combatant or civilian. Karuna is trying to consolidate his power base by eliminating active LTTE cadres and supporters. The LTTE has increased abductions, killings, and terror as a means of reestablishing control over the East. There is deep fear and resentment at the public level over the killings. People are terrified of any open discussion of the LTTE split, and those few who are willing to talk expressed the opinion that LTTE should never have allowed the split to emerge. Tamils in Trincomalee feel sandwiched between the Sinhalese and the security forces on the one hand and Batticaloa and Jaffna on the other. "Trincomalee will no doubt suffer because of this split," one Grama Seva confided. Tamils resent the current domination by the Wanni cadres at all levels of
leadership and the fear of Jaffna domination has been rekindled. But feelings of vulnerability toward other communities can outweigh this resentment.

In southern Trincomalee, the Karuna faction seems to have some mobility and a support base. There have been several confrontations attributed to the two factions in this area, though it is not clear whether the military or the Karuna faction is involved. The LTTE has appointed a senior commander—"Sornam" from the Wanni, who brought northern Batticaloa under his purview—to take charge of Trincomalee after the split. They have also requested that the SLMM amalgamate this area with Trincomalee for purposes of monitoring activities. It is suggested that this may be due to the lack of military influence by the LTTE in the northern part of Batticaloa, which impacts LTTE attempts at future military and political domination of the area.

Open political operations by the LTTE in the Batticaloa district have been frustrated since the split. Their political offices have been attacked many times and they run the risk of assassination when moving openly. It is not stated who is responsible for these killings, but the general assumption is that they are perpetrated by Karuna cadres or those close to them. Events such as Black Tigers Day and Fallen Heroes’ Day that were celebrated on a grand scale in the past are more subdued. Since the defection, there is very little open activity either by the Karuna or LTTE factions in the cleared areas. In the uncleared areas, some of the LTTE officials acknowledge privately that they only operate in small groups in selected locations due to fear of ambush by the military intelligence and the paramilitaries (i.e., the Karuna faction). According to government officials and NGOs, LTTE interference in their administration has been less since they have had to deal with their internal problem. However, NGOs, government officials, and ordinary Tamils in the Batticaloa and Amparai districts said that the LTTE has launched a major campaign of abduction and torture of suspected Karuna supporters and their family members. There is widespread use of terror and intimidation in order to exert control, resulting in a general fear psychosis.

The LTTE are faced with a dilemma. They have to try to win Tamils back from Karuna’s fold by showing that they can stand up to Muslim pressure. The LTTE has to juggle the tasks of a) transforming itself into a political organization while b) pandering to the ethnic insecurities of Tamils vis-à-vis Muslims and c) winning some trust from the Muslims that they can expect justice under a LTTE administration. In the post-Karuna defection scenario there is also thinking emerging in the East that the Wanni faction will make concessions to Muslims at the expense of the Tamils of Batticaloa.

**DYNAMICS OF THE DEFECTION**

In this terrifying and confused situation there are various issues that contribute, some in contradictory fashion, to the dynamics for the future. Among the factors to consider are:

- **Karuna is an Eastern Tamil from the Batticaloa District and can always claim that heritage.**
- **Karuna voiced the resentment of northern domination for the first time and is appreciated for that. There is currently a support base for the Karuna faction, but its size is unknown. However, one Batticaloa Tamil stated, “Karuna said the right thing, for the wrong reasons, at the wrong time.”**
  So, even among those who appreciate his words, there are those who do not entirely support Karuna’s actions because of the detrimental consequences for the Tamil cause.
- **The manner in which the LTTE handled the issue is a concern. Civil society, under the leadership of the Bishop of Batticaloa-Trincomalee diocese, took the initiative to negotiate a settlement between the two groups. There were more than eight professional organizations and trade unions involved in this effort, despite the potential threat. This initiative was primarily fuelled by the fear of a bloody confrontation between the two sections where a large number of eastern cadres could have died. The initiative was not successful. Members of**
this peace group became targets of intimidation and assassinations by the intelligence wing of the LTTE who interpreted the initiative as recognition and legitimization of Karuna and support of his actions.

- The LTTE reaffirmed northern domination by replacing eastern leaders with leaders from the Wanni and flooding the East with the feared intelligence wing of Pottu Amman. This has created great anxiety and an uncertainty about the LTTE’s intentions and increased the feeling of “Jaffna domination.” This anxiety is also due to the fact that the former Trincomalee LTTE commander, “Colonel Pathuman,” was taken to Wanni and has not been heard of since. Today, almost the entire LTTE command structure consists of Vanni cadres and most of the eastern-based leaders have been sidelined.

- However, it must be noted that people also experienced Karuna’s record as commander of the East. He exacted high taxes (believed to be higher than Jaffna) that were part of the eastern complaint against LTTE. Furthermore, his record on child recruitment is appalling and caused problems with the Wanni leadership, which resulted in the then-leader of the political wing being demoted prior to the split. Despite Karuna having sent many child cadres home before going underground, shocked eyewitnesses to the Good Friday battle state that his cadres were predominantly female children. In sum, it was Karuna who was the LTTE in the East and was responsible for its actions there until his defection.

- Karuna taking refuge, or being perceived as taking refuge, with the army will undermine trust in him by Tamils. Several people, otherwise sympathetic to his stance, voiced concerns about this. The security forces are still feared by Eastern Tamils and, if Karuna works too closely with the army, he will be denounced as a traitor. Many Wanni loyalists state that he is under the protection of the army and will become as irrelevant as other Tamil groups who have taken a similar course in the past, such as PLOTE or TELO.

- Finally, other actors will not remain passive. Other Tamil groups, Muslim organizations, and the international community can all act to legitimize or de-legitimize the Karuna faction. The manner in which the security forces operate on the ground in relation to the LTTE Wanni and Karuna faction, both overtly and covertly, will also fuel this volatile situation.

**THE IMPACT OF THE KARUNA DEFECITION**

It is tempting to accept that, just as PLOTE and TELO did earlier, Karuna will become dependent upon the army and thus will quickly become irrelevant. It could be supposed that a mutuality of objective - weakening the LTTE - might result in alliances between Karuna and other Tamil groups. One EPDP leader who was interviewed stated that the EPDP would no more trust Karuna than the LTTE. “They are both the same. One minute you will be working with them, the next they will be killing you,” he said.

However, Karuna has all the advantages of being an easterner with his own connections there. Karuna and his cadres know and can operate the economic base of the LTTE in the East and have some international links to the diaspora. There is some evidence that taxation is recommencing in Batticaloa after having been discontinued last April. Both Karuna and Wanni cadres are beginning to collect taxes - sometimes from the same businesses, which may produce a backlash from the people. If all other actors remain passive, it may be possible that the Wanni LTTE will reduce Karuna cadres to a rump organization taking shelter with the army; but others will not remain passive.

Youth have been, and continue to be, the most vulnerable in this situation. Government officials have been informed that they must only carry out orders from the LTTE. In addition, one local counterpart of an INGO reported that they have requested not to implement any development programs for youth following the split, particularly in the uncleared areas.
The demobilized youth from the East remain the most vulnerable. UNICEF has an ongoing program for the reintegration of child soldiers who have been released from the movement, but this was overwhelmed when Karuna sent many children back suddenly without prior arrangements. As a result, some were cared for by religious communities, and some went home. There are reports of the LTTE selectively killing some of the disbanded youth as part of their terror campaign to control them and force others back to the LTTE. Some youth who try to go abroad end up being arrested by the security forces in Colombo. Some form of protection is urgently needed for the disbanded youth, almost the entire segment from the most deprived strata of the society. Senior government officials are reluctant to address the issue of demobilized youth since they feel it might antagonize the LTTE and destabilize the government’s engagement with them.

In reality, there is likely to be a very long, drawn out battle for power over the Tamils of the East that will lead to more killing and more terror on the ground. This will pose a challenge to all those in positions of power, domestically and internationally, to deal with impunity in a very difficult situation. Other forces will seek advantage and try to drive the LTTE out of the East, or at least the south-east, thus complicating the situation more. Any endgame is too far into the future to see the contours.

**Tamil-Muslim Relations**

An important dimension to the tensions between the Tamil and Muslim communities was the role of the military intelligence, which, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, recruited youth from Muslim villages to inform on LTTE activity. This led to suspicion and hostility toward Muslims by the LTTE leading to many killings of alleged Muslim military informants. The violence between the LTTE and the community is partly due to the operations of this intelligence group consisting of Muslims against the LTTE.

The population mix north of Trinco to Kuchchaveli is Tamil and Muslim, and the people are predominantly fishermen. In this area, there has not been any recruitment of Muslim youth by the military intelligence to work against the Tamil militants. Hence, the people work at the community level and are unified by interdependence. This land is not the basis of livelihood and thus land disputes are minimized. In addition, there is a lack of leadership in mobilizing ethnically due to the unpopularity of the Mosque committee that also contributes to the lack of hostilities. These micro situations impact Muslim political aspirations. Though they did not reject an autonomous Muslim region in the southeast, many Muslims saw this as a last resort and wanted an arrangement for the non-contiguous areas to be agreed upon. Their preferred option was for Tamil-Muslim political interdependence, fostered through constitutional guarantees.

**Local Community Negotiations**

In the districts of Batticaloa and Amparai, the pattern of successive Tamil and Muslim communities is evident. Problems such as the takeover of Muslim paddy lands, extraction of taxes, and abduction and ransom are reported with alarming regularity. Soon after the CFA, Muslim leaders in the north of Batticoloa eschewed LTTE taxes related to the reclaiming and cultivation of their paddy fields. Those farmers keen for a compromise were deterred by threats of violence by militant elements among the Muslims. The LTTE leadership took up the position: no taxes, no cultivation. Eventually, Muslims were allowed to cultivate their paddy lands, but tax was demanded toward harvest time, which was paid to safeguard the harvest. The issue was resolved, but created deep resentment among the Muslims and reinforced their vulnerability vis-a-vis a potential LTTE administration. In the years preceding the CFA, there had been several community level negotiations with the LTTE over access to Muslim-owned paddy fields in this district. Agreements were, and continue to be, negotiated at the community level, regardless of the
existence of a CFA or stalled peace process - though civilians continue to be caught between the demands of daily survival and militant activity. However, these interactions also can sow the seeds for change at the community level and have impact more widely, though care must be taken not to invest too much in this notion.

POLiticization of Local Issues

South of Batticaloa, a similar picture of Muslim disillusionment emerges. The Muslims in these areas feel that the CFA has not brought any improvements to their lives. They still feel the same deprivation and insecurity. Only the LTTE has gained, according to the Muslims. Muslims who were affected during the tsunami were those who were expelled from the LTTE-controlled areas during the past two decades. They accuse the LTTE of blocking attempts by divisional secretaries to resettle them in the land from where they were displaced in the early 1980s. The community leaders view this as a sign of the intransigence and hostility of the LTTE toward Muslims and motivates them to oppose any LTTE-dominated political arrangement for the East. Ferial Ashroff, a member of the National Unity Alliance and a minister in the present government, argues that it serves no purpose to create a special arrangement to undertake development work such as P-TOMS in areas that are controlled by the government; it is only necessary in areas under the control of the LTTE.

Muslims Supported by the "Sinhala State"

The prevalent Tamil perspective in the south of Batticaloa sees a threat from the Sri Lankan state and the security forces ("the Sinhaleses") on the one hand, and Muslims on the other. Tamils feel that Muslims have gradually reduced them to a minority in the Amparai district by political and administrative manipulations during the past two decades of violence and that they have been pressured into selling their paddy fields since the violence of the 1980s. Most of this violence is blamed on the SLMC and the home guards. Tamils also resent the creation of new Muslim divisional secretariat administrative units. Tamils argue that villages such as Akkaraiapattu and Pottuvil have become Muslim dominated through anti-Tamil violence by the security forces supported by Muslims. The Tamils celebrate the current lack of unified Muslim political leadership.

In Jaffna there are about 200 Muslim families who have returned since the CFA. Four families returned in 1997 and 140 by August 2003. The rate of return is reducing. They complain that they cannot get compensation to repair damaged houses and mosques. A Muslim school has opened in Jaffna town but is operating without electricity, water, or working toilets. The school is in the middle of a road of Muslim houses that are all badly damaged. One Muslim community leader stated that "Jaffna Muslims are different, we feel closer to the Tamils in Jaffna than the Muslims in the East. We are culturally different to Eastern Muslims." Nevertheless, later in the conversation he confided that they could not fully trust Tamils and could not speak freely. Another leader stated that the SLMC and Ferial Ashroff claims on behalf of Muslims do not interest them; they want minority rights guaranteed by the constitution everywhere.

Muslims throughout the East unanimously believe that the LTTE eastern leadership did not implement the political agreements reached between their respective leaders. They contend that there are differences between the political wing and the military wing of the LTTE and state that the military wing does not implement the outcomes of discussions with the political wing. Muslims see this either as an absence of control within LTTE or as a façade used to manipulate Muslims. Muslims state that since there is no evidence of the LTTE treating them as equal partners in any solution, Muslims must have their own separate arrangement.

Muslims point to recent incidents in the north of Batticaloa where Muslims were abducted and killed,
arguing such incidents demonstrate that Wanni leaders also could not be trusted. They are at pains to emphasize the interdependence of Tamils and Muslims of the East and the importance of understanding to peaceful coexistence. But they do not see any political will or confidence building measures on the part of the LTTE, either pre- or post-Karuna. They say that the differences are not at the level of the people but at the level of the militants.

**MUSLIM YOUTH CONSCIOUSNESS**

Speaking with Muslim youth groups has the eerie deja-vu quality of speaking with Tamil youth groups in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Muslim youth today are more educated than twenty years ago and they feel the injustices and humiliations concerning Muslim rights more keenly. They show documented proof of killings, abductions, extortion, and taxing that have been carried out by the LTTE, particularly after the CFA. There is also a rise in Muslim consciousness that views any cooperation with LTTE as a threat to Islam. This segment is nurtured by the madrassas. These radical militant groups are already in operation with very strict regimes of compliance and punishment including killings as retribution.

However, the youth groups and their rhetoric do resemble Tamil youth groups of the early 1980s more than the Jihadi groups from elsewhere. Unfortunately, the experience of Muslim youth to date is that violence brings attention to problems, non-violence does not. This lesson, together with the increasing globalization of more radical Islamic ideas may change the picture.

Muslims have resented in the past and and continue to resent the patronizing attitude of Tamil political parties. They state that Muslims continued to contribute to the Tamil struggle only to be targeted unfairly and looked upon purely as a lucrative source of money and resources through extortion, abductions, and robbery. They are also furious about Tamil views that Muslims are using the Tamil struggle to advance themselves and that they have not “earned” a place at the negotiating table.

**TAMIL - SINHALA RELATIONS**

Again, the Sinhalese do not comprise a monolith throughout the East. The Sinhalese who have been living in Trincomalee for generations are perfectly bilingual and do not have to compete with the Tamils for a living. A second group, such as fishermen and merchants, see themselves playing a dominant role and are dependent on state patronage. They are very vocal members of the traditional political parties, United National Party and Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and control specific territories in various parts of the town. They tend to move with the ebb and flow of national politics and support the accommodation of Tamil demands within a unified Sri Lanka. Despite this, they have some anxiety about whether the government will “sell them out” to the LTTE. It is this fear that the JVP seems to have capitalized on in the Trincomalee district, where they are making political inroads. It is also in this regard that the army has become an integral part of the situation in Trincomalee. With a large number of soldiers from Trincomalee, any conflict is bound to have lasting repercussions.

Many of the Sinhalese, irrespective of political affiliations, also see the CFA as a space that had been used by the LTTE to infiltrate the town and act with impunity in establishing their control over the population through intimidation and terror. The police also argue that the LTTE provokes Tamils into taking part in pro-LTTE activities that lead to tension and create backlash by the Sinhalese. This fear of a backlash, they argue, creates insecurity in the minds of Tamils, ensuring support for the LTTE.

The JVP also has been trying to create incidents during LTTE-organized events. For instance, on Heroes’ day, the JVP organized Sinhala three-wheeler drivers to carry out a procession next to the area where the LTTE was conducting its function. The police have been trying to
keep both communities apart by working out compromises whenever there are incidents. They contend there aren’t any civil society organizations behind these incidents. All “events,” they say, are organized and managed by either the JVP or the LTTE. Such incidents show the fierce contest by the Sinhalese and Tamil groups to establish their dominance in specific areas and challenge the other to provoke a reaction. These incidents are also, of course, used to bring their respective communities into their fold.

**MILITARY AND POLICE**

The security forces remain important stakeholders in the conflict. In the East where the army has been the de facto administrator of the “cleared” areas, their role is more than merely counter-insurgency operations. Their relationships with all three communities play directly into the dynamics of the conflict. However, the military has encouraged the police to handle conflicts or violence arising out of civilian activities, such as the JVP post-tsunami activities in Trincomalee town. Relations between all communities and the police force, which is more multiethnic than the military, are quite good.

The military is very bitter about the operation of the CFA. They are careful not to directly criticize the SLMM; the effectiveness of which they say is limited by the mandate. There is widespread resentment at the higher levels of command that the armed forces were not consulted about the terms of the CFA and its operational effectiveness, which they believe gives military, political, and social advantage to the LTTE. They believe that the gains made by the security forces during the war with enormous sacrifices are now being compromised. They also state that the LTTE is using the CFA only as a temporary space to regroup, and are waiting for the right time to recommence the war.

Clearly, the Karuna split has delighted the army in the East who felt very dispirited at their inability to curb LTTE activities earlier. Now it appears to them that this could be an opportunity to limit the LTTE in the East, driving them to settle for the North. That Karuna cadres are operating under army protection is not proven, but it seems clear that the army in the East would willingly support Karuna cadres against the LTTE. This also has the potential to undermine the influence of a more moderate officer corps.

The historic perception of the military as protectors of the Sinhalese, and confusions surrounding Muslim-military relations due to activities of the military intelligence, has led to a deterioration of military-civilian Tamil relations. However, in some places, notably Batticoloa town, some Tamils felt that the CFA had resulted in the army “learning the difference between Tamils and tigers” for the first time. The army itself is conscious of the need for “hearts and minds” work and were very pleased at the number of Tamils and Muslims who have expressed gratitude for their actions in the tsunami rescue operations. The LTTE will be only too wary of this development.

The military throughout Sri Lanka is under political control and army command. They will observe to the letter, if not in spirit, orders relating to the observance of the CFA despite being frustrated by it and feeling bitter toward the LTTE. However, it is likely that they would take any opportunity that would not directly contravene orders to curb and frustrate the LTTE on the ground. In the East, Karuna may have presented them with such an opportunity and fuelled any ideas of a return to war that are alive within the armed services there.
8. International Engagement in the North-East

REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES: INDIA

India, the immediate regional power with hegemonic ambitions, has followed the same policy goals in relation to Sri Lanka for decades, though the approach has varied dramatically. India wants a rights-based, negotiated settlement of the Tamil question in Sri Lanka, bounded by the limits on Indian states in the Indian constitution. This would solve the problem of Sri Lankan refugee influxes to India, stop spill-over of the Tamil cause to Tamil Nadu, ensure that there is no military victory for the LTTE, and limit the powers of any North-East Sri Lankan administration.

The interaction between the two countries has always been complex and multi-faceted. After the Indians exerted their diplomatic weight to discourage the LTTE from completing the advance through the Jaffna peninsula in 2000, the LTTE invested in a considerable “charm offensive” with the BJP government. It is to the credit of the LTTE that they did not attempt to play the “Hindu card” at that time - though that may have been due to the considerable influence of Christians in their own ranks. For a time it was thought that the LTTE might be having some success, despite independent overtures from both the GoSL and opposition leaders. However, the election of Congress ended such possibilities and the question of the assassination of Rajiv Ghandi returned to the agenda.

India is always characterized as having substantial intelligence resources in Sri Lanka, including being involved in counterinsurgency initiatives against the LTTE, whose autonomous power India seeks to crush. For example, the LTTE and many independent Tamils cite intelligence operations and collaborations by the Indians as being the norm. Muslim leaders have privately stated that India is training some Muslim youth - some of that in connection with security for the oil storage facility at Trincomalee.

All parties agree that there can be no sustainable settlement unless India is satisfied, and paranoia regarding India that used to be rampant in the South has largely abated. Norway has continuously kept India informed about the agreement of the two military parties to the conflict. India accepted the Norwegian intervention with great reluctance and only after April-June 2000. The increased internationalization of the peace process in the “Indian backyard” (with the inclusion of Japan, the United States, and the European Union) has led to Indian resentment.

PEACEMAKING AND NEGOTIATION: NORWAY AND THE SLMM

This report is critical of the design of the peace process developed by the Norwegians. However, the steadiness of the Norwegian initiative is splendid. An extremely well connected expatriate Tamil community leader stated that he believed it was only because of Norway that the LTTE had not gone to war in December 2004. The future of the peace process depends upon Norway widening its declared interest beyond the LTTE and the government and including more formal consultation with other interest groups. They currently do this at an informal level, but there needs to be a clear feed into the formal structures. The LTTE and the GoSL may not welcome this, but initially, this can be a separate “table” of formal consultation with Norway rather than the parties. This may sound ambitious at a moment when the two major parties are not meeting, but such a change could alter the dynamics of even a stalled process.
There are two major problems with the SLMM. The first is the boundaries of its mandate and the CFA, and the second is its composition. It is understood that the SLMM is led by Norway and restricted to Nordic countries at the request of the LTTE and GoSL. Nevertheless, the conflict of interest between mediation and monitoring is well known and there are examples of findings of SLMM - particularly regarding sea incidents - which many Sri Lankans and Sri Lanka watchers feel proves this point. It is not suggested that the stability of SLMM should be undermined by total change, but a graduated incorporation of other nationalities, and eventually a change of leadership should be undertaken. This is not in any way a reflection on the ability or ethics of the current head of the organization.

The CFA is more than a separation of forces agreement and less than a human rights agreement, although it does include a basic commitment to refrain from key human rights violations. As a separation of forces agreement, it is adequate, although its terms may not be to the liking of the SLAF. The SLMM has been conceived--and staffed as a mission--to monitor a separation of forces agreement, not to monitor human rights. This was recognized, and had the talks not stalled, an additional human rights agreement was in the process of being negotiated, although the parties were reluctant to agree to extended international monitoring. It would have been extremely useful had this been in place over the last 12 months, particularly in the East, and in its absence consideration should be given to maximizing the human rights monitoring role that the SLMM could play within its existing mandate.

**INTERNATIONAL DONOR COORDINATION**

Conditionality has failed with both the LTTE and the government primarily because the international community is not a community. Each country has different foreign policy interests and different development approaches. Both the LTTE and GoSL understand this and have been successful at playing the international field. This has resulted in the dissipation of any donor leverage that may have been available.

The apparent objective of donor coordination to date has been a unified approach. But, not only has this not proved possible, it is not desirable. Transformation of the actors in a conflict requires a high level of engagement and support backed by clear and unambiguous critiques. This must be accompanied by a non-negotiable understanding that, whatever transitional arrangements are necessary, post-settlement context will be based firmly on basic international norms. This requires a division of roles. To a limited extent this has happened in respect of the LTTE. Norway has a special role, the U.S. and the U.K. maintain a ban on the LTTE, India is non-accommodating across the board, mainland Europe is generally more politically engaging, and Japan is a donor who prefers to ignore the political context, which is very worrying as they are the largest donor to Sri Lanka. However, this division has been accidental and based purely upon the policies of the home foreign ministry and aid ministry policies, not on the needs of the peace process in Sri Lanka.

While recognizing the realities of foreign policy interests, donor coordination needs to be much more calibrated across donors and tuned to the reality of a comprehensive analysis of the Sri Lankan conflicts. However, donors also need to recognize the limitations of their actions in bringing about an end to violence.

**TIMELY INTERVENTION**

While this report highlights the inadequacy of current analysis of the North-East, including among donors, there is no doubt that there has been an improvement in the information and analysis available to donors in Sri Lanka. The conflict assessment is itself evidence of that. However, there is a tendency for this information to be presented in accordance with donor timetables, rather than interventions being responsive to the Sri Lankan situation.
For example, several reports have been funded and published recommending greater inclusivity in the Sri Lankan peace process. However, since the tsunami, donors have not suggested that the discussions regarding a joint mechanism should include any party other than the government and the LTTE (the suggestion that Muslims should be part of implementation does not include them in the negotiations process). Thus, the process of negotiating the joint mechanism has been a mirror image of the exclusion of the peace process - the same parties negotiated the same interests in the same way, resulting in a similar pattern of hope, followed by problems, followed by disillusionment, and finally deadlock. Given that the mechanism was dependent on the distribution of donor money, this was a situation where their leverage could have been maximized.

Any advice, comment, or intervention will always have greater impact if it is pertinent to what is happening on the ground. It is recognized that political sensitivities may mean that such advice will be given privately, but more usage should be made of public statements advising on best practice and international experience at timely moments.

The need for long-term engagement in conflict countries through transitions is well documented. In Sri Lanka, there is a danger that disillusionment with the peace process or other development considerations may result in disengagement, specifically now that Sri Lanka is a middle-income country. Disengagement is not without political risk and could be extremely detrimental to the process.

A STALLED NEGOTIATION AND DEVELOPMENT

It must be recognized that until a permanent political solution is found all parties will attempt, where possible, to strengthen their respective positions militarily and politically, and weaken the other. This is particularly the case in the void created by a stalled negotiation. Although a longer-term negotiation is recommended to allow processes to impact on potentially transformative dynamics, it is essential that the process is perceived to be moving forward at all levels. Peace spoilers must be continually forced to catch up with the moving situation and changing politics. This implication impacts all the recommendations that follow and must be viewed within this constraint. This leads to the rather obvious truism—which is often forgotten in the political hothouse of negotiating interests—that all parties need to gain in some way for a successful settlement to be achieved.

Changes in the politics of the South could release the political-level logjam, but change appears to be impeded structurally and by personalities. The LTTE envisages an entry into the arena of political power through reconstruction, rehabilitation, and development in order to maintain control over the population in the North and regain control in the East. This will also accord them legitimacy at the international level. At the level of the Tamil population the LTTE have not yet proven their ability to represent and care for all the communities of the North-East, nor for dissenting Tamil voices. This failure cannot be ignored, yet it must be understood that a military organization that continues to perceive itself as beleaguered by other forces cannot switch to democratic controls immediately.

Long before the Karuna split, the LTTE were stating that though the shooting war had ended, the intelligence war continued. Since the split, their defensiveness and paranoia has clearly increased. Some milestones achievable during the process should be discussed with LTTE together with a clear understanding of post-settlement procedures. To date any conditionality has been interpreted as an attempt to curb the power of the LTTE by both the organization and other parties. However, if the LTTE is to survive in the long term it is in the organization’s interests to explore such changes.

33 For a Tamil Community Centre recommendation on the Joint Mechanism see TIC, London “Note on Good Practise for Tsunami Reconstruction Joint Mechanism.”
But these discussions cannot simply be in the context of aid conditionality, which has clearly failed. Rather the discussions need to be in the context of engagement and transformative change. Transformation and development of the LTTE has to be seen in the context of development of the North-East and not in the context of aid conditionality.

**POST-TSUNAMI ISSUES**

The distribution of resources has different impacts in the different locales of the conflict. Economics in the North-East of Sri Lanka are usually articulated in terms of the people and the victims of war or the tsunami. Under normal circumstances resources are political power; this is even more so the case in the North-East where powers of leverage, economic greed, and legitimacy all feed into conflict dynamics at the levels of politics and people. The needs of the people of each ethnic political community, and the political organizations representing them do not necessarily coincide. The local, national, and international dynamics surrounding economic resources in Sri Lanka have become extremely complex. The volume of money and organizations now on the ground doing post-tsunami work increases this complexity. The difficulties of negotiating a joint tsunami mechanism illustrate the highly political nature of post-tsunami relief and reconstruction programs. In the tsunami affected areas, people are experiencing aided inflation. Local NGO’s complain of their long-term programs being disrupted by newly arrived international NGOs randomly distributing “hand-outs” and creating a culture of dependency. Furthermore, good local staff are being “poached” by international organizations offering three and four times the local salaries. The local people who have lost their houses in the tsunami are unable to find accommodation because the new NGOs and INGOs have rented out many houses for high rates. Locals laughed ironically at the fighting among the international agencies, and the established international organizations were in despair at the lack of coordination. These are all old lessons for the international community, but they urgently need to be relearned. They have implications both for the efficiency of reconstruction and for the political economy of peace or war.

**INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

International organizations and donors are instrumental in shaping both the political aspects of the peace process and ground dynamics. This report considers a peace process as a gradual movement from violence to politics and from coercion to the establishment of international norms. In the North-East of Sri Lanka, coercion still silences the individual or alternate view. The progress toward pacific politics and international norms is largely in the hands of the political, military, and international organizations working in the North-East. During the war, different norms operated within different parts of Sri Lanka in respect to both human rights (recognized by the operation of international humanitarian law) and developmental practice.

Although there has been little impact, the murder of political opponents in the North-East has been the subject of much international concern and condemnation. It is not known whether donors and development agencies have adopted strategies to move toward development norms including public participation, open tendering, and transparent local financing. The manner in which external resources are distributed will influence the development of norms in this respect in the future. This lies at the heart of the problems in negotiating a joint mechanism or interim administration and actions at the ground level will influence the political dynamics.

**CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION**

In Sri Lanka the debate around transformation has been limited to the shift of the LTTE from a military to a
political organization, with some references to the need for the GoSL to also transform. Transformation of the parties and all actors is important for conflict transformation, but such a process requires transformation of issues, goals, cultural practices, institutions, and social and power relations. The reality is that, despite the discourse of transformation, the character of the peace process has remained one of conflict management. It is not transformative. It is focused on managing one violent conflict within the country, despite the increasing evidence that the war between the LTTE and the GoSL is dynamically linked to many other political, social, and increasingly violent conflicts.

One party to the conflict cannot be expected to effect transformation within such an unpromising environment where there is no collective responsibility within the separate political processes of the North-East and the South, let alone the peace process itself. The peace process has remained stalled because the status quo is better than active war and the main political actors throughout the island find it more palatable than the risks involved in moving forward. Since the peace process has become emblematic for politics in Sri Lanka, this void at the political level benefits only peace spoilers who will increasingly fill the void.

There is a lack of political space throughout Sri Lanka, but constraints in the North-East are enforced through direct violence. Conflict transformation is primarily about creating the political space within which everyone can begin to move freely - not about the transformation of one or more armed parties.

**PATTERNS OF EXCLUSION AND VIOLENCES**

The pattern of exclusion, followed by violence, followed by political attention has become a habit-forming pattern in Sri Lanka. The Muslim question was not new when it was forced center stage through violence in the East. The Eastern/Northern Tamil issue was not new -
9. Implications and Conclusions

THE PEACE PROCESS

The overall picture of the North-East is one of instability, which seems to be mirrored by equally unstable politics in the South. The LTTE’s perception of Southern instability is very strong as reflected in Prabhakaran’s Heroes’ Day speech in November 2004. This is undermining confidence in the peace process both by the LTTE, who perceive themselves in a “peace trap,” and by the general population who sees no hope of progress. In parts of the North-East, such as Jaffna town, the response to this is resigned hopelessness. Elsewhere, such as in Batticaloa and Trincomalee towns, different conflict fissures are generating a new desperate dynamic of fear and coercion. The peace process, even at its most successful, was never designed to cover these micro dynamics, yet the future of the process itself may depend on these new fissures and contours.

This report makes the point that the process in Sri Lanka is based on conflict management, not conflict transformation. Such moves as have been attempted toward transformation have been limited to demanding transformation from the LTTE. However, transformation is a holistic concept that involves gradual change in context, structure, actors across the board, issues, and elites. It requires a new way of thinking about the peace process, a way in which the power relationships are understood and accommodated through conflict analysis. Transformation is not goal oriented and requires process. A peace process is so much more than the procedural arrangements between the parties and a mediator with occasional goalposts of achievement. For example, process also includes the relationships and culture of exchange, which should not privilege armed conflict actors to the exclusion of others.

Process also requires progression, and, though it will always be likely to move slowly, it is very difficult to sustain a fruitful process in stasis. Inclusivity is an essential aspect of a transformative process and requires more than a series of “add-ons,” such as including a few of the more vociferous groups in the process. The following recommendations and observations highlight some aspects of the Sri Lankan peace process that fail to be transformative.

- **Analysis** needs to be much more nuanced and sensitive to sub-regional, as well as sub-national dynamics. It needs to take on changing social issues. It needs to be sustained and timely.
- **Prompt action** based on analysis, that grabs windows of opportunity, can change the political dynamic and keep the process on track. The Sri Lanka peace process has been bedevilled by indecision and slow-moving proposals, which have given peace spoilers too much time to undermine the process.
- **Short-term agendas** need to be adjusted to meet the longer-term needs of the peace process.
- **Inclusion** needs to be an embedded principle of the process ensuring that, through a more open, multi-level process, the complexities of pluralism are captured. This should result in some currently silenced mid-level people being brought into political spaces where they may be able to act, help marginalize peace spoilers, and mitigate against the further development of violence in society.
- **Trust** is a much-bandied about word but it does require investment. Trust between Ranil Wickremasinghe and the LTTE brought dividends. Mistrust between the LTTE and President Kumaratunga has caused immense problems and
could have resulted in battlefield actions in December, but for the tsunami.

- **Getting the process moving:** The stalled process feeds directly into the LTTE fears of a peace trap and relates closely to questions of trust. A lack of dynamic change and continued progress in the peace process will only encourage hawks and disillusionment among the people. Getting the process moving and keeping it moving should be a priority, and will need great creativity and courageous political action.

- **International norms across the board** must in principle underpin the process and progress toward norms should be an essential part of the transition.

**THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

The international community is a false construct as all governments are motivated by different national interests; there can even be differences between donors and diplomats from the same country. Though this limits the impact of the donor community, donors and diplomats can still be more effective in assisting the peace process in Sri Lanka, and this requires long-term engagement. Unfortunately, donors are also guilty of short-term thinking, as was illustrated by the shocking manner in which well-known lessons regarding relief and development were ignored in the implementation of post-tsunami measures.

- **New contours of conflict created by the tsunami aid** requires donors to encourage all international agencies to push back spending deadlines, being attentive to absorptive capacity and conflict sensitivities. A collective donor report in two parts should be commissioned on a) lesson learning and b) undoing the damage, or at least doing no more damage.

- **Conflict analysis** is equally important for donors who need to develop systems for more frequent conflict analysis, either in-house or in collaboration with Sri Lankan and international organizations.

- **Institutional memory** is very important for developing an analysis in proper historical perspective. More attention should be paid to handover briefings when staff change.

- **Conditionalities have not been effective.** The accidental complementarity that has risen in relation to the LTTE should be operated on a more conscious and organized level with both the government and LTTE.

- **Conflict transformation:** Donors need to develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of what is needed for transformation to take place. Or, they need to understand better how to apply the lessons from transformation, bearing in mind the limits of their ability to effect an end to the violence.

- **Actor transformation:** Development of all actors should be in the context of overall development. To seek to transform the LTTE in isolation is futile and doomed to failure.

- **International norms:** Donors who have been active in the area of human rights norms need to redouble their efforts and should begin developing strategies to bring the whole of Sri Lanka toward international development norms and best practices.

- **Timing** should be according to ground needs and opportunities, and actions and reports should not be according to head office or international timetables.
Bibliography


