

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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THESIS

DEFEATING THE MODERN ASYMMETRIC THREAT

by

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June 2002

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DEFEATING THE MODERN ASYMMETRIC THREAT

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

On February 24th, 2002 the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka entered into a Peace Agreement with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) ending a horrific 19 year-old low-intensity conflict. Over the course of nearly two decades, the LTTE came to exemplify the modern asymmetric threat as they battled the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) and for a period an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). The anthropology in Chapter II, history in Chapter III, and explanation of the Tigers in Chapter IV describes most of the intricacies of the struggle. In particular, Chapter IV offers four explanations for the prolific use of suicide bombers by the LTTE: one strategic, one operational, one psychological and one religious. Chapter V conducts an analysis of the conflict to garner what lessons can be learned from the successes and failures of the SLAF and IPKF so that U.S. commanders can better prepare their troops for future battles against organizations employing similar tactics as the LTTE.

Chapter V further tests my hypothesis that the four principles of Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) as currently defined in U.S. Joint Doctrine (maximum intelligence, minimum violence, unity of effort, and responsive government) are the applicable variables in defeating the modern asymmetric threat, even those that employ suicide bombers. I defined success in defeating the modern asymmetric threat as besting the threat sufficiently through military means that the enemy lays down his arms, gives up the use of his explosives, and seeks to end the conflict peacefully by political means. With the February signing of the peace accord, having been greatly assisted by the global effects of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., the Sri Lankan government and its armed forces finally achieved success in defeating the LTTE according to this definition. Whether wittingly or unwittingly at the time, the Sri Lankans were adhering to all four principles of IDAD. Some may argue that without the effects of 9/11 this would not have been possible and this may very well be true, but it does not negate my argument. Chapter VI defends this conclusion and makes some further recommendations for improving the definitions of the IDAD principles so that young U.S. military officers and non-commissioned officers may be better prepared when they come face to face with similar threats in the near future.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. RELEVANCE

The purpose of this thesis is to assist U.S. commanders better prepare their troops to meet and defeat the modern asymmetric threat. In the opening round of the War on Terrorism, the United States armed forces and their allies appear to have shocked the world with the rapid disposal of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, and numerous battlefield victories over Osama Bin Laden's al Qaeda terrorist network. The Defense Secretary himself, though, in a recent television interview warned that the U.S. Department of Defense must be careful not to jump to conclusions as to which lessons are to be learned from the conflict in Afghanistan, especially in light of that conflict's relatively short duration.

Most analysts seem to at least agree that the conflict has demonstrated the effectiveness of combining air power, unmanned aerial vehicles, human intelligence, special operations forces, local forces, light infantry, and air assault infantry when battling an asymmetric threat hidden in a mountainous desert environment. In due time, the Joint Services will pen the official history and record the official lessons learned. In the meantime, U.S. commanders can study a recently concluded conflict between a modern armed force and a modern asymmetric threat in a jungle environment.

For nearly 19 years, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil - Eelam (LTTE) confounded the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) by using an assortment of asymmetric tactics. The LTTE also confounded five divisions of the Indian Army sent on a "Peacekeeping" mission to disarm the LTTE, a mission that the Indians ended unsuccessfully after nearly three years. There are many lessons to be learned from the only recently concluded story of how the relatively small force of Tamil guerrillas held its own against two modern day armed forces. U.S. commanders should take advantage of the very current opportunity to study and learn from the conflict in Sri Lanka - this may be especially important since it is likely that as al Qaeda moves its nerve center, it will also move its operations into new environments and regions. It is also highly likely that any other potential future U.S. asymmetric opponent in south Asia will have already studied the tactics of the LTTE.

Additionally, current events in the Israeli / Palestinian conflict have sparked heated debates about the terrorist tactic of using suicide bombers. The LTTE made liberal use of human suicide bombers for both political assassinations / urban terror and during military / jungle operations during its 19-year struggle. In fact, the LTTE committed more acts of suicide terrorism in the last 20 years than most other terrorist organizations combined (Sprinzak, E., 2000, p. 69). This fact, though often cited, is rarely understood or explained. One aim of this thesis is to better explain the terror tactics adopted by the LTTE.

This thesis will also trace and explain the history of the Sri Lankan conflict and attempt to scientifically analyze it from a neutral position with the goal of determining how a modern government and its armed forces can best defeat a modern asymmetric threat, particularly one that employs suicide bombers.

B. BACKGROUND

After gaining Independence from Britain in 1948, the island country known as Ceylon remained within the British Commonwealth system and continued to develop and organize its armed services along British lines. In 1972, a new constitution renamed the country Sri Lanka. Over the years the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) received advice, training, and equipment from many supporters, including Britain, India, China, the former Soviet Union, the United States of America, Israel, and others. In an attempt to keep the SLAF modern and on a perceived par with the other armed forces in the region, Sri Lankan politicians appear to have emphasized the importance of technology and firepower. However, for years the SLAF's emphasis on technology and firepower yielded little success in dealing with the asymmetric threat posed by the LTTE.

Established as an ethno-nationalist separatist movement fighting for its own nation or "homeland" in the northern and eastern portion of the island country of Sri Lanka (Eelam is the Tamil word for homeland), the LTTE has also been known to engage in international drugs and arms smuggling. From 1987 – 1990, the Indian Army, in agreement with the Sri Lankan government, sent in a two-brigade peacekeeping force to put a halt to what many considered was an impending civil war. The Indian Peace

Keeping Force (IPKF) quickly grew to a five-division force estimated at 70,000 troops, but the LTTE continued to hold out. The LTTE, estimated to be at most 10,000 strong, continued its struggle against the SLAF that grew to a combined force of around 120,000 troops. Over the years, during different phases / operations of the war, employing different tactics and adhering to various different principles, both the SLAF and IPKF met varying degrees of success and failure. The LTTE developed asymmetric responses to the threat imposed upon it by the IPKF. The LTTE continued to use those same asymmetric responses to confound the SLAF.

For a long time the LTTE escaped condemnation from the international community because it went out of its way to avoid having any Western tourists killed in the fighting. Additionally, it was supported by a vast Tamil diaspora estimated at 650,000 persons with large concentrations in diverse places such as Singapore, London, parts of Europe, and Canada. In places like Toronto, the diaspora was large enough to exert significant political influence to keep the Tigers from being labeled a terrorist organization for several years, despite mounting evidence to the contrary. Finally (in March 2001), Great Britain followed the U.S. State Department's lead (in August 1997) of listing the LTTE as an international terrorist organization. India, Malaysia, Australia, and Canada also blacklisted the LTTE. These listings made LTTE fundraising activities illegal and thus more difficult in those countries.

But the fundraising continued under cleverly disguised front companies. Not until after the events of September 11th, 2001 were the Sri Lankan government's efforts to stop the fundraising charade successful. Finally, with its funds drying up, growing international condemnation of suicide terrorism, and with the considerable help of third party peace negotiations initiated by a Norwegian delegation, the LTTE agreed to settle the conflict. Borrowing a page from the Irish Republican Army, the LTTE now speaks through a new political party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA).

C. METHODOLOGY

In an effort to determine how to defeat a modern asymmetric threat, I chose to conduct a case study analysis of the LTTE in Sri Lanka. The first challenge was to define

the problem. The IPKF described its operations against the LTTE as a peacekeeping operation designed / intended to disarm the LTTE. The SLAF described its efforts against the LTTE as a struggle with a terrorist organization. The IPKF intervention was clearly not only a peacekeeping operation and the SLAF struggle was clearly not only a counter-terrorism effort. At the same time, however, the struggle was not truly a civil war either, as some have contended, because not all Tamils supported the LTTE and its goal of establishing a separate state. My research revealed that the LTTE are largely Tamil Hindus and Catholics who exclude Tamil Muslims from their struggle. Within the Sri Lankan government and armed forces, the predominantly Buddhist Sinhalese leadership usually downplay the role of religion in the conflict to avoid fueling sympathy for the Hindu Tamils from the large Tamil population in India. Thus, the struggle can best be classified as an ethno-nationalist separatist insurgency by a segment of the Tamil population, largely fought in the jungle, yet with plenty of instances of urban terrorism.

For the government of Sri Lanka and its armed forces, the LTTE can best be described as an Internal Defense and Development (IDAD) problem. If a young officer in the U.S. Army had been asked to assist the SLAF with its IDAD problem, he would have properly classified this request as a Foreign Internal Defense (FID) issue. Turning to the most current doctrine for FID, he would have pulled Joint Pub. 3-07.1, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for FID (dated 26 June 1996) off the shelf. After a quick review, he would have noticed that the four principles of IDAD (p. II-15 and App. C, p. 2-3) are:

- 1) Unity of Effort
- 2) Maximum Use of Intelligence
- 3) Minimum Use of Violence
- 4) Responsive Government.

The young officer may have hypothesized that if the command element of the Sri Lankan government and SLAF followed the four principles of IDAD, as outlined in the Joint Publication, it should be successful in its struggle against the LTTE. Conversely, if the government and armed forces were violating the principles of IDAD they should be unsuccessful.

If I were that young officer called upon to assist the SLAF in its struggle with a modern asymmetric threat like the LTTE, I would have turned to this doctrine and these principles, trusting that the U.S. Joint Services developed these principles and continues to profess them in its doctrine today after years of observing both their successful and unsuccessful employment by the U.S. itself, her allies, and her enemies. I would have tried to coach the Sri Lankan Armed Forces to employ them.

Having now spent more than a year studying the Sri Lankan conflict, I believe that if the command element of the Sri Lankan government and SLAF had followed the four principles of IDAD as outlined in the Joint Publication they would have succeeded in defeating the modern asymmetric threat as exemplified by the LTTE. When I began this thesis the struggle was still ongoing. Fortunately, in the aftermath of 9/11 the struggle appears to have come to a peaceful resolution – in part, I will argue, because the four principles of IDAD have now been brought into alignment. I believe that this could have occurred much sooner – if only the Sri Lankan government and SLAF had made these four principles their top priority.

The concept of studying battles or campaigns for the presence or absence of principles is not new. Students of the U.S. Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning are taught to employ this technique. The student studies, and then recounts, a battle looking specifically for adherence to or violation of the Principles of War, for instance. The significance of principles is usually that they must *all* be adhered to in order for the commander to ensure success. If even one of the principles is violated, the result is usually failure. The Sri Lankan case illustrates this beautifully and demonstrates that the government and armed forces of a country must simultaneously adhere to all four principles of IDAD in order for a commander to ensure success when confronted by a modern asymmetric threat. Violating even one principle during any given phase of the operation will result in failure.

In order to scientifically prove the worth of these principles, and my theory that they all must be adhered to at the same time, I first recount the significant anthropology and history of the island leading up to the modern 19-year struggle. I do this in Chapter II, which covers the anthropology of the conflict. Next, in Chapter III, I relate the history of the modern conflict explaining how the Sri Lankan government and armed forces

attempted to counter the LTTE, and how the LTTE responded. In Chapter IV I explain how and why I contend that the LTTE typifies the modern asymmetric threat and how and why it specifically developed and often employed suicide bombers. Here is where I offer my explanation of the asymmetry of the LTTE. Only then, can I operationalize the dependent variable – which is success or failure in defeating a modern asymmetric threat, such as that presented by the LTTE. I also operationalize the four independent variables I have identified: maximum intelligence, minimum violence, unity of effort, and responsive government. Once I have operationalized all of the variables, I examine the conflict for the adherence to or violation of them by the Sri Lankan Government or SLAF. Chapter V is where I conduct this analysis. Chapter VI is my conclusion, which contains some recommendations for the junior leaders of the U.S. Armed Forces who may have to face similar asymmetric threats in the present and near future.

As I analyzed the conflict, it became readily apparent that the SLAF employed different tactics during different phases of the conflict and for a particular phase the LTTE was engaged by the IPKF. I thus broke the history and anthropology of the conflict into six phases (1948-82, 1983-87, 1987-90, 1990-95, 1996-2001, and 2001-02), paying particular attention to the five phases covering the 19 years of intense conflict, from 1983 - 2002. The years 1948-82 needed to be included because had the Sri Lankan government behaved differently during the period from its independence until 1982 the conflict may have never started in the first place. During the period 1987-90, the IPKF engaged the LTTE while the SLAF regrouped and dealt with another Marxist insurgency in the ethnic Sinhalese southern half of the island. During all other periods, the LTTE and the SLAF were mutually engaged.

I examined each phase of the conflict for the presence or absence of the application by the SLAF or IPKF of my four independent variables. In each instance I sought to measure the corresponding success or failure of the modern armed force against the modern asymmetric threat. If I had found that the SLAF or the IPKF consistently followed all four principles of IDAD in its struggle with the LTTE, I should have found it able to defeat the LTTE, but clearly neither the IPKF nor SLAF did. If I had found that the SLAF or IPKF violated even one of the principles of IDAD in its struggle with the LTTE, it should have instead failed to defeat the LTTE, which is what occurred until

shortly after the events of September 11th, 2001 in the U.S. which had global impacts that reached the conflict in Sri Lanka. Of course, I could also have found that the LTTE so successfully redefined the modern asymmetric threat that the four IDAD principles for defeating insurgency are no longer valid or need to be redefined. In fact, the evidence led me to conclude that the case of Sri Lanka proves that the principles of IDAD are still valid and can be successfully employed against the modern asymmetric threat if properly defined and consistently practiced.

D. THESIS ORGANIZATION

Chapter I is this introduction, discussing the relevance of the conflict to current events and describing the background of the conflict, my methodology, sources I used, and my organization of the thesis. Chapter II examines the Anthropology of the Conflict. Chapter III examines the History of the Modern Conflict. Chapter IV explains the Asymmetry of the LTTE. Chapter V offers an Analysis of the Conflict by breaking the conflict down into logical phases. Chapter VI is my Conclusion.

E. SOURCES

This thesis is based on an analytical survey of primary and secondary sources relating to the conflict. Much has been written about the struggle. As with any ethnic conflict, one must be very careful when reviewing the literature for the many inherent biases. There are hard-line Sinhalese and Tamil positions; there are Sinhalese and Tamil positions that are sympathetic to the other side's cause; there are moderate points of view; and there are Indians, British and others sympathetic to one side or the other. One must study the conflict from several positions to develop a full picture.

The most important source I relied upon to write this thesis was A Soldier's Version: An Account of the On-Going Conflict and the Origin of Terrorism in Sri Lanka, written by Major General Sarath Munasinghe after he retired from the Sri Lankan Army in July of 2000. The General's military career spanned most of the years of the conflict between the Sri Lankan Army and the Tigers. In his book he traces the development of

the Tigers and the various tactics the Army employed against the Tigers. The book is only in print in India and Sri Lanka. I was lucky enough to get a copy through the U.S. Library of Congress field office in New Delhi, India.

I balanced the General's account with several British and Indian histories, and countless news articles. Additionally, I compared all of this to what the Tigers themselves reported on their unofficial website: www.eelamnation.com. The Tigers' official website is: www.eelam.com. The official site is very sanitary and was designed for overseas consumption and to solicit donations. The unofficial website was designed to counter government propaganda and offer Tiger propaganda instead. However, the site was usually honest in admitting Tiger losses. Two other websites I also found useful for fairly unbiased information on the struggle were: www.tamilnet.com and www.lankaweb.com. After nearly 15 months of reading and comparing the Tigers' sites to the General's account, and with current and archival news reports, I believe it is possible to retell the story in a way useful to young American officers and non-commissioned officers. At least this is my goal.

II. THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE CONFLICT



Figure 1. Map of Sri Lanka, downloaded with permission from:
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/middle_east_and_asia/sri_lanka_pol01.jpg

A. BACKGROUND

1. Relevance in Terms of Human Tragedy

Sri Lanka, known widely as Ceylon until 1972, is a large island (about the size of the state of Pennsylvania) situated 22 miles southeast from the southern tip of India. For nearly 19 years the island was embroiled in a bitter insurgency that was estimated to have taken the lives of over 65,000 people – men, women, children, soldiers, guerrillas, politicians, terrorists, policemen, Sinhalese, Tamils, and Indians combined. As many as 750,000 people may have been internally displaced from their original homes, and an overseas diaspora (mostly Tamil) of approximately 650,000 persons has been created as a result of the fighting. The Sri Lankan Armed Forces are believed to have lost 8,500 personnel in the fighting, the Indian Army 1,100, the LTTE or Tamil Tigers report having lost 17,211 fighters, and nearly 40,000 civilians were cut down in the cross fire. The history in Chapter III will account for many of these losses. Other details can be gathered from the Human Rights Watch Organization's Annual World Reports available on the web.

To even begin to understand how such a tragic loss of life could have taken place in such a small place, one must familiarize oneself with the people of the island, their ethnicity, religion, language, and social systems. Differences in ethnicity, religion, language, and social class created internal pressures on the island. The geo-strategic importance of the island to other countries of the region created external pressures. Choices that the government and armed forces made in the face of these external and internal pressures exacerbated differences between factions, and heightened ethnic grievances that led to conflict and eventually a brutal insurgency. One can understand how the government and armed forces made these decisions only if one remembers that the country was still in the early stages of statehood after having gained its independence. One also has to understand the critical role played by Velupillai Prabhakaran (leader of the insurgent LTTE) and the extent to which he developed his own brand of guerrilla warfare and developed his own terrorist techniques as the conflict unfolded. Prabhakaran's evolution, in turn, requires an understanding of the anthropology of the island.

2. People, Religion, Language

Some 18.6 million people inhabit Sri Lanka. Around 14 million, or 75% of the population, is ethnically Sinhalese and speaks the Sinhala language. Approximately 90% of these Sinhalese practice Buddhism. The Sinhalese population is centered around the capital of Colombo and in the southern and western portions of the island. It is believed that the Sinhalese came to Sri Lanka from India in around 500 B.C. and Buddhism came to the island around 300 B.C. The Sinhalese are thought to belong to the Indo-Aryan race and often refer to themselves as “People of the Lion” (Country Study, 1990, p. 6).

Around 3.2 million, or 18% of, Sri Lankans are ethnically Tamil and speak the Tamil language. Approximately 90% of these Tamils practice Hinduism. Other Tamils practice Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam. The majority of Tamils are “Jaffna Tamils” who have lived on the northern Jaffna peninsula and in the jungles in the north and east for thousands of years. About 1 / 5 of the Tamil population is comprised of more recent immigrants from India. These Tamils are sometimes referred to as “plantation Tamils”, or Indian Tamils, as they were brought to the island by the British from the Indian State of Tamil Nadu starting in 1820 in order to work on coffee and tea plantations. All Tamils have long considered themselves “People of the Tiger” (Country Study, p. 7).

It is interesting to note that some 60 million Tamils live in Tamil Nadu, which is near the southern tip of India and has 600 miles of coastline, just across from the Jaffna peninsula. Tamils in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu have always had close ties with the Tamils of Sri Lanka. In particular, members of the Indian Tamil fishing caste of Tamil Nadu maintain strong kinship links with members of the Sri Lankan Tamil fishing caste of the Jaffna peninsula. This situation creates an “ethnic affinity problem” for the Sinhalese of Sri Lanka; though they are a clear majority in Sri Lanka, when they think about their numbers relative to Tamils in the larger region, never mind just on Sri Lanka, they feel like a clear minority (Kaufman, 1996, p. 114).

B. THE ANTHROPOLOGY BEHIND THE MODERN HISTORY

1. General

I will discuss the modern history of the conflict in Sri Lanka, paying particular attention to actions between the SLAF and IPKF with the LTTE in Chapter III. However, knowing this history is not enough for understanding the anthropology of the conflict. One must first delve more deeply and consider the legacy of the ancient kingdoms, the role of colonialism, the watershed event of WWII, the rise of nationalism, the spread of communism, the Cold War, and the consequent political, social, and economic structures in the region.

2. Ancient History

The Sinhalese believe their ancestors first came to the island in 500 B.C. There is evidence that an ancient Sinhalese civilization spread from the north-central province to the south from 300 B.C. through 1100 A.D. Buddhism was founded in India around 600 B.C. and came to Sri Lanka in 300 B.C. through the work of early missionaries. In 300 A.D., a sacred relic - a tooth from the original Buddha - was brought to the island, and an important Buddhist Temple was built in the central city of Kandy as a shrine for the tooth. The classical period of Sinhalese culture is considered to have lasted from 200 A.D. to 900 A.D.. During this period, the Sinhalese developed their agriculture including complicated irrigation systems. They also developed their own architecture and art forms, heavily influenced by Buddhism. Buddhism had a softening effect on the harsh edges of the caste system that the Sinhalese had brought from India. The warrior caste, for instance, played a role in keeping royalty in check. The highest caste to which Sinhalese could belong was the cultivator caste, and all modern Sri Lankan Presidents and Prime Ministers have been from this caste (Country Study, p. 10 –11). This is also the highest caste among Tamils.

The Tamils trace their earliest settlements on the island to 300 B.C. Two Tamil warriors “usurped the Sinhalese throne” from 237 until 215 B.C., when they were murdered. In 145 B.C. another Tamil warrior conquered and ruled the Sinhalese until he lost a 15-year war to a Sinhalese king in 101 B.C. Sinhalese and Tamil historians have

used these periods of ancient conflict to stir modern religious and ethnic tensions, but more objective historians regard these as having been dynastic rather than ethnic struggles (Country Study, p. 11 – 12).

From 500 – 600 A.D. three separate Hindu kingdoms flourished in southern India and were rolling back the earlier gains Buddhism had made amongst the Indian people. This prompted the Sinhalese to become the protectors of Buddhism. Still, during this same period, a Sinhalese prince relied on Tamil assistance to dethrone another Sinhalese prince. The Tamils who supported the Sinhalese rulers found favor in the central kingdom of Kandy and the Hindu influence could be seen even in architecture of this period (Country Study, p. 12).

Around 850 A.D., a Sinhalese prince successfully raided southern India. Around 990 A.D., two Sinhalese kingdoms joined forces to attack southern India. The southern Indian Chola Dynasty retaliated and conquered northern Sri Lanka in 993 A.D., and conquered southern Sri Lanka by 1017 A.D. The Indian Chola dynasty ruled Sri Lanka from 1017 – 1069. During this period, the Tamils and Hinduism flourished until a Sinhalese king drove the Indians out in 1070. This Sinhalese king spent the next 40 years restoring the dominance of Buddhism (Country Study, p. 13).

In the 1100s, Sinhalese kings again conducted raids in southern India. The Sinhalese also tried to spread Buddhism abroad and sent soldiers as far as Burma to protect their missions. Then, something happened in the 13th century that sent the Sinhalese fleeing into the southern half of the island. Some historians speculate that malarial-mosquitoes from the northern jungles infested the Sinhalese kingdom's irrigation systems in the north central highlands. From this point on, the Sinhalese would regard the southern half of the island as their cultural and demographic center, while the Tamils would dominate the north. The thick northern jungle would separate the two. Also, Buddhism would flourish in the south, while Hinduism flourished in the north. The Tamils strengthened their hold over the entire northern Jaffna peninsula and the Tamil fishing caste benefited economically from lucrative pearl fisheries all around the peninsula (Country Study, p. 16).

From the 1300s to the 1500s the Tamil kingdom defended the island from Indian encroachment. However, the Tamils would not stop two invasions by a Malaysian

Buddhist king hell bent on capturing the Buddha's tooth from the Sinhalese. The Malaysians did not succeed, but the Tamil indifference angered the Chinese Ming Dynasty, which intervened on behalf of the Sinhalese, and reunited the entire island under a Sinhalese king around 1500 (Country Study, p. 17).

3. Colonial History

By the 1500s the Portuguese were fast becoming a dominant maritime power. They attacked Moorish ships and trading colonies throughout the Indian Ocean region and landed on the southern tip of Ceylon in 1505. They immediately recognized the strategic importance of the island to the security of their southern Indian coastal ports. Consequently, they purposefully supported one Sinhalese prince in a fight against his rival brother. This rivalry divided the Sinhalese between a southern kingdom centered on the developing Portuguese built city of Colombo and a central kingdom centered on the Buddhist temple in Kandy. In 1560, with the help of the southern kingdom, the Portuguese sacked the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy and stole or destroyed the Buddha's tooth (Country Study, p. 8). The central kingdom then pushed the Portuguese back south. The Portuguese converted many in the southern Sinhalese kingdom to Roman Catholicism, while the central kingdom became the protector of Sinhalese nationalism and Buddhist culture (Country Study, p. 19).

By 1544, Portuguese missionaries had also converted the Tamil-populated island of Mannar to Catholicism. (Mannar Island is just off the northwest coast of Sri Lanka.) The Tamil king of Jaffna sent an expedition to Mannar and decapitated the priest and "about 600 of his congregation" to stop the migration of Catholicism northward. This infuriated the Portuguese king who sent numerous expeditions into the Kingdom of Jaffna until he successfully annexed it in 1619. Between 1619 and 1627, the Portuguese general in charge of the Jaffna peninsula set about destroying nearly 500 Hindu temples (Lawrence, 1997, p. 44). Next, the Portuguese tried to attack the central Sinhalese kingdom of Kandy from their newly acquired Tamil strongholds in the north. In 1630, the Sinhalese ambushed and destroyed a large Portuguese force. The Portuguese would never again successfully penetrate the Kingdom of Kandy. In the meantime, however, the Portuguese converted both southern Sinhalese and northern Tamil members of the

fishing castes to Catholicism. This explains the modern day prevalence of Catholicism and Portuguese surnames among them (Country Study, p. 21).

By 1638 another maritime power, that of the Netherlands, had established itself in the region. The Dutch were making forays from their bases in Indonesia against Portuguese holdings and wanted to gain control over the profitable Ceylonese cinnamon trade. The Dutch formed a pact with the central Kingdom of Kandy and, with the Kingdom's help, attacked and captured the eastern ports of Trincomalee and Batticaloa in 1639. The Portuguese and Dutch fought fiercely. Colombo fell to the Dutch in 1656, and though the Portuguese turned the Jaffna peninsula into their last stronghold, that, too, fell in 1658. In the cities, the Dutch tried in vain to convert Catholic islanders to Protestantism, while Buddhism and Hinduism were able to flourish again in the more rural areas (Country Study, p. 23).

The Sinhalese king of Kandy realized he had only helped the Dutch replace the Portuguese. Looking for a better deal yet again, he decided to court the British in 1664 to help him battle the Dutch, but the British ignored the request. The Dutch sent an expedition against the Kingdom of Kandy in 1762 with little effect. A larger expedition in 1765 was able to force the Kingdom of Kandy to sign a peace treaty. Later, among its other imperial acts, the Dutch codified the Tamil legal code of Jaffna, establishing a legal system for the whole country (Country Study, p. 24). The Dutch were also responsible for the construction of hundreds of miles of canals that still link many of the island's inland waterways (Country Study, p. 64).

By 1758, as Britain was gaining control over India, it began to eye the Dutch cinnamon trade in Ceylon, and the strategic deepwater port of Trincomalee. The Kingdom of Kandy had courted the British several times thus far, but it was not until 1796 that the British finally attacked and captured Trincomalee. The British used the British East India company to replace the Dutch East India company as the administrators of the island. The Dutch officially ceded the island to the British in 1801, and Ceylon became Britain's "first crown colony" in 1802 (Country Study, p. 24).

The British had needed little help from the Kingdom of Kandy to capture Trincomalee and began to view the king as a nuisance. Yet, an expedition sent against the Kingdom in 1803 failed. With the British defeat of the French in the great naval

battle at Trafalgar in 1805, they became the dominant naval force in the world. The industrial revolution was also in full swing and the British used this momentum to bolster their control over the island's seaports. In 1815, the British launched a successful expedition against the Kingdom of Kandy. The British were assisted by Buddhist monks whom the king had annoyed over land tax issues. The monks did not expect the British to place an Englishman in administrative charge of the Kingdom. In opposition, they incited a popular rebellion that the British put down in 1818. The British enacted measures that put all religions on the island on an equal footing to quell any future religious rioting (Country Study, p. 27).

Britain did not incorporate Ceylon into British India but ruled it as a separate crown colony. The entire island seemed to benefit under British colonial rule. Great agricultural plantations developed and roads, dams, and hospitals were built. The island population exploded from 800,000 to 7 million inhabitants. Instead of dividing the country along ethnic lines, the British established the modern day provincial system (Country Study, p. 29). The British also ran schools and taught English so that they could staff their Civil Service system. They employed many of the minority Tamils in colonial military and civil servant jobs. Coffee and tea plantation production soared. This is when the British encouraged Indian Tamils to migrate to Ceylon to work the plantations. Buddhist monks near Kandy, angered over plantation encroachment on temple lands, fostered another rebellion in 1848. The British army again forcefully put this rebellion down. In response, the British parliament admonished the army to be less heavy-handed and more attentive to the needs and religious sensitivities of the population (Country Study, p. 32).

During the latter half of the 1800s the British defended the island with units of Malays and Burghers (white settlers). Finally, in 1910 the British established an all-volunteer Ceylon Defense Force. WWI turned out to have little effect on the island, though some individual Ceylonese soldiers volunteered to serve the British crown in Europe. In 1915, the British army was again heavy-handed in intervening in a communal riot between Sinhalese and Muslims in the western province. This heavy-handedness sparked a wave of Sri Lankan nationalism. (Nationalism was also taking root in India where entire Indian units fought for the British in WWI). But on the whole, Sri Lankan

nationalism floundered throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Also, several leftist parties tried to enter politics with no great success (Country Study, p. 38).

4. Geo-Strategic Importance

As the Portuguese and Dutch had earlier noted, the island's position dominates the sea-lanes from Asia to Africa and the Middle East. The deepwater port of Trincomalee on the eastern side of the island can support a modern naval force that can then dominate most shipping in the Indian Ocean. The British Navy clearly recognized this fact, as did the Japanese (Murthy, 2000, p. 3).

5. During WWII

When the British lost Singapore to the Japanese in February 1942 the strategic importance of Trincomalee was further heightened. The Japanese bombed the port of Trincomalee, as well as Colombo and Madras in April. The British shot down over 100 Japanese aircraft over the island and the Japanese carrier fleet had to return to Japan to refit. The war never really returned to the island, but Sri Lanka became an important source of rubber for the Allied war effort. Under British control the Ceylon Defense Force grew to five battalions of light infantry (Country Study, p. 39 and 232).

The Japanese bombings of WWII highlighted the strategic importance of the island of Ceylon in the minds of members of the Indian Defense establishment. As India and Pakistan gained their independence from Britain in 1947 (who had ruled each since 1763) there were disputes between them that led to massive population transfers, with Muslims streaming to Pakistan and Hindus to India. Given the bloodshed that occurred as a consequence, India could focus little attention on Ceylon though their earliest defense planners did wish to incorporate the island into a Greater India. In order to maintain important air, naval, and communications facilities on Ceylon and to maintain an influence over affairs in the region, Britain entered into a common Defense Pact with Ceylon on November 11th, 1947. The Pact offered Ceylon protection from future Indian expansionism (Murthy, p. 3). Under the protection of the pact, Ceylon let its army shrink to a ceremonial force of a mere 3,000 personnel (Country Study, p. 233). On February

4th, 1948 Ceylon's new constitution took effect and the country peacefully gained its independence from Britain (Country Study, p. 41).

C. HISTORY FROM INDEPENDENCE TO THE MODERN CONFLICT

1. The British, the United National Party, and Anti-Communism

Britain did not develop military and police units in Ceylon as it had in India. Some light infantry units had been formed for the defense of the island against the Japanese, but had regressed to being largely ceremonial. After gaining Independence Ceylon remained a dominion in the British Commonwealth and continued to develop and organize its armed services along British lines. British officers were the first leaders of the Ceylon Army, Navy, and Air Force. The British would hold sway over both the Indian and Sri Lankan Navies through the 1950s. With British support, Sri Lanka overcame the opposition of the Soviet Union to gain admission to the United Nations in 1955 (Country Study, p. 43). Throughout the 1950s, the minority Tamils and majority Sinhalese of Ceylon competed with each other in a mostly peaceful democratic fashion.

2. 1956 Elections

Despite British support for the anti-communist, pro-western United National Party, the UNP lost to the Sri Lankan Freedom Party in 1956. The SFLP Prime Minister, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, took advantage of the fact that the election came on the 2,500th anniversary of the death of the Buddha as well as the anniversary of the arrival of the Sinhalese to Ceylon. He ran on a platform that promised to elevate the Sinhalese language and the Buddhist religion. He accused the UNP of being involved in a "conspiracy" with the Catholic Church (Country Study, p. 43). The SFLP courted both the U.S.S.R. and Communist China, seeking greater ties and pushed the British out of their Royal Air and Navy bases in 1957 (Murthy, p. 6). As Bandaranaike's preferences for Sinhalese and Buddhism became evident, ethnic riots erupted between Sinhalese and Tamils in 1958. The government quelled the riots by forcefully relocating many Tamils to the north. By holding out the promise of Sri Lankan citizenship to the large population of Indian Tamils, Bandaranaike was able to enact his Sinhala language preference act.

Though the promises made to the Indian Tamils were never fulfilled, an infuriated Buddhist monk assassinated Bandaranaike in September 1959 (Joshi, 1996, p. 20). His widow, Shirimavo Bandaranaike, became leader of the SFLP and Prime Minister in 1960. Bandaranaike was the world's first female PM. She began steering the country further to the left, shifting the country's oil import controls from British and U.S. companies to Soviet, Romanian, and Egyptian state-owned companies. The PM said she needed to nationalize all of the country's oil companies to limit western influence on the island (DeSilva, 1998, p. 29). In response, the U.S. cut all foreign aid to Ceylon (Country Study, p. 46 - 49).

3. 1962 Sino-Indian Conflict

As the Indians developed stronger ties to the U.S.S.R., Ceylon strengthened its ties with China. During the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, Ceylon remained neutral and even hosted conferences to try to settle the dispute. But, in 1963, Ceylon entered into a maritime agreement with the Chinese thereby angering the Indians, raising their suspicions, and probably helping to push them closer to the U.S.S.R. (Murthy, p. 6).

4. 1965 Election

The 1965 election brought the UNP back to power. The UNP immediately tried to restore relations with the U.S.. At the time, the U.S. was preoccupied with the war in Viet Nam. The UNP did address Tamil grievances and allowed the Tamil language to be an official language of the country equal to Sinhala in Tamil regions. This move, coupled with an unfortunate failure to restore the country's economy, opened the door for a return of the SFLP (Country Study, p. 49).

5. 1970 Election

The SFLP and its famous female Prime Minister Bandaranaike was returned to parliamentary power in 1970 and "quickly extended diplomatic relations" to East Germany, North Vietnam, and North Korea, and threatened to cut ties with Israel. The latter move was for the consumption of Muslim constituents (Country Study, p. 50).

6. 1971 Indo-Pak War

The SFLP further raised Indian suspicions during the 1971 Indo-Pak War. The SFLP, though professing neutrality, allowed Pakistanis to refuel their planes on the island as they shuttled military personnel in civilian clothes from Western Pakistan to Eastern Pakistan. Again, this may have been aimed at the SFLP's growing Muslim constituency in Ceylon. Regardless, the Pakistanis would lose Eastern Pakistan to Indian-supported Bangladeshi liberation forces (Murthy, p. 6).

7. 1971 Marxist Insurgency

The SFLP had its own problems during this period. Many Sinhalese felt the Tamils were overly represented in the state bureaucracy and state-run school system as a result of the years of favoritism shown the Tamils by Imperial Britain. This resentment had simmered and developed into a call for the reversal of discrimination by some Sinhalese against the Tamils in the early 1960s. The People's Liberation Front (Sri Lankan initials: JVP, for Janatha Vimukthi Peremuna), a largely anti-Tamil, extreme left wing Sinhalese party, attempted a communist/Marxist insurgency in the late 1960s, which floundered. Although the SFLP appeared to be developing ties with the Chinese, the Chinese must have felt the ties were not strong enough and, in April 1971, with apparent North Korean support, the Chinese pushed the JVP to make a bid to take over the country. The JVP attempted to simultaneously overthrow 92 police stations and usurp control of the government. Some of the attacks went off earlier than planned, and many police stations were alerted and proved able to defend themselves (DeSilva, p. 103). The SFLP sought help from the U.S., U.K., Pakistan, Yugoslavia, and the U.S.S.R. because the country's small ceremonial army was caught totally unprepared. In typical Cold War out-bidding fashion, each of the countries responded with varying amounts of arms, ammunition, and training. The Indians also jumped at the chance to regain influence in Ceylon and provided assistance with some (six) helicopters and a small (150-man) contingent of security personnel at Ceylon's International Airport. The Indian Navy also sent five frigates to protect the port of Colombo (Murthy, p. 7). With the arms, training, and support the growing Ceylonese army could afford to be heavy-handed in

putting down the JVP, locking up nearly “16,000 suspected insurgents.” From 1972 – 1976 any remaining JVP members were forced to go into hiding (Country Study, p. 50).

Following her victory in 1972, Prime Minister Bandarnaike did implement some measures to satisfy another leading opposition party by making Sinhala the official language of the country and nationalizing all Christian missionary schools. Since 1946 both Sinhala and Tamil had been recognized as the two official languages of the country. Bandarnaike stated that the main reason for making Sinhala the official language was not to discriminate against the Tamils, but to limit British and other foreign influence on the island (Country Study, p. 50).

8. Growing Ethnic Grievances of Tamil Youth

In 1970, in response to government quotas that favored Sinhalese attendance over Tamil attendance at the University of Jaffna, Tamil student protesters formed the Tamil Youth Front. Initially, the Front was committed to reform through the peaceful implementation of democratic / parliamentary procedures. Velupillai Prabhakaran was one of the early members of the Tamil Youth Front. Witnessing significant Sinhalese political gains through the use of assassination / insurgency by the likes of the JVP and disgruntled Buddhist monks, Prabhakaran and other more militant Tamils grew impatient waiting for the Front to achieve its political reform goals and pushed the TYF to take more action (Joshi, 1996, p. 20).

9. 1972 Constitution

The SFLP instituted a “Trotskyite” constitution in 1972, officially changing the name of the country of Ceylon to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. This move infuriated most Tamils because it was apparent they would not be granted regional autonomy under a federal system. The SFLP enacted further university admission procedures that blatantly favored Sinhalese over Tamils, leading to more student unrest (Country Study, p. 51).

10. Early Development of the Tamil Tigers, May 1972 – Early 1975

The government moved to repress the various militant Tamil youth organizations, particularly in the largely Tamil city of Jaffna. There, in May 1972, the Tamil Youth Front attempted to sabotage some high-tension wires and in June 1972 members attempted to kill a politician by throwing a bomb at his taxi, but only succeeded in killing the driver. In 1974, Sri Lankan police cornered a member of one of the militant Tamil groups during a botched assassination attempt against the Jaffna Chief of Police. Rather than face capture, the militant, named Sivakumaran, chose to commit suicide by swallowing cyanide. Later, Prabhakaran would adopt the practice as a whole for the LTTE and LTTE fighters would begin to carry a vial of cyanide on a chain around their necks (Sangarasivam, 2000, p. 328).

By early 1975 Prabhakaran and several dozen other Tamils had broken away from the Tamil Youth Front to form the Tamil New Tigers. Prabhakaran himself had picked the Tiger as the group's symbol to contrast with the Lion, which was historically used by the Sinhalese as their emblem. Later, in 1976, the Tamil Youth Front would rename itself the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization or TELO, and continued to operate apart from Prabhakaran's Tigers. "Eelam" is the Tamil word for "homeland" (Munasinghe, 2000, p. 43).

11. 1975: First Assassination

On July 25th, 1975 Prabhakaran (then only 17 years old) and three other Tamil New Tigers cornered the Tamil mayor of Jaffna while he was entering a Hindu Temple and assassinated him, reportedly for cooperating with the Sri Lankan government in police crackdowns (Joshi, p. 20). Many historians believe Prabhakaran was the triggerman, but at least one Sinhalese source admits that he may not have been (Munasinghe, p. 43).

12. 1976: First Bank Robbery

Eight months later, Prabhakaran pulled off a successful bank robbery, netting over 500,000 rupees, a good deal of money for that time. Some other members of the TNT may have been responsible for a previous bank robbery in 1974 (DeSilva, p. 45). But the

result of the March 5th, 1976 robbery was that by May, Prabhakaran was able to claw his way to the top of the TNT, oust the leader, and rename the organization the Liberation Tigers of Tamil - Eelam or LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 44).

13. 1977: Another Assassination, Beginnings of Targeting Police Officers

On February 14th, Prabhakaran would again exert his influence over Tamil affairs when he had his LTTE assassinate another mayor of Jaffna. That May, he had two Tamil police officers who were investigating the assassination killed. More police killings would follow (Munasinghe, p. 46).

14. Effects of the 1977 and 1982 Elections on the JVP

The SFLP's socialist policies were destroying the country's economy. The 1977 election returned the country's first leading party, the UNP, to power under its new leader, J.R. Jayawardene. Jayawardene had campaigned on a promise to rework the country's constitution to one modeled after the French presidential system. He wanted to strengthen the presidency mostly in order to discourage the resurgence of any terrorist groups like the JVP. From 1977-82, the JVP struggled to become a legitimate political party but did not add much to the country's political discourse. Embarrassingly, in the 1982 parliamentary election, the JVP only garnered 4% of the popular vote and chose to go underground from 1983-86. It would not resurface until 1987 (Country Study, p. 51 - 52).

15. Irritation of the LTTE with the Strengthening of the Presidency

On September 7th, 1978 Jayawardene and the UNP followed through on their campaign promise with an amendment to the constitution that changed Sri Lanka's parliamentary system, which had previously favored the Prime Ministership, to one which favored the Presidency. The President became Head of State, Chief Executive, and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces. In 1979, the UNP went on to pass the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which granted the President broad powers of search, arrest, and detention to deal with terrorism and handle matters of national security. As a response to the strengthening of the presidency and in a move to gain notoriety, on the

very same day, the Tigers used a time bomb to destroy an Air Ceylon Avro 748 jet liner at the Colombo airport (Joshi, p. 22, DeSilva, p. 67, and Munasinghe, p. 46).

16. 1979: First Military Response to the LTTE

The LTTE pulled off another bank robbery on December 5th, 1978. The new president, tired of the increasing lawlessness, issued a decree in July to the brigadier general responsible for northern Sri Lanka stating, “you are to eradicate terrorism from the Jaffna peninsula and elsewhere in the island by December 31st, 1979” (Munasinghe, p. 51). The army consequently declared a curfew and rounded up many Jaffna youth for questioning. Some youths were released and some were imprisoned. There were rumors that the army was “butchering” them. One Sri Lankan army officer close to the operation claims this is not true. However, in his own book, the same author describes incidents in which a prisoner was injured “due to an accidental discharge of a weapon of a soldier” (Munasinghe, p. 81) and a “suspect died due to illness while in custody” (Munasinghe, p. 86). Regardless, the army general in charge of the operation declared success by Christmas of 1979. In reality, many of the Tamil militants had only fled the Jaffna peninsula across the Palk Strait to the adjacent city of Madras in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu (Munasinghe, p. 52).

17. Safe Haven in Tamil Nadu, India

As early as 1975, some Tamil student groups in London were organizing, studying Marxism, and trying to foster British support for a Tamil homeland. Prabhakaran himself never went to London; instead he went with the LTTE to Tamil Nadu where he felt he could garner more support from the Indian Tamils for his growing movement. Prabhakaran established a no drinking, no smoking, and no dating rule for the LTTE. The latter was too much for one of his lieutenants who fell in love with a secretary and broke away from the LTTE, taking many members with him to form the People’s Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam or PLOTE (Munasinghe, p. 52). Prabhakaran’s strict rules hurt his recruitment and retention efforts and he had to rekindle a relationship with the TELO which was still operating in northern Sri Lanka. The LTTE conducted a joint bank robbery with the TELO on January 17th, 1981. On March

25th, they conducted another joint robbery of an armored car. After the second joint robbery the two groups again split up. Both groups returned to India. A TELO leader who was captured by the Sri Lankan government after having worked with Prabhakaran on the robberies warned officials “you all must never allow this man Prabhakaran to come up. [meaning to become the leader of all the Tamils] If he ever comes up, I can assure you he will ruin the entire country and wipe out the Tamil race” (Munasinghe, p. 54). This nearly prophetic TELO leader would later be among the Tamil prisoners killed by Sinhalese rioters in July 1983 (Munasinghe, p. 55).

18. 1981: Attacks Against Police Officers, Early Altercations with the Army

The LTTE initiated yet another string of police killings in May of 1981. In supposed response, Sinhalese extremists burned down the Jaffna library, destroying thousands of unique volumes written in Tamil. Many Tamils regarded the attack on the library as an assault against their language and history and the more militant took to the streets in protest. The government used the powers of the Prevention of Terrorism Act to quell the rioting in the north throughout the rest of the summer. These events continue to be an oft-cited ethnic grievance of the Tamil people. Fortunately, the anti-Tamil JVP was struggling to become a legitimate political party in the south and did not add more fuel to the ethnic fires. Eventually, the SLAF army restored enough of a semblance of order for peaceful elections to take place on the peninsula (Munasinghe, p. 56).

On July 27th the PLOTE attacked a Jaffna police station and made off with weapons. In response, the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) of the Army joined forces with the Police Intelligence and Security Division (ISD) for a better-coordinated military / police intelligence effort (Munasinghe, p. 63).

On October 15th some LTTE Tigers on bicycles killed two SLAF army soldiers and stole a rifle, while eight days later PLOTE members pulled off a bank robbery netting gold worth 27 million Rupees. This may be evidence that, at this point, the PLOTE was stronger than the LTTE. If so, though, this would soon change (Munasinghe, p. 63).

On January 2nd, 1982 the LTTE killed a PLOTE leader. A SLAF Army Intelligence Operation also started rolling up the PLOTE organization. On February 27th, the SLAF Navy captured several more PLOTE members on board a small boat. At this

stage, the SLAF intelligence considered the PLOTE a larger threat than the LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 65).

19. 1982: First Election Day Violence

Most moderate Tamil politicians boycotted the 1982 parliamentary elections in order to send a signal to the government of the growing dissatisfaction of their constituents. But the boycott may have actually been coerced by terror. On May 18th, the LTTE assassinated three moderate Tamil political candidates who insisted on running for election. The LTTE also attacked a polling booth to discourage voter participation and set a precedent for repeated election-day attacks that would be followed for many years to come (Munasinghe, p. 87). Another result of the boycotted election was that when ethnic tensions came to an even stronger boil in 1983, there would be no Tamil moderates in parliament with whom the Sinhalese could compromise.

20. Early Indication of Future History of Factional In-Fighting

On May 19th, in the city of Madras (in Tamil Nadu, India), Prabhakaran and the LTTE had a shootout with the PLOTE over turf and to establish dominance as the lead Tamil liberation group. The Tamil Nadu police captured most of the culprits involved in the shootout, including Prabhakaran. Prabhakaran and many of the LTTE were released on bail and slipped back into Jaffna, Sri Lanka (Joshi, p. 23 and Munasinghe, p. 66). Prabhakaran maintained his control over the LTTE from within Jaffna with a senior advisory committee back in Madras fulfilling a largely nominal leadership role. The LTTE may have also been responsible for another bank robbery around this time (DeSilva, p. 45).

21. First Train Attack, Several Bungled Ambushes

Less than a month after Prabhakaran's capture and release, the LTTE set off a bomb in a train traveling from Jaffna south to the capital of Colombo, killing two civilians and wounding five others. On July 2nd, the LTTE attacked a police patrol killing four and wounding two officers (Munasinghe, p. 65). On September 29th, the LTTE tried to ambush a patrol of SLAF Navy vehicles, but only one of four vehicle mines went off

and it went off 50 meters too soon. The Navy passengers in the trucks were stunned but unhurt and the LTTE escaped from the scene. Some speculate that if the larger patrol of sailors had reacted more quickly, they could have wiped out the entire LTTE then and there, while it was still in its infancy (Munasinghe, p. 67).

By late October Prabhakaran was back in Madras directing the LTTE operations from the higher headquarters there. One of his lieutenants led the LTTE in Sri Lanka on a raid against a police station, killing two officers. The army, assisting the police, wounded a Tiger code-named Seelan on November 20th. He would die about seven days later in Tamil Nadu. Two Catholic priests, a Methodist minister, a doctor, and a nurse had aided him and assisted him on his way out of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan army arrested these people to send a message to the populace not to treat terrorists (Munasinghe, p. 75).

On March 4th, 1983 the LTTE was trying to improve its vehicle land mine ambushing technique (having switched from mines touched off by small generators to mines set off by batteries). But LTTE members botched the job again when their ambush mine went off another 50 meters too soon. No one in the target vehicle was harmed (Munasinghe, p. 85).

22. 1983: First Use of Deception

On July 6th, the LTTE, dressed in Sri Lankan Army uniforms for deceptive purposes, raided a cement factory and stole numerous detonators used in rock blasting. On July 15th, the Sri Lankan Army responded with some deception of its own. Commandoes dressed in civilian clothes drove around Jaffna in civilian mini-buses in an effort to round up the LTTE. One of the mini-bus patrols jumped two Tigers on bicycles and wounded one of them badly. He reportedly asked his partner to quickly shoot him in the head, which his partner did. Later the army caught and killed this second Tiger (Munasinghe, p. 90).

23. Explanation of Cyanide Vials

The July 15th incident is noteworthy not just because deception was used but because the first Tiger killed by request was one of Prabhakaran's favorite lieutenants,

code-named Charles Anthony. Reports of the incident infuriated Prabhakaran and he vowed revenge against the army. This is also when he began to make all members of the LTTE carry a glass vial of cyanide on their person to be taken in the event of impending capture by the army and to prevent any more unpleasant incidents. The little vials of cyanide are readily available in the region because local farmers use cyanide as a pesticide that they pour on their plant leaves (Munasinghe, p. 91). Prabhakaran views death by cyanide as more humane than death by gunshot and also views death this way as a final act of defiance against the army, not allowing oneself to be captured and tortured (Sangarasivam, p. 331). The LTTE and SLAF were now fully engaged.

D. SUMMARY

As this chapter describes, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and social competition between the various inhabitants dramatically shaped the early history of the island. Colonialism, WWII, nationalism, early Cold War politics, and economic struggle continued to shape the modern history of the island since its independence in 1948.

The Sri Lankan government and armed forces succeeded in defeating a Sinhalese Marxist insurgency in the early 1970s, but the insurgency was successful in that it resulted in many government preferences throughout the country for the Sinhalese people, Sinhala language, and Buddhism. The resulting discrimination against Tamils and Hinduism set the stage for the militant entrepreneur, Velupillai Prabhakaran, to launch a separatist insurgency in the 1980s and 1990s which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

III. THE HISTORY OF THE MODERN CONFLICT

A. EELAM WAR I, 1983 - 1987

1. The Infamous 1983 Ambush

Although the LTTE and the various other Tamil separatists had killed several dozen police officers through the 1970s, most historians date the start of the modern conflict in Sri Lanka as July 23rd, 1983. At 11:20 pm, Prabhakaran personally led all 26 members of the LTTE in an ambush of a Sri Lankan Army patrol on the Tamil-dominated Jaffna peninsula. The LTTE used the detonators they had stolen from a cement factory to remotely fire vehicle mines underneath a SLAF Army jeep and truck. Prabhakaran coordinated the ambush with heavy machine gun and rifle fire, killing one lieutenant and twelve non-commissioned officers (Munasinghe, p. 1 –6).

2. Reaction of the Army

Word of the attack spread throughout the Sri Lankan Army on the 24th. On the 25th, several platoons went on a rampage and killed several innocent Tamils including some young boys. Large numbers of Sinhalese civilians started a riot in the southwestern capital of Colombo. Nearly 18,000 Tamil homes and 5,000 Tamil businesses were destroyed and over 150,000 Tamils were displaced. At least some elements of the government had to have been complicit in the riots, because rioters had in their possession “voter lists and addresses of Tamils” (Sangarasivam, p. 173). Many Tamils went to the northern Tamil-dominated portion of the island, but many others sought asylum overseas in countries like Australia, England, and Canada. This initiated the Tamil diaspora (De Silva, p. 232).

3. Murder of Tamil Prisoners

In an unofficial state response, Sri Lankan prison guards stepped aside when rioting Sinhalese broke into the prison where most of the previously captured Tamil militants were being held. The Sinhalese took their revenge by slaying the prisoners inside the Welikada jail on July 25th (Joshi, p. 23 and Munasinghe, p. 55). It took the

remainder of the month for the Sri Lankan Army Officer Corps to bring the situation under control. Many non-commissioned officers who had participated or been complacent in the riots were stripped of their rank and many privates were disciplined (Munasinghe, p. 11). As a result of the ethnic rioting and Sri Lankan Army involvement in human rights violations, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi severed military relations with Sri Lanka. Prior to this, most Sri Lankan military officers had received training at Indian military schools (Munasinghe, p. 12).

4. Refugee Problem for India

Even in the Tamil-dominated north, many Sri Lankan Tamils feared that widespread discrimination, rioting, and attacks by Sri Lankan Sinhalese would eventually reach them, and they began fleeing in small boats across the 22 mile-wide Palk Strait between the Jaffna Peninsula and the Tamil-dominated Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Prabhakaran went with them and began consolidating his control over Tamil youth by bringing them into the militant LTTE. He reorganized his operations from Madras and planned to launch back into the Jaffna peninsula.

5. Refugee Problem Solved

Meanwhile, some of the other Tamil splinter groups were seeking out and, in 1982, receiving training from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Popular Liberation Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in Lebanon and Syria. Probably in order to limit this increasing Middle Eastern influence, the Research and Analysis Wing (R & AW) of the Indian Intelligence Agency (IIA) decided to take over and sponsor the training of all Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups from 31 separate camps within Tamil Nadu throughout 1983. The R & AW of the IIA is the equivalent of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Operations Directorate. The R & AW continued equipping the LTTE and other Tamil separatist movements through 1987 as part of a proxy Russo-Sino cold war struggle between India and Sri Lanka. Prabhakaran and the LTTE came out on top as the R & AW's favorite group. It should be noted that at this point the tactic of suicide bombing had not entered the LTTE's repertoire but the thought may have been

percolating in members of those groups that had trained in Lebanon and Syria (Joshi, p. 21).

6. Countering the LTTE

After the LTTE ambush and the ensuing anti-Tamil riots that drew Indian sympathy for the Tamils, the Sri Lankan government felt it would be better to establish stronger links with the Pakistanis, British, and Israelis while continuing to also purchase weapons from the Chinese. The Sri Lankans contracted former British SAS officers for counter-terrorism training. The Israelis had captured some Muslim Tamil militants training in Lebanon in 1982 and gladly offered the Sri Lankans counter-terrorism training by the Mossad (Israeli Intelligence) and Shin Bet (Israeli Counter-Terrorism Force) (Murthy, p. 8). At least one counter-terrorism / counter-insurgency trick the SLAF appeared to learn from the British or Israelis was to protect an informant's identity with a hood as he pointed out LTTE collaborators / members at check points (Lawrence, p. 120).

7. Training by the Indians

As he gained control of all Tamil groups, Prabhakaran was reportedly even beginning to manipulate the R & AW. Politically speaking though, the LTTE was really only attracting light support from one political party in India, and a minor player at that - the Dravida Kazgham (DK). Reportedly, the DK empathized with the LTTE's secessionist cause. Then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi likely supported R & AW involvement in Sri Lanka simply to keep the Tamils in Tamil Nadu satisfied and to discourage British, U.S., or U.S.S.R. involvement in what some believed was an impending civil war (Joshi, p. 23).

India had had some success earlier in exerting its regional influence when it successfully supported Eastern Pakistan separating from Western Pakistan to form Bangladesh in the 1971 Indo-Pak War and it was not forgotten that the Sri Lankan government quietly tried to assist the Pakistanis in holding on to Eastern Pakistan. So it should not be too hard to imagine Gandhi hatching a plot in New Delhi to sponsor a breakaway Tamil State in the Jaffna peninsula / northern / eastern regions of Sri Lanka in

part to satisfy the Tamils of Tamil Nadu, and in part to punish the Sinhalese for their support of Pakistan. It is estimated that Indian intelligence trained as many as 5,000 LTTE cadres in at least 15 camps in 1983 (Joshi, p. 23).

After receiving this training, the LTTE restarted operations on the Jaffna peninsula. In the face of the growing insurgency, the Sri Lankan Army withdrew from the peninsula to a strategic camp at Elephant Pass. The army would only go into Jaffna during the day. The LTTE owned the night and started pulling all of the boys from the Tamil high schools into its ranks (Munasinghe, p. 13).

In August of 1983, the LTTE killed a Sri Lankan government official, a TELO leader, and a suspected robber. The LTTE reportedly conducted the latter as a “law enforcement” killing for the people, as it hung a placard that read “death to robbers” on the victim (Munasinghe, p. 14).

8. Explanation of the Declaration of “Heroes Week”

On September 23rd, the LTTE raided Batticaloa prison in the eastern district and released all Tamil prisoners being held there (Munasinghe, p. 14). Prabhakaran declared the week from November 20th - 27th as “Heroes Week” in honor of the Tiger code-named Seelan who had suffered under his wounds for a week, then died, back in November 1982. He urged the Tamil people to rise up and attack the Sri Lankans during this week. Prabhakaran’s birthday also happens to fall on November 26th, and so that date and “Heroes Week” would herald bloodshed for years to come (Munasinghe, p. 92).

9. 1984: More Training, More Ambushes

Presumably the LTTE spent the better part of 1984 equipping and retraining the prisoners it had released in September to be Tiger fighters, since the LTTE did little else to draw attention to itself until August 11th, when six Sri Lankan Army soldiers were killed when their jeep hit a land mine, as part of an LTTE ambush (Munasinghe, p. 15).

10. Indira Gandhi Assassination by Sikhs

Ironically, while in the midst of sponsoring separatism in Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi was assassinated in October 1984 by two of her Sikh bodyguards in retaliation for

her support of a violent crackdown on Sikh separatists seeking their own homeland of Kahlistan (Mahmood, 1996, p. 46). After the assassination, and because it was further preoccupied with the separatist Sikh movement within its own borders, the Indian government decided it would be best to just play “honest broker” outside its borders between the Sinhalese Sri Lankan government and the separatist Tamils (Joshi, p. 24).

11. First Targeting of Army Leadership by LTTE

On November 10th a Sri Lankan Army Colonel was killed when his jeep struck an LTTE-planted land mine (Munasinghe, p. 16). Ten days later a Sri Lankan police station was blown up. SLAF military intelligence analysts were sophisticated enough in their investigation to determine that the latter attack was the work of the TELO and not the LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 17).

12. First Organized Example of Ethnic Cleansing by LTTE

On November 30th the LTTE attacked and killed “hundreds if not thousands” of Sinhalese civilians who were settled on farmland in the rich Wannu jungle region of Vavuniya district in the northern province, which Prabhakaran claims the Tamils regard as the heart of their homeland (Munasinghe, p. 137).

13. 1985: The Joint Operations Center (JOC) Established

Advice from the British and Israelis resulted in the creation of a Joint Operations Center (JOC). The JOC was formed to coordinate the joint counter-insurgency (COIN) efforts of the Sri Lankan Army, Navy, and Air Force. The JOC council consisted of the President, Prime Minister, Minister of Internal Security, the three service Chiefs, the Police Corps Inspector General, Director of the National Intelligence Bureau, and the one-star JOC Commander (Country Study, p. 236).

14. SLAF Intelligence Leads to Raid

On January 9th the Sri Lankan Army, making use of fresh intelligence, conducted a raid on an LTTE hideout in Jaffna, killing 14 Tigers. The raiders also recovered some

of the very firearms the LTTE had stolen from the soldiers they had killed in the July 1983 ambush (Munasinghe, p. 17).

15. Another Train Bombing

Ten days later a Sri Lankan passenger train was attacked and 29 Army personnel and eleven civilians were killed. A thorough intelligence investigation was again able to determine that the raid was the work of the TELO and not the LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 17).

16. More Clashes with the Army

On February 13th the LTTE tried to overrun a SLAF Army camp on the Jaffna peninsula and 16 Tigers were killed in the ensuing gunfight (Munasinghe, p. 20).

17. All Party Conference Failure

In spite of the attacks on his police departments, and in an attempt to take separatist grievances more seriously, Sri Lankan President Jayawardene hosted an all-party conference on July 13th in Thimpu. At least six different groups were represented, including the LTTE, TULF (Tamil United Liberation Front), PLOTE, EPRLF (Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front), TELO, and EROS (Eelam Revolutionary Organization). Little was accomplished. A second round of talks was held on August 12th, and the government even went so far as to propose granting considerable regional autonomy to all of the country's provinces, including the Tamil-dominated northern, and Tamil-saturated eastern provinces. But Prabhakaran would not allow the moderate Tamil politicians to accept the offer because the plan did not go far enough. He wanted the other seven provinces to recognize a united northern and eastern province as an official Tamil homeland: a state within the state. Of course, this would be unacceptable to any security-minded Sinhalese because the northern and eastern provinces are joined near the strategically important port of Trincomalee. A compromise could not be reached, and the LTTE was responsible for forcing all of the parties to walk out of the talks (Munasinghe, p. 20). This might be further evidence that the LTTE was involved in an airport explosion ten days prior that may have been designed to derail the talks.

18. First Plane Bombing

On August 2nd a suspected LTTE bomb believed to have been meant to detonate a plane at the Sri Lankan Airport in Colombo exploded in the craft after its touchdown in the Indian Airport in Madras, killing thirty civilians (Joshi, p. 24).

19. More Attacks on Police

On September 2nd the LTTE attacked a Sri Lankan police station killing seven officers, while five SLAF Army personnel were killed elsewhere when their vehicle struck a suspected LTTE mine. What is noteworthy about the police station killings is that by the end of the year, all ethnic Sinhalese police officers in Jaffna peninsula would resign or transfer out of the peninsula (DeSilva, p. 56).

20. 1986: First Known Bus Bombing by the LTTE

On February 19th the LTTE blew up a bus killing 35 civilians and injuring 38 more civilians (Munasinghe, p. 20).

21. More Ethnic Cleansing and Factional Fighting

From May through July of 1986, the LTTE reportedly conducted ethnic cleansing operations against Sinhalese civilians living around the strategic eastern port of Trincomalee within the eastern province. Also, over 100 civilians were killed within the capital of Colombo during May 1986. This was possibly the result of factional fighting between the various extremist groups (Munasinghe, p. 20). In Madras, India, somewhat inexplicably, an EPRLF militant fired on a crowd with a machine gun, killing one person and injuring many others. Speculation was that the perpetrator was enticing more Indian involvement in the worsening situation in Sri Lanka as the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) had launched a major military offensive into the Tamil held northern and eastern sections of the isle. Alternatively, the perpetrator could have been using terror as a means to coerce support from the Tamils of Tamil Nadu for the struggling EPRLF (Joshi, p. 24). These three events are important to note because at least SLAF intelligence analysts were demonstrating some ability to differentiate other factional violence from LTTE violence, both inside and outside of Sri Lanka.

22. SLAF Involvement with Paramilitary Groups

At the same time, some elements of the SLAF intelligence apparatus were involved with Sinhalese radicals and may have been complicit in some urban terrorist incidents, as these extremists clearly were not interested in distinguishing between combatants and non-combatants. For instance, these extremists were probably responsible for a bomb that had damaged the residence of an LTTE spokesman in December 1985 and used bully tactics to keep the populace off of the streets at night, greatly assisting the SLAF in its assaults into Jaffna City. The LTTE struggled to hold on to the city and the Jaffna peninsula (DeSilva, p. 68).

23. LTTE Eliminating Competition

Remarkably, in the midst of all the fighting with the SLAF and Sinhalese militants, during April and May 1986 Pirabhakaran and the LTTE eradicated the TELO by killing its leader and nearly all of its then approximately 300 members. The LTTE was reportedly able to infiltrate the TELO and capitalized on splits and rifts within the organization to unravel and destroy it (DeSilva, p. 69). By the end of the year the LTTE would also have several battles with the PLOTE and nearly finish off the EPRLF. The LTTE also completely broke free of R & AW control, but the R & AW may have still controlled the PLOTE and maintained influence in Jaffna (Joshi, p. 24).

24. Another Plane Bombing, Other Bombings

On May 3rd, 1986, a Tri-Star aircraft was blown up at the Colombo International Airport, killing 15 civilians and 13 foreign nationals. Fourteen more civilians were killed in mid-May when a telegraph office building was blown up. On May 30th, eleven civilians were killed in an explosion at a “commercial establishment” (Munasinghe, p. 21).

25. Attempt to Gather Intelligence

On October 13th, the LTTE attacked SLAF soldiers in the northern province. Nine troops were killed and several taken hostage. One of the troops taken hostage was an artillery lieutenant who concealed his identity, pretending to be a private. The Sri

Lankan government held a closed coffin funeral for the lieutenant's family and later negotiated his release from the LTTE. The Sri Lankan military may have gained some strong intelligence from the lieutenant once he was out of LTTE hands. He was later killed in another LTTE attack on August 2nd, 1991 (Munasinghe, p. 21-22).

26. 1987: Executing Soldiers on Leave

January 27th was a bloody day. Thirteen Sri Lankan police officers were killed in the eastern city of Batticaloa and 32 army troops were killed as they were returning from leave on a civilian bus to the eastern port city of Trincomalee. Reportedly, the LTTE stopped the bus, sorted out the passengers, found the unarmed soldiers in their civilian clothes, and executed them (Munasinghe, p. 22).

27. Beginning of Truck Bombings

Having reportedly been inspired by the Palestinian truck bombings of the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Lebanon in 1983, it apparently took several years before Prabhakaran was able to attempt a similar feat; it took that long for the LTTE to acquire enough explosives. In January 1987, LTTE fighters were loading a water tanker with explosives. It is believed they were planning to drive the truck bomb into a SLAF army camp. The device went off prematurely, killing 17 of the Tigers and some civilians who were nearby (Munasinghe, p. 22).

28. Major SLAF Offensive

By May of 1987, the SLAF could no longer tolerate the growing insurgency and mounted a major counter-insurgency (COIN) effort. In a highly successful coordinated effort, commanded from the JOC, the SLAF Army, Navy, and Air Force cleared the LTTE from all of its bases in the east, up to the Jaffna peninsula (Country Study, p. 225).

The SLAF consolidated itself in an old Dutch fort and an old British air base in northern Sri Lanka. The army and air force began planning for a final assault to capture Jaffna and wipe out all Tamil separatist resistance. They launched an aerial bombing campaign and ground assault from May 26th through June 6th. The three brigade offensive was code named "Operation Liberation" and the bombings, as they often do,

resulted in civilian deaths. More than 12,000 SLAF army troops were poured into eleven camps and the SLAF successfully regained control of the Jaffna peninsula and most of the northern and eastern provinces (De Silva, p. 55). Under cover of the heavy bombing, only sixteen soldiers died in the offensive (Munasinghe, p. 23). The LTTE responded with some frontal assaults on the new SLAF fortified positions and committed some atrocities of its own against any soldiers it captured. Also, Prabhakaran's LTTE propaganda wing successfully painted the SLAF bombing campaign as state-sponsored terror and garnered enough political support from Tamil Nadu to pressure the Indian government to intervene.

29. Indian Concern

The Tamil Nadu state government itself tried to send a flotilla of ships to relieve Tamil civilian refugees from the Jaffna peninsula, but the flotilla was turned away by the Sri Lankan Navy. On June 3rd, Indian Air Force Cargo planes with fighter escorts airdropped food supplies into Jaffna to relieve the population. The Sri Lankan Armed Forces witnessed the growing Indian concern and attention and conducted war-gaming exercises about how to respond to a possible Indian Army invasion (Munasinghe, p. 24).

30. First Black Tiger

In the meantime, the LTTE appeared to have recovered from its first attempted truck bombing mishap in January and pulled off the deadly trick on July 5th. In what would officially become classified as the first "Black Tiger" suicide bomber mission, the Tiger, code-named "Captain Miller", drove a truck laden with explosives into a SLAF Army camp and detonated it, killing himself and 17 army personnel. After the attack, the LTTE propaganda wing hung posters of Miller extolling him for his martyrdom in an attempt to recruit more Tamil youths into the LTTE and its new Black Tiger suicide bomber unit. July 5th continues to be celebrated by the LTTE as "Black Tiger Day" (De Silva, p. 56 and Munasinghe, p. 25).

On July 27th another Black Tiger drove a suicide truck bomb into the Sri Lankan Army post at the old Jaffna fort, killing six soldiers and injuring eleven more. Despite the new suicide tactic, many leaders of the SLAF felt that they were gaining the upper

hand over the LTTE and claimed to have been caught “shocked and completely unaware” when, on July 29th, the Sri Lankan government brokered a deal with India for its intervention in the conflict (Munasinghe, p. 25).

31. End of Eelam War I, Beginning of Indian Intervention

India soon realized that the SLAF were planning to launch a major offensive into the Jaffna peninsula in response to the suicide truck bombers and probably solve the LTTE problem once and for all. The Indian government decided to intervene for several reasons. Some argue it got involved primarily to satisfy the demands of Indian Tamil politicians who represented the 60,000,000 Tamil strong state of Tamil Nadu. Others argue that the Indians intervened for purely humanitarian reasons to put an end to atrocities on both sides. Some argue that the Indian government recognized that if it allowed the LTTE to be crushed by the SLAF, it would lose any influence it had over affairs in Sri Lanka. Still others say the real motivation for Indian involvement was to keep the Cold War superpowers from becoming involved in the small country so geographically significant for its southern security. Cynics say Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was serving Sri Lankan President Jayawardene with a dose of *realpolitik* for Sri Lanka’s interference in the 1971 Indo – Pak war over Bangladesh’s independence. Another explanation is that the move would silence Tamil separatist stirrings within Tamil Nadu itself. The truth must lie somewhere in the midst of all these explanations (Country Study, p. 226).

32. The 1987 Indo – Sri Lankan Peace Accord

The Sri Lankans themselves were starting to have problems with a re-emerging far left insurgency within their own Sinhalese population, again in the south of the island. The Sri Lankans also suspected that the Soviets, Chinese, and Americans were all only interested in the conflict because they had strategic designs on their deepwater port at Trincomalee, and for good reason (Country Study, p. 250). A private company based in Singapore had won a contract to refurbish the port of Trincomalee. Additionally, the U.S. had proposed the establishment of a Voice of America radio station in Trincomalee. Indian intelligence believed (and convinced the Sri Lankans) that the Singapore firm had

ties to the U.S. CIA and that the VOA station would also be used by the U.S.'s CIA to communicate with U.S. submarines in the Indian Ocean or to monitor Soviet submarines there. As part of the Indian – Sri Lankan Accord of 1987, the Sri Lankans agreed to break the contract with the company from Singapore and block the building of the U.S. VOA station. In exchange, the Indians agreed to help the Sri Lankans refurbish the oil tanks at Trincomalee harbor (Murthy, p. 8 – 9).

33. Army Confinement

As part of the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord agreed to by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (son of Indira) and Sri Lankan President J. Jayawardene, an Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) entered the island and the Sri Lankan Army was confined to its camps in the northern and eastern districts (Joshi, p. 24).

Despite this confinement, eight SLAF soldiers were killed fighting the LTTE on September 5th. Some in the SLAF felt the Indians intended to leave after they had put in place a Tamil leadership in the northern and eastern districts that they could control from India. As evidence they report having seen LTTE leader Prabhakaran traveling in Indian Army jeeps with Indian Army intelligence officers (Munasinghe, p. 25). Others believe the Indian Army favored a different Tamil separatist organization over the LTTE, the PLOTE. As evidence they offer the bloody fighting that broke out between the PLOTE and LTTE in September of 1987 (Joshi, p. 25).

B. THE IPKF INTERVENTION, 1987 – 1990.

1. Initial Cooperation

As a gesture of goodwill the LTTE surrendered some small arms to the IPKF, but these were reportedly unserviceable (Munasinghe, p. 26). With the Indians in place, Prabhakaran felt safe enough now to move his headquarters from Tamil Nadu to Jaffna. On October 3rd the SLAF Navy captured an LTTE boat and took 17 Tigers prisoner. The Indian Army arranged for the prisoners to be visited and a suspected LTTE member among the visitors reportedly slipped the prisoners cyanide. All 17 took the cyanide; twelve died but five were saved (Sangarasivam, pp. 338 – 340). Prabhakaran reportedly

took the loss of his cadre extremely hard, so he had the LTTE torture and kill eight SLAF personnel that they were holding prisoner, and displayed their dead bodies in Jaffna (Munasinghe, p. 27).

After two months of trying to cooperate with the LTTE, the IPKF finally realized that the LTTE was conducting ethnic cleansing operations under its noses in the northern and eastern districts. The initial two-brigade Indian force quickly ballooned to a five-division force. On October 9th, the IPKF launched “Operation Pawan” bent on the elimination of the LTTE. This was more than the LTTE had bargained for (Joshi, p. 22).

2. Disintegration to Combat

On October 10th, the LTTE fired on an IPKF patrol boat, killing four and injuring six Indian sailors. Also that day, the LTTE destroyed three Indian main battle tanks and shot and killed an Indian Army colonel (Munasinghe, p. 27).

Fighting continued between the LTTE and IPKF throughout 1988. The Indians were fairly well situated within the Jaffna peninsula and were reportedly guilty of committing atrocities against civilians. Prabhakaran needed the Indians out of his home turf and approached the new Sri Lankan President, Premdesa, for a peace accord. Premdesa and the SLAF were extremely busy themselves, however, bloodily suppressing a far left wing insurgency being launched by the resurgent JVP in the southern portion of the island, and were content to see the IPKF and LTTE tied up with each other in the north and east (Munasinghe, p. 28).

3. The LTTE Battles the IPKF

The LTTE was the only Tamil separatist group that would stand up to the IPKF. The IPKF used several other Tamil separatist groups to attempt to hunt down the LTTE. The IPKF and its helpers succeeded in pushing the LTTE out of Jaffna City and Jaffna peninsula and into the jungles of the northern and eastern provinces. The LTTE adapted and became highly skilled jungle fighters. The IPKF continued to pressure the LTTE and the LTTE grew short of arms and ammunition (Country Study, p. 226).

4. The JVP Re-emerges

The Indians set about cleaning up insurgent activities in their own state of Tamil Nadu at the same time they sent the “Peace Keeping” force to clean up the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. The SLAF also used this opportunity to take care of their other insurgency led by radical Sinhalese in the south. The JVP, which had been bloodily put down in 1971, was again rearing its ugly head. In 1987, a JVP radical had thrown a hand grenade into a meeting, nearly injuring President Jayawardene and his Prime Minister, PM Premdesa (Country Study, p. xxxiv).

5. The SLAF Battles the JVP

Riding on a wave of Sri Lankan nationalism and spurred on by the IPKF intervention in the north, the JVP had resurfaced as a terrorist outfit set on the destruction of moderate Sri Lankans. From 1987 – 1989 the JVP stands accused of some 10,000 killings (DeSilva, p. 112). This time the JVP reportedly only received weak external support from such rogue nations / entities as Iraq, North Korea, Tanzania, Yemen, Cuba, the South African National Congress, and Basque separatists in Spain (DeSilva, p. 89 – 90).

President Jayawardene retired at the end of 1988 and his Prime Minister, Premdesa won the election, beating former PM Bandaranaike for the Presidency. Premdesa gave the job of dismantling the JVP to the JOC commander, which he elevated to a two-star position. The general was put in charge of “Operation Combined Units” in which he used 100 platoons of mostly army infantry, augmented by some navy and air force personnel who “combed the countryside ... and ... meticulously and ruthlessly repeated cordon-search-arrest-interrogate-kill cycles” (DeSilva, p. 117). The army was allegedly supported by “goon squads ... masked men in closed vehicles without number plates ... maintained by government politicians and persons in danger of JVP reprisal” (DeSilva, p. 118 & 263). From 1989 – 1990, it is estimated that these Sri Lankan Army and “vigilante” groups killed in excess of 40,000 Sinhalese, and effectively wiped out the JVP (DeSilva, p. 75). The JVP may have focused too much of its efforts on the political indoctrination of its members and not enough time on building a strong military organization, as proved by its inability to counter the army onslaught (DeSilva, p. 12).

Again, many diverse countries sought to “assist” the Sri Lankans put down the JVP, including “India, Pakistan, Britain, Singapore, the United States, Russia, Yugoslavia, Egypt, and China” (DeSilva, p. 257). All were trying to gain Sri Lankan loyalty through arms sales, donations, loans, and / or offers of money, technical assistance, and training. The U.S. may have gained enough favor with the Sri Lankan government to later use the island as a refueling point for U.S. Air Force C-130 and C-141 aircraft on their way to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (DeSilva, p. 257).

6. Factional Fighting

On July 13th, 1989 Prabhakaran benefited as the leader of Tamil separatists when the LTTE killed one and injured another leader of the moderate TULF in the middle of Colombo. Three LTTE gunmen captured in the battle were later killed by Sri Lankan police for “trying to escape” (Munasinghe, p. 34).

In the ongoing battle with the Marxist insurgency in the south, Sri Lankan forces captured the leader of the JVP in Kandy on November 12th. The leader was subsequently killed by another JVP member (presumably to prevent him from collaborating) while still in police custody. The probable unintended consequence of this JVP move was that its Marxist insurrection finally died out following the death of their strongest leader (Munasinghe, p. 37).

7. Indians Use the Divide and Conquer Strategy

In the north, the Indian Army was transforming what was left of the PLOTE into the Tamil National Army (TNA) and providing the TNA with training and arms to help in the fight against the LTTE. In the meantime, on November 5th, the LTTE killed 35 members of the EPRLF, losing six fighters of their own. Later, the LTTE turned on one of the TNA camps, and attacked and killed 17. On December 25th in a still larger attack, the LTTE killed 44 TNA members. Although the TNA was losing to the LTTE on the battlefield, at least some believe they had been winning the larger battle for the hearts and minds of the Tamil people (Munasinghe, p. 38). During the nearly three-year campaign, from July 1987 to March of 1990, the IPKF succeeded in securing the city of Jaffna and most of the Jaffna peninsula. The LTTE initially demonstrated that its members were

capable urban fighters, but gave way to the unrelenting IPKF pressure and moved into the jungles of northern and eastern Sri Lanka, where they were forced to become capable jungle fighters (Joshi, p. 22).

8. Development of the Sea Tigers

During this period the LTTE also demonstrated a small naval capability with the “Sea Tigers” mounting attacks on Sri Lankan and Indian naval vessels using scuba divers and small, fast-moving fiberglass boats (Joshi, p. 22).

9. More Self-Sacrifice

Also during this period, Prabhakaran continued to demonstrate his ever-tightening grip on the LTTE. When several of his lieutenants were captured and about to be transported to the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo, he ordered them to commit suicide over the radio. They complied by taking their cyanide (Joshi, p. 22). This episode could be evidence of Prabhakaran’s compelling / charismatic leadership and his followers’ faithful adherence, or it could point to the growing Tamil fear of Indian / Sri Lankan cruelty. Either way, it does suggest an acceptance of the growing LTTE preference for suicide over capture / interrogation by the SLAF.

10. Development of Prabhakaran’s Political Shrewdness

During the IPKF campaign, Prabhakaran and the LTTE also demonstrated their increasing political adeptness and ability to think and act strategically. At the outset of their fighting the IPKF they were able to continue to use the R & AW for “arms and logistical support” (Joshi, p. 25). This was also around the same time the LTTE was first accused of being involved in international drug smuggling. Conceivably, the R & AW continued to support the LTTE in the midst of their fight with the IPKF because they were monitoring the alleged drug traffic (Joshi, p. 22).

Nonetheless, the IPKF was making increasing gains on the LTTE. Prabhakaran turned to the Sri Lankan government itself (DeSilva, p. 57). He played on the Sri Lankan fears of increasing Indian influence on the island by admitting to some of his painful losses - the Tigers lost some 700 of their best cadre dead and thousands wounded in their

struggle with the IPKF (Joshi, p. 40). Another estimated 1,200 Tamils are reported to have been killed or “gone missing” during the IPKF intervention (Munasinghe, p. 39).

Finally, having defeated the Marxist insurgency in the south and having grown tired of the enduring IPKF presence in the north, President Premdesa was looking for ways to get the IPKF to pull out of Sri Lanka. Having received arms and ammunition from abroad and having greatly increased their numbers, the SLAF leadership felt they could handle the LTTE, and encouraged the President to ask the Indians to leave. But Premdesa preferred to see the LTTE push the IPKF out. Prabhakaran had already solicited Premdesa for logistical help in the past, and now he actually succeeded in gaining some arms and logistical support from the Sri Lankan President, against the strong advice of many top leaders of the military. Having received his new weapons, Prabhakaran shrewdly entered into a cease-fire agreement with the IPKF in April 1989. Yet, just as things began to look better for the region, Prabhakaran demonstrated his cold-blooded spirit by having the most influential moderate Tamil politician in Colombo assassinated on July 13 (Joshi, p. 25).

11. IPKF Withdrawal

The uncompromising Prabhakaran only entered the cease-fire agreement to regroup after his losses. The IPKF finalized its plans to pull out of Sri Lanka by early March 1990 and vowed to never return (Joshi, p. 26). Fighting the Tamils in Sri Lanka had become for the IPKF what Algeria had been to the French, Viet Nam for the U.S. and Afghanistan for the U.S.S.R.. On March 30th, 1990 the last Indian troops left Trincomalee harbor. The IPKF reportedly suffered a total of 1,115 KIA during the course of the intervention (DeSilva, p. 56). The IPKF also suffered as many as 3,000 WIA, including many amputees from LTTE land mines. The IPKF believe it killed 2,220 LTTE and wounded another 1,220. The LTTE say they lost only 700 fighters to the IPKF. The discrepancy is easy to explain: the IPKF considered many civilian casualties as Tigers. Somewhere between 3,000 and 4,000 civilians are believed to have been killed in the crossfire (Gunaratna, 1993, p. 315). The Indians’ departure was abrupt and President Premdesa did not coordinate their withdrawal with the SLAF. This abrupt departure by the IPKF left a vacuum that the more nimble LTTE was quick to fill. The

LTTE seized control of Jaffna City and the Jaffna peninsula. The LTTE made quick work of consolidating its control and eliminating all those who had assisted the IPKF (DeSilva, p. 50 and Munasinghe, p. 39).

12. Aftermath of Indian Withdrawal

The LTTE abided by the cease-fire agreement (which also applied to the SLAF who only maintained small bases in the northern and eastern provinces and nominal control of the police stations) from January to June of 1990. After the complete IPKF pullout in March, the LTTE used April and May to re-establish itself in Jaffna City, on the Jaffna peninsula, and throughout the northern and eastern regions of the island. Additionally, LTTE fighters captured countless thousands of weapons that the R & AW had left for the TNA (Joshi, p. 26).

13. LTTE Smuggling Ring

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the LTTE continued to develop its intricate medical, logistical, subsistence, and supply network with the Tamil fishermen, farmers, police, and politicians of the Tamil Nadu coastline (Joshi, p. 26). Also, during this period of relative peace, the socialist Sri Lankan government decided to relax its economic ideology and embrace some of the free market practices that were making Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong, and others in the region very wealthy. The region was awash in cheap electronics equipment. So, in addition to drawing subsistence supplies of fish and rice from the over 400 villages along the Tamil Nadu coast, the LTTE found itself able to tap into a growing black market for nearly any commodity they wanted. The currency of the region was reportedly gold and apparently the LTTE had plenty of it. The one commodity the LTTE lacked at the time was diesel fuel. The LTTE would entice the Tamil Nadu fishermen to pull alongside their boats and siphon over diesel in exchange for gold. A logical explanation for the source of the LTTE's gold was that they were trafficking in drugs, to buy diesel, to fuel their boats to transfer their supplies from Tamil Nadu to the Jaffna peninsula (Joshi, p. 27).

During this period, Prabhakaran also developed safe houses for his financial wing in Tamil Nadu. The financial arm used secure HF and VHF communications to stay in

contact with fundraisers in “London, Geneva, Mauritius, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, and Sydney” (Joshi, p. 27). It is widely known that the LTTE raised vast funds from the Tamil diaspora. Much of this they did via coercion and by extorting protection money for relatives left behind. It is thought that the somewhat legitimate funds from “donations” were used to help launder other funds from international arms and drug smuggling operations (Gunaratna, 2001d).

While the LTTE was engaged with the IPKF and for a short time thereafter, the Tamil Nadu state government looked the other way when it came to all of the LTTE’s comings and goings. After all, the IPKF had reportedly killed thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil civilians, including doctors and nurses during its “Peace Keeping” operation. The Tamil Nadu state government even continued to somewhat tolerate the LTTE after Tigers killed an officer and injured eleven more Tamil Nadu police officers in a shootout at a checkpoint on February 18th (Joshi, p. 28).

C. EELAM WAR II, 1990 – 1995

1. Summer 1990, Beginnings

On June 7th, the LTTE resumed the war when it fired on a SLAF army vehicle, killing one soldier and injuring several others. The soldiers did not retaliate because they were trying to hold to the spirit of the cease-fire. Several LTTE leaders were still in negotiations with the Sri Lankan government in Colombo at the time. As the peace talks broke down, the LTTE leadership had to be protected by Sri Lankan Special Task Force soldiers from disgruntled Sri Lankan Air Force airmen as the government provided the LTTE leaders safe air passage to Jaffna (Munasinghe, pp. 100 - 101).

2. The LTTE Restart the Conflict in Districts of the Eastern Province

Three days later, the LTTE raided a large police station and recovered approximately 300 rifles, 28 machine guns, and 65 sub-machine guns (Munasinghe, p. 102). The following day, the LTTE ambushed and killed eleven SLAF soldiers in the eastern province district of Ampara. Also on June 11th, the LTTE took over “most of the police stations in Batticaloa and Ampara”, two major towns of the eastern province.

They captured 899 police officers. The LTTE allowed 125 ethnic Tamil officers to escape, probably with orders to never serve as police officers again. The Sinhalese officers were murdered execution style, shot in the head with their hands tied behind their backs (DeSilva, p. 225 and Lawrence, p. 127). Later, the SLAF would uncover the burned remains of more than 200 officers killed this way (Munasinghe, p. 102). Also on the 11th, two eastern province Army detachments came under simultaneous attack by LTTE units. Three soldiers were killed at one detachment and two at the other. Both detachments called in artillery and close air support to fend off the LTTE attacks (Munasinghe, p. 103). On June 13th, in the northern province, nine police officers were taken captive by the LTTE and their police station was raided of its weapons, vehicles, and radios. On June 14th, seven soldiers were killed and eleven were taken prisoner by the LTTE in an attack on an army camp. The next day, five soldiers were killed and one was taken prisoner when their vehicle was ambushed by the LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 103).

3. Alienation of Indian Tamils of southern Indian State: Tamil Nadu

Prabhakaran truly miscalculated when he brazenly had the leader and twelve members of the EPRLF assassinated in Madras on June 19th. The Tamil Nadu state government could not continue to accept the increasing lawlessness of Prabhakaran and the LTTE and began “cordon and search operations as well as surveillance of the LTTE” (Joshi, p. 28). Several companies from the Indian central police reserve were sent in to better train the Tamil Nadu police. Additionally, the Tamil Nadu police were issued 100 AK 47s and trained in their use by the National Guard. Thirty-four static checkpoints were established along the coast with 15 roving patrols to cover the distances between the posts. Additionally, the Indian Defense Minister developed and implemented an interagency–joint task force of naval vessels, Coast Guard cutters, customs inspectors, and intelligence analysts with the task of getting their arms around the LTTE problem in Tamil Nadu (Joshi, p. 29).

4. Indians Act on Intelligence

The intelligence agencies uncovered the fact that the LTTE had around 30 logistical cadres in Tamil Nadu coordinating the use of nursing homes for medical

treatment of injured Tigers and controlling the use of factories to make munitions and uniforms (Joshi, p. 31). Another source documents that while the IPKF was battling the LTTE in Sri Lanka, the LTTE support branch was operating offices with at least 14 different functions from within Tamil Nadu, to include: intelligence, communications, arms production, explosives procurement, propaganda, political work, food and essential supplies, medicine, fuel, clothing, transportation, finance and currency conversion. Following the IPKF pullout some of these offices safely returned to Sri Lanka and others branched out internationally (Gunaratna, 2001a, p. 14).

5. Progression to a War of Movement

Also, on June 19th, the same day the LTTE assassinated the EPRLF members in Madras, the LTTE launched a well-coordinated attack against the SLAF army camp at Fort Jaffna. The LTTE used bulldozers with welded-on sheets of metal to serve as armor plating to protect the drivers as they crashed through the gates. Assaulters used ladders to climb the fences and walls. The LTTE fighters fired a large number of RPGs during the assault, but were repelled by the army, and took heavy casualties from air force fighters (Munasinghe, p. 104). Also, late in June, the LTTE surrounded a SLAF army camp near Batticaloa in the eastern province, but could not overrun the camp. The LTTE did overrun another army camp in the northern province and made off with two infantry fighting vehicles. Meanwhile, on July 12th, the LTTE overran another northern army camp, killing or capturing all 71 soldiers stationed there (Munasinghe, p. 106).

6. The Army Regroups

The army used the remainder of July, August, September, and October to retaliate and regain control of the northern province. The SLAF conducted a well-planned joint campaign to strengthen army, navy and air force positions in the north. Through several operations, the army fortified and consolidated itself at the strategic camp at Elephant Pass, secured a naval base at Karainagar, secured the Palaly Air Base for the air force, and even gained control of several islands off the northern province coast. During the course of the operation, in reporting that was eerily similar to U.S. body count reports during the U.S. War in Viet Nam, the SLAF recorded 708 LTTE KIA to 88 SLAF KIA,

42 SLAF WIA, and four SLAF MIA (Munasinghe, pp. 107 - 112). Another source indicates that the operation to secure and defend the Jaffna fort was not this lop-sided. According to this source, at least 720 SLAF soldiers died between January and August 1990 in defense of the fort (DeSilva, p. 57).

7. Ethnic and Religious Based Killings by Both the SLAF and the LTTE

The LTTE may have been guilty of conducting several ethnic cleansing type attacks during this same period. On July 25th, 19 Sinhalese civilians were found “hacked to death” in a northern district and on August 3rd, 93 Muslim civilians (a mix of ethnic Sinhalese and Tamils) were “massacred” inside of a mosque in an eastern province district (Munasinghe, p. 108). Another source reports that 68 Muslims were killed by the LTTE on July 25th and that the LTTE actually attacked two mosques on August 3rd resulting in 160 deaths and 80 injured (Lawrence, p. 127). The same source accuses the Sri Lankan Army of ethnically cleansing a Muslim village near Batticaloa of 185 persons on September 9th (Lawrence, p. 142).

8. Incorporation of Suicide Bombers into Attacks on Army

On November 22nd the LTTE overran an eastern district army camp. Twenty soldiers were killed and 77 were taken prisoner. Survivors of the battle said that during the attack many LTTE Tigers, presumably Black Tigers, conducted suicide attacks by hurtling themselves loaded with explosives against the camp defenses. On December 8th, the LTTE killed the general in charge of the eastern province and eight soldiers in one of their vehicular ambushes (Munasinghe, p. 108).

9. 1991: Deep Penetration of Black Tigers into Colombo

Not only was Prabhakaran having success in the north and the east, but also during this period he was demonstrating and developing an ability to penetrate and strike fear in the Sri Lankan capital in the far south. On March 2nd Prabhakaran had his LTTE commandos use a remote detonated mine to blow up and kill the SLAF Defense Minister while he was being driven in his limousine through Colombo (Munasinghe, p. 121).

Sri Lanka's Sinhalese were outraged. At this point in the conflict the army's recruiters were having no problem filling their ranks with able-bodied Sinhalese youths from Colombo who were volunteering for what some were calling a growing Civil War. Almost as if they were in competition, India and Pakistan provided training assistance to the SLAF's new recruits (Munasinghe, p. 109).

10. Rajiv Gandhi Assassination

In May 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was out of office and campaigning for re-election. Prabhakaran held Gandhi personally responsible for all of the casualties the IPKF had inflicted on the LTTE. Prabhakaran calculated that as Gandhi was no longer Prime Minister, he would be traveling with less security. Also, Prabhakaran knew that Gandhi was the type of politician who likes to mingle with the crowd and shake hands to garner votes. Prabhakaran ordered a test to see if a squad of Tigers could penetrate Gandhi's security ring. The chosen squad penetrated the security ring of another former Indian Prime Minister also on the campaign trail. "The belt bomb girl" handed some flowers to the former PM while other squad members posing as photographers and journalists recorded the rehearsal. Prabhakaran was pleased with their accomplishments and ordered the hit on Rajiv Gandhi. On May 21st, 1991, the same "belt bomb girl" blew up herself and Gandhi while he was campaigning in Madras (Joshi, p. 29).

11. Backlash Against the Gandhi Assassination

Prabhakaran miscalculated the extreme backlash and negative public opinion that followed this assassination carried out in Tamil Nadu. Not only did the Indian government and the Tamil Nadu state government crack down on his operations, but also the 60,000,000 Indian Tamils of Tamil Nadu began to re-evaluate their support for the 4,000,000 Tamils of Sri Lanka. Prabhakaran's logistical operations from Tamil Nadu became extremely strained and the Indian government rolled up his safe houses there (Joshi, p. 30).

The Indian public prosecutor held Prabhakaran personally responsible for the Gandhi assassination based on correspondence captured from Tigers and safe houses used in the plot. The prosecutor sought Prabhakaran's extradition from Sri Lanka, but

every time Indian or Sri Lankan officials got close to Prabhakaran his followers committed suicide in lieu of being interrogated. Immediately after the bombing, Prabhakaran ordered the survivors of the core team to commit suicide when they became trapped in their “safe” house in Bangalore, India. At least twenty-five Tigers involved in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination committed suicide. Four other Tigers were put to death by the Indian government and 22 captured Tigers or Tiger supporters involved in the incident were given life prison terms (Joshi, p. 30).

12. More Evidence LTTE Has Links to Other Terrorist Groups

By December 1991, Indian investigators had uncovered the fact that the LTTE was attempting to foster an insurgency against the Indian government within the radical youth leagues of Tamil Nadu. Investigators uncovered links of LTTE training and assistance to Maoist rebels in southern India responsible for several train bombings (Joshi, p. 31). The Maoist “People’s War Group” (PWG) has been active in southern India since a Marxist rebellion at the end of WWII (Joshi, p. 33). There are several reasons this linkage is important. First, the Maoists occupy a dense forest region of southern India and could be using the LTTE’s boat system to traffic drugs. Investigators found LTTE-style communications equipment with the PWG (Joshi, p. 32). Additionally, after the Rajiv Gandhi assassination, the LTTE lost nearly all the political support they had from Tamil Nadu and their logistical network was crippled. The LTTE may have found a logistical partner in the PWG. The PWG may have, in turn, received some communications and explosives training from the LTTE. Some LTTE-style bomb blasts took place in Madras against PWG-type targets in 1993, 1994, and 1995 (Joshi, p. 33).

Secondly, at least one author has traced the historical origin of suicide bombing not to the Middle East, but to some Islamic factions of southern India. The LTTE could have picked up the tradition through discussions with the PWG just as easily as from their members who trained in Lebanon and Syria (Dale, 1988, p. 39).

An additional note of interest is that investigators found propaganda pamphlets in which the Maoists praised Sikh militants for their secessionist acts vis a vis the Indian government. The investigators did not establish any direct link between the LTTE and

the Sikhs fighting for a homeland in northern India, but the pamphlets, if produced by the LTTE, are highly suggestive of the innovative capacity of the LTTE propaganda wing (Joshi, p. 33).

13. Experimentation with WMD, Return to Guerrilla Warfare

There are some reports that the LTTE attempted to detonate a bomb attached to chlorine powder or chlorine gas in one of its attacks on an army camp in 1990, in a poor man's attempt at a chemical warfare attack. Due to the poor results, the LTTE appear to have abandoned this effort. As a consequence of the unraveling of the Soviet Union's Iron Curtain and Yugoslavia, however, Prabhakaran was reportedly able to procure 50 tons of TNT and 10 tons of the plastic explosive RDX from illegal arms dealers in the Ukraine, 24 surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) from Bulgarian dealers, and 32,400 81 mm mortar shells from Croatian dealers (Gunaratna, 1997, p. 8). Prabhakaran would eventually use the SAMs to hold off the SLAF Air Force, the mortars to besiege SLAF army bases, and the explosives for his suicide bombers. The LTTE would combine its growing proficiency with machine guns, recoilless rifles, and explosives to develop the "art of ambush, strategic retreat, and ferocious comeback" (DeSilva, p. 55). To contain the SLAF army units the Tigers developed the tactics of mining the roads, blowing bridges, cutting railway tracks, and interdicting supply lines (DeSilva, p. 56).

14. On the War Front

Back on the war front, the SLAF successfully defended two camps in May 1991 against the LTTE, inflicting high casualties with the help of the air force. As many as 408 LTTE were killed in the fighting. The SLAF suffered 19 KIA, four MIA and 20 WIA (Munasinghe, p. 113).

In early June the SLAF killed 84 suspected LTTE in an operation to clear Mannar Island off the northwest coast of Sri Lanka. The SLAF reported 18 soldiers killed in the fighting. In more fighting to control a strategic highway in the northern province district of Vavuniya, 173 LTTE and eleven SLAF were killed. Later in June, in fighting to control another smaller island, 60 LTTE and 23 SLAF were killed. Through early July,

in operations to control the Wannu jungle of the northern province, 520 LTTE and 44 SLAF were killed (Munasinghe, p. 113 - 114).

15. Importance of Elephant Pass

Entry to the Tamil stronghold on Jaffna peninsula is controlled through a bottleneck called “Elephant Pass.” There, on July 10th, an estimated 5,000 – 6,000 Tigers (dressed in full combat fatigues for the first time) encircled and besieged an SLAF battalion. The LTTE had conducted careful planning and terrain analysis before launching this operation (DeSilva, p. 58). Using Ukrainian .50 cal anti-aircraft guns to hold off the SLAF Air Force resupply helicopters, the Tigers assaulted the Sri Lankan base using heavy mortar fire, RPGs, and their modified bulldozers to breach obstacles and defensive positions. The SLAF had to resupply the base by airdrop. As other guerrilla movements have done in the past, the Tamils may have moved to conventional tactics too soon (Leites & Wolf, 1970, p. 58). Although this attack was very courageous and innovative, the LTTE’s losses were heavy and the LTTE fighters never took the camp. Instead, several battalions of SLAF Infantry conducted an amphibious assault with coordinated Close Air Support to move in and relieve the besieged camp. The LTTE repulsed the first amphibious assault but could not hold off the second. The LTTE then moved to delaying actions with more typical guerrilla tactics and some concerted counter-attacks. They succeeded in delaying the SLAF relief effort from linking up with the camp until August 4th, 1991. At least 1,000 LTTE and 202 SLAF personnel were killed in the fighting (Joshi, p. 35 and Munasinghe, p. 114 -116). By the end of August, the army would go on the offensive to consolidate its hold on the northern and eastern provinces, once again rebuilding its camps, and destroying several LTTE camps. In doing so, 800 LTTE were killed, including some high-ranking leaders. Around 150 SLAF soldiers were reported KIA in the fighting (Munasinghe, p. 120).

16. 1992: Restructuring the SLAF Headquarters

In early 1992, the SLAF’s seven-year-old Joint Operations Command (JOC) was restructured and the task of battling the insurgency given to a Joint Security Forces Headquarters. In the midst of the restructuring, the SLAF bureaucracy wrestled with

whether its emphasis should be in the north or the east. The LTTE obviously appeared stronger in the Tamil-dominated north. But under the army's nose in the east, the LTTE was conducting ethnic cleansing type operations against both Sinhalese and Tamil Muslims. In a wave of terror, Tigers murdered innocent Muslim civilians living along the fringes of the eastern province borders (Joshi, p. 36).

17. While the SLAF Restructures, LTTE Terror Reigns

On April 10th, the LTTE blew up a civilian bus in the eastern province district of Ampara. Twenty-eight civilians were killed and another 36 injured in the blast. On April 29th, the LTTE killed more than 50 mostly Muslim civilians in an eastern district village. Later the same day, in another eastern village, the LTTE “hacked to death” 58 more civilians, again mostly Muslims. Then, on July 15th, in the eastern district city of Batticaloa, the LTTE attacked another civilian passenger bus and killed 19 Muslim civilians (Munasinghe, p. 124).

While some elements of the LTTE were affecting the ethnic balance of the eastern province, other elements stayed focused on the SLAF. On July 29th the LTTE attacked a combined army - police foot patrol, killing 18 SLAF army soldiers and eight police officers near Batticaloa. Further north, at the strategic port of Trincomalee, the LTTE blew up a civilian passenger ferry when it was heavily loaded with soldiers, killing 22 SLAF soldiers and six civilians (Munasinghe, p. 124).

In the north, on August 8th, LTTE commandoes conducted a vehicle ambush killing the general in charge of operations and some of his senior staff (Munasinghe, p. 124). Back in the east, on September 21st, the LTTE killed 23 SLAF soldiers on patrol near Batticaloa. Three days later, the LTTE attacked a SLAF army camp near Batticaloa and killed 18 more SLAF soldiers (Munasinghe, p. 125).

18. The Army Tries to Defend the People to No Avail

The army stationed some troops in the mixed Sinhalese / Tamil Muslim villages of the eastern district to discourage any more ethnic cleansing by the LTTE. But this was not enough on October 5th when the LTTE overran three villages in a coordinated attack that resulted in the shooting and hacking deaths of 146 civilians and 20 soldiers. Another

83 civilians were wounded but survived to describe these heinous attacks (Munasinghe, p. 125).

19. The Army is Under Siege Itself in the North and the East

On November 3rd, the LTTE attacked another combined army - police foot patrol, killing 22, this time near Ampara. In the north, on November 23rd, the LTTE attacked an army camp near Palaly Air Base, killing 46 soldiers and capturing five. The LTTE also “suffered many casualties.” In a simultaneous attack at a separate smaller camp, the army suffered no casualties but killed 15 LTTE while, on December 2nd, the LTTE killed twelve soldiers, and stole a jeep and “a large stock of arms and ammunition” from yet another camp in the east (Munasinghe, p. 125 - 126).

In a bloody vehicle ambush in the north on December 24th, 1992 the LTTE killed 42 SLAF soldiers. On January 18th, 1993 the LTTE ambushed and killed 14 more soldiers. The army began taking many more precautions in its vehicle convoy procedures and the fighting quieted down throughout the March monsoon period. In an attack on a northern army camp on April 9^h, the LTTE killed 19 more soldiers and three civilians (Munasinghe, p. 127).

20. Meanwhile, More Terror in Colombo and the Navy Responds

In November 1992, a Black Tiger on a motorcycle pulled alongside the official car of the commanding admiral of the SLAF Navy, detonated himself, killing the admiral and several others in downtown Colombo (Munasinghe, p. 125).

The navy was furious. It quickly set about locating and destroying Tiger bases on the Jaffna peninsula coast. The Indian Navy aided the SLAF Navy when, on January 15th, 1993, the Indians halted a large LTTE resupply ship. The LTTE cadre on board ordered the civilian crew on its ship overboard, scuttled the boat with the explosives that were on board, and committed suicide (Joshi, p. 36).

21. 1993: LTTE Leader Eliminates Competition

Prabhakaran used 1993 to strengthen his stranglehold on the LTTE. Apparently some of his lieutenants had grown too important for his liking during the LTTE's years of

hard fighting with the IPKF and SLAF. Prabhakaran accused several of his lieutenants of being double agents for the R & AW and had them killed (Joshi, p. 36).

22. Further Development of the Special Suicide Bomber Unit

Prabhakaran ordered hits on Sri Lankan President Premdesa and his National Security Minister. On April 23rd a Tiger assassin shot the Minister. A week later, during a May Day parade in Colombo, a suicide bomber quickly made his way through the crowd towards the President and detonated a waste-belt bomb instantaneously killing himself, Premdesa, and 24 others (Hechter, p. 53 and Munasinghe, p. 128).

23. Back on the War Front

On July 25th the LTTE overran an army camp in the north killing 24 soldiers, taking 18 captive, and killing some local civilians. The LTTE destroyed several engineering vehicles and recovered many firearms and some global positioning devices from the camp. The northern army commander relieved the brigade commander for being unprepared for the attack (Munasinghe, p. 128).

The SLAF continued to control the strategically important camp at Elephant Pass. SLAF intelligence knew the LTTE operated a large fleet of fishing boats in and around the Jaffna peninsula, mostly out of a base 18 km north of Elephant Pass at Kilali. During August and into September, the SLAF planned to conduct a combined operation to destroy these boats (Munasinghe, p. 129).

24. SLAF Conducts a Combined Operation

On September 28th, the combined operation began with six battalions of infantry, supported by armor, artillery, and air support moving north from Elephant Pass on the 18 km march to Kilali. Half way into the movement, the infantry met its first resistance by the LTTE and suffered 37 WIA. The offensive then stalled for the night. The following morning the infantry got moving again, but came under heavy mortar fire. In fierce fighting, 112 SLAF soldiers were killed and 199 were wounded, and two tanks were destroyed by the LTTE. On the third day, the infantry broke through the LTTE with only five more KIA. The army buried 42 confirmed LTTE dead and estimated it had killed at

least 100 more that the LTTE carried out with them. The army reached Kilali, overrunning and destroying seven LTTE base camps, and linked up with the navy in a very successful final raid to destroy 120 LTTE small boats, their motors, and support facilities. On October 4th, the SLAF pulled back without pressure to Elephant Pass (Munasinghe, p. 130 – 131). Due to the pullout and high number of SLAF casualties, many critics hailed the September 1993 offensive as a failure (Joshi, p. 36). Despite the criticism, the operation was successful in crippling an important piece of the LTTE infrastructure and the daring offensive nature of the operation reportedly boosted morale throughout the SLAF (Munasinghe, p. 132).

25. The LTTE Counter

In a daring offensive operation of its own, on November 11th, the LTTE used its remaining boats to go through the Jaffna lagoon, circumventing the strategic army camp at Elephant Pass to catch the army camp at Pooneryn off guard. The LTTE deftly split the defenses of the two battalions at the camp and overran it, causing chaos. The LTTE killed 241 SLAF Army and Navy personnel, including the brigade commander. The LTTE wounded 551 more, and took 396 prisoners along with two tanks, two 120mm artillery pieces, and countless arms and munitions. The LTTE fought a delaying action against a large SLAF amphibious landing sent in to relieve the camp, and then withdrew (Munasinghe, p. 136).

26. 1994: The Rise of the Black Sea Tigers

Both the LTTE and the SLAF used the first half of 1994 to recoup from their respective losses, consolidate their gains, and refit. There were minor skirmishes and most of the headlines were captured by the Sea Tigers. On March 16th, two Sea Tiger scuba divers (a male and a female) attacked a Sri Lankan Navy vessel. They attempted to attach an explosive to the hull of the ship, but their attachment would not hold. They jointly decided to hold the explosive with their bodies against the boat and destroyed it. Events quieted down through the June monsoon season, then the Sea Tigers struck again on September 19th when they snatched a navy commander off his boat (Gunaratna, 2001b, p. 3).

27. President Kumaratunga Comes to Power, 1995 Cease Fire

The August 1994 election had brought a new, right-of-center, People's Alliance government to parliamentary power and, by November, Sri Lanka's new President, Chandrika Kumaratunga (daughter of the famous first female Prime Minister, S. Bandarnaike) was firmly in place. Before beginning negotiations with the LTTE, she first explained to her military commanders her intent for the talks and warned the military to be prepared in case the talks failed (Munasinghe, p. 139 – 140). On January 8th she signed a "Cessation of Hostilities Agreement" with Prabhakaran under the auspices of the International Red Cross (Joshi, p. 37).

The cease-fire held for four months. On April 8th, 1995, two SLAF soldiers were shot dead in Jaffna although the LTTE denied any involvement. It was much harder for the LTTE to deny involvement, however, when, on April 19th, two Sea Black Tiger scuba divers blew themselves up to destroy two SLAF Navy gunboats (Munasinghe, p. 141 and Joshi, p. 37).

28. 1995: Tigers Begin Using SAMs

Then, on April 28th, ground Tigers used a SAM to shoot down an SLAF Air Force "AVRO" cargo plane, killing all on board. Initially, the SLAF reported the accident as having been caused by mechanical failure. But on April 29th, the Tigers repeated the feat, shooting down another cargo plane (Joshi, p. 37). A total of 94 service members were killed in these two incidents. It is believed the LTTE bought eleven Greek-made Stingers (under U.S. license to the Greeks for NATO purposes) from the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in 1994 (Hunter, 2001, p. 3). In an effort to be more honest with the press and the people, the SLAF broke with its years of keeping details of the conflict secret, and created a Public Affairs Office by reassigning some personnel from the Psychological Operations Office. The new PAO held a press conference and admitted to the Sri Lankan people and the world that the LTTE had indeed shot down two aircraft. The President was able to leverage the public outcry into increased defense spending for modernization (Munasinghe, p. 142).

29. Army Tries to Develop Special Forces

The army built a camp in the jungle near Batticaloa for commando and special forces training. After training, the camp was to become a base for deep strike operations into the jungle versus the LTTE. But on May 28th, the LTTE struck first. LTTE fighters overran the camp, killing 27 soldiers and wounding 14 more. The commandos killed 18 Tigers in the attack (Munasinghe, p. 150).

30. Sea Tigers Attack

On June 28th “an estimated one thousand” LTTE Sea Tigers overran the SLAF Army position on the northern island of Mandativu. The LTTE killed 90 SLAF soldiers and wounded 41 more in the surprise attack that came from three directions (Munasinghe, p. 143).

31. Heavy Fighting for Jaffna

The SLAF mounted another offensive campaign to recapture the Jaffna peninsula on July 9^h that went well for the first five days until the LTTE counter-attacked and caused confusion when they got inside the SLAF lines, killing 33. The LTTE also shot down a small air force plane in the fighting. The SLAF withdrew under covering artillery fire to the Palaly Air Base. A total of 69 SLAF were killed and 16 were MIA from this operation. The SLAF estimated it killed 665 LTTE during the week-long fight (Munasinghe, p. 145).

32. Sea Tigers Attack Again

The Sea Tigers struck again on July 16th. First, one scuba diver attached a bomb to the underside of a SLAF Navy ship in a small harbor off the northern coast. The bomb went off, damaging but not sinking the ship. Then Sea Tigers in small boats harassed and engaged the ship for four hours until a second scuba diver could attach another bomb to the ship. The second explosion succeeded in destroying the ship. By the end of the melee, three SLAF sailors were dead and 16 were wounded. The sailors killed 17 Sea Tigers and captured the scuba divers, both of whom were female (Munasinghe, p. 145).

33. Evidence SLAF Intelligence Network Does Work

On July 29th, the Tigers sent two female suicide bombers into a northern SLAF brigade compound as a diversion for an assault. The bombs worked, but the diversion failed, and the ensuing assault proved costly to the LTTE. SLAF Military Intelligence had learned of the planned attack and the brigade was ready. More than 400 LTTE were killed in the assault (Munasinghe, p. 145).

34. Prabhakaran Lashes Out

Afterwards, in retaliation for the military defeat near his home turf in Jaffna, Prabhakaran ordered the bombing of a Sri Lankan government building in Colombo (Joshi, p. 37). Also, on July 30th, the LTTE caught the lieutenant general in command of the eastern province in one of its deadly vehicle ambushes (Munasinghe, p. 138).

35. President Holds Out an Olive Branch, Prabhakaran Rejects It

On August 3rd, President Kumaratunga offered a provision for allowing a unified northeastern region of Sri Lanka to be controlled by Tamils if the Tigers would give up their arms (Joshi, p. 38). Although this is supposedly what the Tigers were fighting for all along, Prabhakaran rejected the offer and continued to employ the terrorist tactic of the suicide bomber with increasing ferocity. Later, in August 1995, in a failed attempt to kill the Deputy Defense Minister, an LTTE suicide bomber killed himself, 22 others, and wounded more than 40 in the process (Joshi, p. 39).

36. Sea Tigers Hijack a Cruise Liner

On August 29th, the LTTE Sea Tigers hijacked a small tourist cruise liner off the coast of one of the small northern islands. In a gun battle with two small SLAF navy vessels, the Sea Tigers got the upper hand and sunk both boats, sending 18 SLAF sailors to a watery grave. The LTTE took hostage the eight-man crew of the cruise liner along with 136 civilian passengers. The government negotiated the release of all but a few members of the crew, who the LTTE continued to hold (Munasinghe, p. 146).

37. Army Continues the Fight

On September 3^d, in the north-central province, the LTTE ambushed a SLAF army platoon on patrol, killing 19 and wounding five. The army fared better when it went on the offensive in the north around Palaly Air Base. In a sweeping operation from October 1st – 3rd, the SLAF killed approximately 300 LTTE (152 confirmed) and lost 49 Sri Lankan soldiers (Munasinghe, p. 146).

38. President Cares for the Needs of the Tamil People

Throughout this period, the LTTE still controlled Jaffna peninsula and Jaffna City itself. Despite LTTE control of the city, the Kumaratunga government continued to send food aid north for humanitarian purposes. The LTTE took control of the free food and sold it to the populace at exorbitant prices on top of the high taxes they were already extracting (DeSilva, p. 40 & Munasinghe, p. 147).

D. EELAM WAR III, 1996 – 2001.

1. The SLAF Regain Control of Jaffna, Late 1995 – Early 1996

From October 17th to December 2nd, three Divisions of SLAF army infantry forced their way up the peninsula, with the artillery firing ahead and close air support firing above them. Almost 30,000 SLAF members took part in the operation. The operation would cost the lives of 343 SLAF soldiers but ended with the capture of Jaffna City. Unfortunately for the populace, the SLAF would fire 50,000 rounds of 122mm artillery into the peninsula to accomplish this task. The operation displaced all the civilians out of the city and into the jungle. There were no accurate figures for how many LTTE and civilians were killed in the fighting but some estimate LTTE losses at 2,500. It is likely many civilians were counted as LTTE and it is believed that most LTTE fighters really slipped back down to the mainland and re consolidated within the Wannai jungle. According to one source, once the people were sure the LTTE were if not dead, at least gone, they returned to the city (Munasinghe, p. 148).

The LTTE continued its struggle from the northern and eastern jungles. The SLAF Army controlled the southern and western portions of the island, while the SLAF

Army, Air Force, and the LTTE battled over control of the Jaffna peninsula. The SLAF Commandos and Special Forces also increasingly took the fight to LTTE strongholds in the jungles of the northern and eastern provinces. The Sri Lankan Police Special Task Forces and regular police tried to thwart LTTE terrorist attacks in the capital region of Colombo. The SLAF Navy separated the LTTE's control of the northern and eastern sectors by their hold on the port of Trincomalee. The SLAF Navy patrolled the Palk Strait between India and the Jaffna peninsula in attempts to intercept LTTE activities. The Indian Navy also patrolled the Strait to keep their own Tamil fishermen in line (Munasinghe, p. 149).

2. Terror in the South and East

While LTTE fighters were heavily tied up in the north, the LTTE terrorists were causing mayhem in the deep south and the east. On October 20th, 1995 terrorists set fire to twelve oil tanks near the port of Colombo. During the week of October 21st – 26th, the LTTE killed 139 civilians in the eastern district of Ampara, as it attempted to cleanse a number of villages of Muslim inhabitants. Then, on November 11th, two Black Tiger suicide bombers, one male, the other female, tried to kill the commander of the SLAF Army in Colombo. They failed to assassinate him, but succeeded in killing themselves, two soldiers, 17 civilians, and wounding 59 others (Munasinghe, p. 151 and Joshi, p. 39).

3. Continued Threat of SAM Attacks by the LTTE

On November 18th, Sea Tigers successfully shot down a small SLAF Air Force plane with small arms fire from their boats off the coast near the Palaly Air Base, killing the three-man crew (Munasinghe, p. 151).

On January 22nd, 1996, ground Tigers shot down a SLAF Air Force MI –17 helicopter with a SAM near Palaly Air Base, killing 39 soldiers (Munasinghe, p. 152 and Hunter, p. 3).

4. Attempts at Counter-Insurgency in the East

The Sri Lankan government had strengthened some of its police forces, turning them into Police Special Task Forces with paramilitary training for counter-insurgency

(COIN) operations. On December 5th, the LTTE lashed out at one of the more successful of these units near the eastern district city of Batticaloa. The LTTE set off a truck bomb in front of the unit's building, killing 29 officers, 20 civilians and wounding 20 more (Munasinghe, p. 152).

On December 19th, the LTTE overran a SLAF Army company providing security on the railroad tracks near Batticaloa. The LTTE killed 38 soldiers, wounded 23 more, and took five prisoners. Then on December 23rd, the LTTE overran another company on the highway near Batticaloa, killing 34 and leaving 35 wounded (Munasinghe, p. 152 – 153).

5. LTTE Labeled an International Terrorist Organization by the U.S.

On January 31st, 1996, the LTTE set off a truck loaded with an estimated 110 - 220 pounds of plastic explosives in front of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka in Colombo, killing 86 persons, and wounding an astonishing 1,338 others in the ten story building, a dozen surrounding buildings, and on the crowded city street (Kushner, 1996, p. 336 and Munasinghe, p. 151). Again, Prabhakaran miscalculated the backlash from this kind of terrorist attack. This bombing later heavily influenced the U.S. State Department decision to officially list the LTTE as an international terrorist organization in early 1997. India, Malaysia and Great Britain joined the U.S. in black listing the LTTE, thus rendering illegal its fund raising activities in those countries (Gunaratna, 2001d).

6. Continued Fighting in the East

On March 11th, the LTTE ambushed and killed 24 Police Special Task Force officers near Batticaloa. The army tried to clear the LTTE from the jungles north of Batticaloa, but, on March 23rd, the LTTE ambushed and killed 40 SLAF soldiers and wounded 14 more. Further north, near Trincomalee, the LTTE would ambush and kill 15 more soldiers two days later. Meanwhile, on May 11th near Batticaloa, the LTTE ambushed and killed 14 soldiers and left 15 wounded (Munasinghe, p. 153).

7. LTTE Concern Over Improvements in SLAF Air Force

On May 12th, six LTTE terrorists apparently accidentally blew themselves up in the port of Colombo. No one else was injured. It was not clear who or what their bomb had been intended for. Some believe the LTTE was trying to sabotage a shipment of Kfir fighter aircraft Sri Lanka was receiving from Israel (Gunartna, 2001b).

8. Fighting in the North

During this period things were going much better for the army in the north than in the east. In an operation from April through June of 1996, the SLAF cleared and solidified its control of Jaffna peninsula. It cleared and maintained the highway from Elephant Pass to Jaffna City. The LTTE found itself trading the Jaffna peninsula for the north central district. There, on June 7th, the LTTE killed 12 police officers. Two days later, the LTTE ambushed an army patrol, killing 14 and wounding four. The soldiers killed three Tigers in the attack. Then, on July 4th, a female Black Tiger suicide bomber killed herself, the SLAF Army brigade commander in Jaffna, along with 21 others, and wounded more than 50 (Munasinghe, p. 153 – 154, and 190).

On July 18th, in an operation the LTTE code named “The Battle of the Unceasing Waves”, the LTTE surrounded a two-battalion strong SLAF Army position near the northern district city of Mullaitivu, and planned to “take no prisoners.” Of the 1,408 SLAF Army personnel manning the camp, 1,342 lost their lives in its defense. Only 66 SLAF personnel survived to report on the battle. Reportedly, 315 LTTE fighters also died in the fighting. Although very costly to the LTTE in lives lost, this battle proved to be an extremely valuable confidence builder and a huge logistical success. The LTTE recovered a reported \$70 million (U.S.) worth of arms and ammunition from the camp. The LTTE attack was very well planned. Sea Tigers, (including some Black Sea Tigers) hit the camp from the east while ground Tigers hit the camp from the north and south, splitting the camp’s defenses. The SLAF tried to send in a relief battalion in a helicopter air assault, but they were repelled by the LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 155 - 158).

In the equipment recovered from the camp were two 122mm Howitzers with 903 shells, two 120 mm mortar tubes, one 106mm recoilless rifle, twelve 81 mm mortars, 30 60 mm mortars, 26 Soviet-made 40 mm grenade launchers, 29 T69 rocket propelled

grenade launchers, three Type W-85 anti-aircraft guns, thousands of rounds, 2,846 hand grenades, 334 claymore mines, 360 bouncing betties, 3,222 toe poppers, 369 anti-vehicles mines, 65 remote controlled mines, numerous radios, boats, boat motors, and some vehicles (Gunaratna, 2001a).

On July 19th a Sea Tiger suicide bomber succeeded in killing himself and sinking a SLAF Navy gunboat in the waters off the Jaffna peninsula (Gunaratna, 2001b). On July 24th, a Black Tiger conducted a suicide bombing aboard a Sri Lankan train, killing 72 passengers (Munasinghe, p. 158).

In the north, the SLAF army could not recapture the city of Mullaitivu, but did conduct a joint operation to secure the city of Killinochi. From July 26th through September 22nd, in a clearing operation that swept south from Jaffna, the SLAF infantry, along with armor, artillery, and close air support, took Killinochi. The SLAF estimated killing 710 Tigers in the sweep, losing 304 of their own (Munasinghe, p. 159). A little further south, but still within the north central district, on August 29th, the LTTE ambushed a Special Police patrol, killing 28 officers and wounding ten. On November 25th, a Tiger bomber succeeded only in killing himself in a failed attempt to kill the senior chief of the Police Special Task Force for northeast Sri Lanka. Later, on December 16th, another suicide bomber succeeded in killing this same chief (Munasinghe, p. 154).

9. Fighting in the East

On December 11th, near the eastern city of Ampara, the LTTE overran a combined Police Special Task Force - Army camp, killing seven soldiers and 28 officers. The LTTE lost 25 Tigers in the attack, but made off with an 85mm artillery piece. Several suicide bombers of the LTTE focused their efforts on attacking the Police Special Task Force while the ground Tigers focused on recovering the artillery piece (Munasinghe, p. 161).

10. 1997: Back in the North

Using a combination of tactics, on January 9th, 1997 ground Tigers attacked the army camp at Elephant Pass while several Black Tigers worked their way to the artillery position. They detonated themselves, setting off an ammunition dump of 8,000 shells, and destroying twelve artillery and heavy mortar pieces in the process. The SLAF suffered 165 KIA, over 300 WIA, and 65 MIA. The LTTE admitted to losing 192 Tigers in the fighting (Munasinghe, p. 163).

11. Back in the East

On January 18th, the LTTE overran an eastern district city police office, killing 23 officers. The LTTE admitted to losing six Tigers in the attack (Munasinghe, p. 163).

12 Down in the South

On March 3rd, 1997, the day before a national election, a Tiger bomber nearly succeeded in killing President Kumaratunga. The bomber died in the blast and, as a result of the blast, the President lost the sight in her right eye. After recovering from the blast, President Kumaratunga addressed the country over the radio and appeared on television (with a patch over her eye). She went on to win a resounding victory the next day (Munasinghe, p. 163).

13. An LTTE Attack in the East is Coordinated with an Attack in the North

On March 6th, a number of Tigers blew up an air force plane parked at the air base in Trincomalee in the east. Later that day, the LTTE launched a major attack on the army base camp near the northern district town of Vavunativu. The army successfully defended the base with help from air force MI-24 helicopters. The army recorded killing over 100 Tigers and wounding over 200, while losing 73 of its own in the fighting (Munasinghe, p. 164).

14. The Government Continues to Function

On April 27th, the LTTE ambushed an SLAF Army patrol, killing 22 and wounding four near Trincomalee. Later, on May 12th, the LTTE overran a police station

in Trincomalee, killing 14 officers (Munasinghe, p. 164). Despite attacks like these the government kept its offices and schools functioning throughout the eastern district (Munasinghe, p. 165).

15. The Army Finally Acts on Some Long Known Intelligence

On May 2nd, the army managed to regain control of Mannar Island with little LTTE resistance. As early as 1993, Sri Lankan intelligence analysts had known that the LTTE used the island as an intermediate point for moving suicide bombers from Jaffna through the Gulf of Mannar on their way to missions in Colombo, but did not inform the military. Some in the Ministry of Defense believe that if only they had known, they would have seized control of the island much sooner, and could have prevented some bombings in Colombo (Munasinghe, p. 166).

16. Heavy Jungle Fighting

On May 13th, the SLAF Army launched an offensive to finally wrest control from the LTTE of the Wannu jungle surrounding the highway leading to the Jaffna peninsula. The operation went well until the LTTE launched a fierce counterattack near Thandikulam on June 10th. The SLAF suffered 147 KIA, twelve MIA, over 200 WIA, and had several of its artillery pieces destroyed by the LTTE, while the SLAF estimated the LTTE suffered over 500 KIA. Both sides regrouped and the LTTE attacked again on June 25th. This time the SLAF suffered 74 more KIA and 200 more WIA while the LTTE suffered 100 KIA. More counter-attacks followed on September 30th and October 11th with the LTTE suffering heavy losses in each (Munasinghe, p. 167).

On August 20th, the LTTE fired a Stinger missile at a Kfir fighter but missed (Hunter, 2001, p. 3). During the Wannu attacks too, the LTTE fired artillery rounds for the first time, using the pieces captured from the army at Mullaitivu. Also, on July 11th, Sea Tigers hijacked a shipment of 34,500 81 mm mortar shells on a vessel enroute to Colombo from Zimbabwe via Madagascar for the SLAF Army. Since these seizures, 65% of the SLAF's casualties in fighting with the LTTE can be attributed to artillery and mortar fire (Gunaratna, 2001a). Meanwhile, on October 7th, the LTTE had fired

unknown types of SAMs off of boats at MI-17 transport helicopters, but missed (Hunter, p. 3).

17. Some LTTE Successes, Some Failures

An LTTE Black Tiger suicide bomber rammed a truck bomb into a hotel in Colombo on October 15th. Luckily, no one was reported killed except the driver. Eerily, the hotel was Sri Lanka's tallest building and regarded as the country's "World Trade Center." On November 10th, the LTTE hit an MI-17 transport helicopter and an MI-24 Hind helicopter with SAMs, killing two and injuring two (Hunter, p. 3). On November 14th, the LTTE unsuccessfully tried to sabotage an electric power station near Colombo. Back in the north, on December 13th, a Black Tiger suicide bomber died in a failed attempt to kill SLAF Army personnel near the highway (Munasinghe, p. 167).

18. SLAF Navy Successes

While the army was wrestling with the rebels around the highway, the SLAF Navy was wrestling with the rebels in the Palk Strait and clamping down on activity coming in and out of the Jaffna peninsula. The Indian Navy, which was clamping down on rebel activity coming in and out of Tamil Nadu at the same time, assisted the SLAF Navy. When this cooperation began proving effective, Prabhakaran ordered a hit on the SLAF Navy Chief. On December 28th, three Tiger bombers died in a failed attempt to kill the Chief (Munasinghe, p. 168).

19. 1998: Prabhakaran Lashes Out

After three failed attempts at army, navy, and political targets, Prabhakaran may have begun to feel that the Sri Lankan people regarded him as a bungling terrorist. This could explain his most symbolic expression of terror yet - he ordered a truck bombing of the Buddhist Sacred Temple of the Tooth (the shrine which is said to contain a tooth from the Buddha) in Kandy, southwestern Sri Lanka. On January 24th, 1998, three bombers and six worshippers were killed in the blast, and 25 others were wounded (Munasinghe, p. 168).

20. More Backlash

Again, Prabhakaran appears to have miscalculated the backlash from this kind of egregious act. Instead of striking fear into the hearts of the largely Buddhist, Sinhalese majority on the island, he only succeeded in uniting them in universal condemnation of his terrorist tactics. Other Buddhists in the region, and notably many in Thailand, joined in condemning the Black Tigers for this attack. This was coupled with the January 1998 conviction of 26 Tigers for the murder of Rajiv Gandhi (Munasinghe, p. 168).

21. More Terror

Reverting to military targets, on February 7th, a female Black Tiger killed eight bystanders while trying, but failing, to assassinate the Chief of the SLAF Air Force in Colombo. Ironically, three of the bystanders were her assistants who stupidly stood too close when trying to film the attack (Munasinghe, p. 168).

22. Black Sea Tigers Begin Ramming Operations

On February 23rd, a Black Sea Tiger succeeded in damaging a SLAF Navy convoy when he rammed a boat loaded with explosives into one of the navy vessels off the northern coast. An al Qaeda cell would later employ this same tactic in the port of Aden, off the coast of Yemen, against the Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS Cole, killing 17 American sailors and wounding 39 sailors on October 12th, 2000. There is no evidence that the LTTE trained the Cole bombers, but there is evidence that the LTTE, and specifically the Sea Tigers, have traded training and technology with the Abu Sayyef Group (ASG) of the Philippines, known associates of al Qaeda (Gunaratna, 2001b).

23. Black Tigers Try New Ramming Operation

In another new tactic on March 5th, a Black Tiger tried to ram his bus, loaded with explosives, into a VIP motorcade in Colombo in order to kill Sri Lankan police dignitaries. The bus blew up prematurely, missing the dignitaries but killing 37 civilians and wounding 266 in the capital (Munasinghe, p. 168).

24. More Jungle Fighting

In heavy fighting on the highways in the Wannu jungle around April 20th, 43 SLAF army soldiers were killed and more than 200 wounded. There was no report on LTTE casualties (Munasinghe, p. 190).

25. More Assassinations

The situation in the north intensified when, on May 14th, in northern Sri Lanka, a Black Tiger succeeded in blowing up herself, a SLAF Army brigadier general, and two others near the northern army camp at Killinochi. Three days later, an LTTE assassin killed the mayor of Jaffna with a pistol at the mayor's home. The LTTE specifically targeted the general because he had been running a successful civil affairs program and was winning the hearts and minds of the people on Jaffna peninsula, while Prabhakaran targeted the mayor because she was a moderate, cooperating with the government (Munasinghe, p. 191).

26. Heavy Fighting Near Elephant Pass

The LTTE pushed the army back from the camp at Killinochi. The army counter-attacked from its camp at Elephant Pass with an entire division in an ill-planned, hastily executed frontal assault on June 17th. The army suffered 137 KIA, 37 MIA, and 636 WIA. There was no report of LTTE losses (Munasinghe, p. 169). The army complained that it was weak in the north because too many troops had been moved to the east to fight the LTTE there. Troops from the east were moved back to the north to try to recapture Killinochi. In fierce fighting that ran through the end of September the army suffered 926 more KIA, 936 WIA and lost 47 vehicles to the LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 170).

It is not hard to explain how the army suffered 2,000 casualties in the space of a few months if one notes that the SLAF had flooded Elephant Pass with units. For instance, the 54th Division had swollen to seven brigades of 21 infantry battalions supported by an armor, an artillery, and an engineer regiment. As many as 3,000 soldiers deserted after Killinochi was overrun by the LTTE. The government had to offer a general amnesty to get some of them to return to their units, and had to forcibly arrest and return others (Munasinghe, p. 194 –197).

27. Another Sea Tiger Hijacking

On August 13th, the Sea Tigers hijacked an Indian merchant vessel. The Tigers employed deception, dressing in Sri Lankan Navy uniforms and flying Sri Lankan Navy flags on their ship, to trick the crew into allowing them to board. Once aboard, two Black Sea Tigers threatened to blow themselves and the ship up if the crew did not cooperate. The SLAF Air Force caught up with the ship, ordered everyone off, then destroyed the ship with fire from a Kfir attack aircraft. The ship was heavily loaded with cement that the government did not want to fall into LTTE hands for fear that it would be used to harden defensive positions (Gunaratna, 2001b). The LTTE fired unspecified SAMs at the Kfir fighter, but missed (Hunter, p. 3).

28. Another Brutal Assassination

On September 11th, LTTE assassins planted two claymore mines on the roof of the Jaffna mayor's office. In the middle of a meeting held by the mayor with army and police officials, the LTTE detonated the mines, killing the mayor and 21 of the officials. The bombing did not deter other Tamil moderates in the Tamil United Liberation Front who vowed to continue cooperating with the government for the betterment of the people regardless of the terrorist attacks (Munasinghe, p. 192).

29. Much Needed Army Training Finally Takes Place

The army at Elephant Pass regrouped and conducted marksmanship and night firing training. The infantry division began going on the offensive, sending out patrols and succeeded in killing scores of LTTE with little to no casualties themselves (Munasinghe, 198 – 206).

30. Black Tiger Activity

On March 16th, 1999, a Black Tiger bomber failed to kill her target, a senior police official in Colombo, but succeeded in killing herself, another Tiger, and another person nearby. On May 29th, a Black Tiger successfully blew up himself and killed the commander of an anti-LTTE paramilitary, two of his bodyguards, and wounded eight others in northeastern Sri Lanka (Munasinghe, p. 194).

31. A Solid Combined Operation

On June 10th, in a combined attack with infantry in blocking positions and commandos conducting an early morning air assault, the SLAF took to the offensive again against the LTTE north of Elephant Pass. The SLAF suffered 20 KIA and 46 WIA, but the LTTE suffered more “heavily” (Munasinghe, p. 206 – 209).

32. Prabhakaran Continues to Target Moderates with Black Tigers

On July 29th, in Colombo, a Black Tiger blew himself up, killing a moderate Tamil politician who had been working with the Sri Lankan government to find solutions to the ethnic conflict, and wounding seven others nearby. This bombing caught the attention of a U.S. State Department spokesperson who bemoaned the difficulty in solving problems in Sri Lanka because Prabhakaran specifically targeted any moderates willing to make compromises (Gunaratna, 2001d).

33. More Terror

On August 9th, a Black Tiger blew up himself and a SLAF Army major and wounded another nearby. On August 16th, two Black Sea Tigers rammed a SLAF Navy gunboat, killing themselves and ten SLAF Navy personnel off the northeast coast of Sri Lanka. On September 2nd, Prabhakaran had the military leader of one of his few remaining rival factions, the ERPLF, blown up by a Black Tiger. A bodyguard also died in the attack (Munasinghe, p. 212).

34. An Army Debacle, Eventual Recovery

On November 2nd, the LTTE overran the SLAF Army camp near the Wannijungle in Mullaitivu district. Reportedly many soldiers deserted their posts and the LTTE made off with an enormous amount of arms and ammunition. The LTTE used these same arms and ammunition to launch a major attack against the camp at Elephant Pass on December 11th. In what would become known as the two-day battle of the “Unceasing Waves II”, the LTTE would throw at least four waves of very young Tiger assaulters at the camp’s defenses in an attempt to overrun it. The army held the camp, and the LTTE suffered heavily. By the end of December the army was able to secure Elephant Pass,

most of the Jaffna peninsula and large parts of the Wannu jungle (Munasinghe, p. 213 – 215).

35. Black Tigers Coordinate Two Attacks

Prabhakaran decided to retaliate with another attempt on President Kumaratunga. In Colombo, on December 18th, a Black Tiger blew herself up in a failed attempt that only slightly wounded the President, but killed 21 and wounded 100 persons attending an election rally. A few hours later, in a different section of Colombo, at a rally for the leading opposition candidate, another Black Tiger bomber struck, killing three and wounding 70. The candidate escaped injury. The coordinated nature of the attacks caused some to remark that the Tigers were leading a new trend in the “professionalization” of terrorism (Crenshaw, M. quoting Hoffman, B., 1999, p. 414). Osama Bin Laden further developed this trend with his coordinated attack of two U.S. embassies in Africa and both World Trade Center buildings. In the wake of the two political bombings in Colombo, the military wing of the Tigers mounted a counter-offensive to the SLAF and retook nearly 100 villages (Gunaratna, 2001e).

36. 2000: More Terror, More SAMs

In another failed attempt in Colombo, on January 14th, 2000 a Black Tiger got close to killing the President’s mother who was then the country’s Prime Minister. At the PM’s office the Tiger blew herself up, killing twelve people and injuring 28 others. On March 3rd, in a failed attempt on a SLAF Army brigadier general in northeastern Sri Lanka, a Black Tiger blew herself up, and killed one other person and wounded three. On March 10th, a Black Tiger suicide bomber killed 19 civilians and wounded 45 in a Colombo commercial center. The suspected target was a group of Sri Lankan government officials. Several Tigers who were recording the event, meanwhile, escaped capture (Gunaratna, 2001e). On March 31st, the LTTE shot down a SLAF Air Force AN-26 transport plane with a SAM, killing 40 service members (Hunter, p. 3).

On May 10th, five Black Tigers blew up in a failed attempt on the Deputy Defense Minister in Colombo. Three other Tigers were shot dead by police and one other person died in the bombing. The next day, during a military action in a failed bid to recapture

Jaffna from the SLAF, waves of Tiger human bombers threw themselves into the SLAF positions. More than 1,000 Tigers were reported wounded in the fighting, according to an international aid organization. On May 19th, Sri Lankan police foiled a planned attempt by Black Tigers to attack several moderate politicians. During the subsequent investigation, twelve Tiger supporters were arrested. On May 23rd, two Black Tigers blew themselves up in a failed attempt in northeastern Sri Lanka at a leading politician and an official in charge of rehabilitating former Tigers (Gunaratna, 2001e).

37. Modern Communication System of the SLAF

The government of Sri Lanka and the SLAF had both grown into large bureaucracies. Receiving training, advice, and assistance from a myriad of countries over the years resulted in a confusing hodge-podge of equipment and systems. One particular problem was inadequate cross-service communications. For years the SLAF battled the LTTE while battling its own communications equipment. In an effort to improve the communications structure of the SLAF, the government secured a very large contract with the British communications company, Thomson Racal Defence. Thomson outfitted the entire army, navy, air force, and security apparatus of the country with secure FM radios in 2000. These secure radios made a huge difference in the Joint Operations of the SLAF during the final two years of the war. With the new secure FM radios distributed across the services, the SLAF and police forces were better able to coordinate their final efforts against the LTTE (Gunaratna, 2001c).

38. Heavy Fighting for Jaffna

On May 29th, the LTTE was heavily engaged with the SLAF in fighting for the Jaffna peninsula. The LTTE infantry regiment was reported to be attacking with 7,000 fighters. It was estimated 4,000 fighters were men and 3,000 were women. These estimates point to the growing importance of women as fighters in the organization by this point in the conflict. The Tigers cut off some 20,000 SLAF soldiers outside the peninsula and had another 35,000 SLAF soldiers and airmen trapped within the Palali Air Base. At least 200 Tigers reached the city of Jaffna before the SLAF Army broke out and foiled the LTTE attempt to re-capture the city (Gunaratna, 2001e).

39. More Terror

The Tigers returned to their terrorist tactics. On June 7th, a male Black Tiger succeeded in killing himself, the Sri Lankan Minister for Industrial Development, 22 others, as well as wounding 60 persons in Colombo. In August, a Black Tiger suicide bomber in northern Sri Lanka killed two SLAF Army soldiers. On September 16th, a Black Tiger bomber killed himself, seven others, and wounded 30 more outside the Ministry of Health in Colombo. The Minister remained unharmed (Gunaratna, 2001e).

40. Ground Tigers and Sea Tigers Support Each Other

In October, the LTTE and SLAF were involved in heavy jungle fighting. The SLAF maintained control of the Jaffna peninsula and Jaffna City, but the guerrillas maintained their hold over large sections of the north central jungle. In the east, on October 23rd, the LTTE shot down a SLAF MI-24 “Hind” helicopter with a Stinger missile near Trincomalee, killing the four-man crew (Hunter, p. 3). The Hind was responding to an attack by the Sea Tigers. The Sea Tigers, in four high-speed, low-profile suicide boats entered the inner harbor. The navy destroyed two of the boats, but the other two hit their mark, destroying a navy fast attack passenger vessel used to move infantry in amphibious assaults. The SLAF Navy suffered 40 injuries in this attack. The Sea Tigers were supported by land Tigers firing mortars and rockets from across the harbor. The LTTE filmed the event and footage found its way onto the World Wide Web (Gunaratna, 2001e). On October 26th, apparently in response to the LTTE jungle successes against the SLAF Army, a Sinhalese mob stormed a Tiger rehab center and murdered 25 former Tiger youth. This mob attack was eerily similar to attacks by Sinhalese on Tamils seventeen years earlier after the first LTTE ambush in 1983 (Gunaratna, 2001f).

41. First Norwegian Peace Plan

As fighting continued through November and December, a Norwegian delegation worked diligently to intervene between the two sides and broker a tentative peace agreement. The superior firepower of the army helped the SLAF maintain control of the Jaffna peninsula. In a commando raid on an LTTE camp, 14 of the 18 Tigers killed were

teenaged girls and it was becoming increasingly clear that the LTTE were relying more and more heavily on young girls to fill its ranks. On Christmas Eve, a ceasefire agreement was finally reached. The Norwegian government's efforts to broker peace may not have been entirely disinterested, since several Norwegian companies have oil and gas interests in Sri Lanka (Gunaratna, 2001f).

42. 2001: First Evidence of SLAF Creation of a “Deep Penetration Unit”

The LTTE appeared to be complying with the ceasefire, though the SLAF Army did retake some territory from the guerrillas in the wake of the agreement. In February 2001, a SLAF Army Special Forces unit ambushed an LTTE jeep carrying LTTE leaders. The LTTE website said the leaders were traveling back from peace negotiations with Catholic bishops, Buddhist monks, and Muslim imams. The LTTE leadership escaped unharmed. This attack was evidence of a growing proficiency and demonstrated willingness by the SLAF Army to conduct special operations of its own, strategically targeting the Tiger leadership. From this point in the conflict onwards, the LTTE leadership would continue to express grave concerns about the SLAF “Deep Penetration Unit” (The Los Angeles Times, 2001).

43. Both Sides Break Ceasefire Agreement

Throughout March, the LTTE reorganized itself around the north central jungle town of Wannai. In apparent disregard of the ceasefire, the SLAF went on the offensive and took back some LTTE-held territory. In April, the LTTE reemerged as a quasi-conventional force and dealt the SLAF some of its heaviest casualties to date. Definite numbers were not reported by the SLAF, but the LTTE reported 160 fighters KIA and 400 WIA. The LTTE also reported eight Sea Tigers killed in a battle with the SLAF Navy. The SLAF had to rely on air raids by its air force to maintain its hold on the Jaffna peninsula, but lost control of the strategic Elephant Pass camp. One analyst believes it was these heavy losses and the demoralization of the SLAF Army that was keeping the Sri Lankan government involved in the Norwegian-sponsored peace negotiations with the LTTE. He believes that the LTTE were demonstrating considerable proficiency in engaging the SLAF in nearly conventional army tactics with integrated use of RPGs,

LAWs, SAMs, mortars, artillery, and multiple barrel rocket launchers, so much so that the Sri Lankan government feared that its military would soon lose the Jaffna peninsula it fought so hard to gain in 1996 (Gunaratna, 2001e).

44. SLAF Army Increasingly Relies on Bombing by SLAF Air Force

The Directorate of Internal Intelligence and Directorate of Military Intelligence concurred that the LTTE was planning to launch an attack to re-seize Jaffna peninsula in early July. Preemptively, on June 30th, the SLAF Air Force heavily bombed LTTE strongholds around Mullaitivu. The LTTE warned on its website that if the bombing did not cease, it would be forced to take drastic measures.

45. Parliamentary Problems for the President

On July 11th - election day, 2001 - the left wing UNP reduced the President's PA party to a minority in the parliament, but had not gained a clear majority itself. The UNP wanted to push for the Norwegian peace plan but the PA wanted to finish the fight with the LTTE, so the President suspended parliament while the UNP tried to form a majority coalition (The Los Angeles Times, 2001).

46. The July 24th Airport Attack.

The LTTE may have added to the urgency of the President's claim that the time was ripe to finish off the LTTE when it brazenly attacked the Colombo International Airport. Prabhakaran must have felt he had to order the attack because of the recent heavy damage the SLAF Air Force had been inflicting with its Israeli-made Kfir fighters. In an SAS-style raid (the British Special Air Squadron was developed to attack the German Luftwaffe while they were still on the ground), a squad of Black Tiger commandos conducted a daring suicide attack at the Colombo Airport, one day after the 18th anniversary of the beginning of the fighting between the LTTE and the SLAF. The Tigers destroyed eight Sri Lankan Air Force aircraft, three civilian aircraft, and damaged five more civilian aircraft. As in many Asian countries, the military and civilian airports share perimeters. Fourteen Tigers died in the attack, many of them blowing themselves up when cornered by government troops. The SLAF Air Force suffered eight KIA and

the army four KIA. Among the SLAF Air Force aircraft destroyed were two Kfirs specifically targeted by the Tigers for the great damage they had caused in the north. The attack was coordinated with a 4 a.m. explosion at a power station that blanketed the airport in total darkness (Athas, 2001, pp. 1 – 3).

47. Effects of the Airport Attack

Insurance companies estimated the cost of the losses caused by the attack at the airport at \$400 million (U.S.). Worse yet was probably the crippling effect on the country's important tourism industry, which dropped off 90% in the wake of the attacks. The President and the SLAF continued to prosecute the war with their remaining fighter aircraft, launching immediate retaliatory strikes against LTTE jungle strongholds, and later in support of ground forces. In fighting around Mullaitivu on August 22nd, the SLAF suffered 14 KIA and the LTTE suffered 17 KIA. On August 25th, an army patrol with fighter jet support killed 16 LTTE. The SLAF suffered 11 WIA, but this patrol was indicative of the growing SLAF proficiency in coordinating Close Air Support (CAS) for its ground troops (The Los Angeles Times, 2001).

48. U.S. Gets Mildly Involved

In late August, the U.S. Embassy tried to act as a mediator between the President's PA party and the UNP led by the current and former Prime Minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe. The U.S. sought to get parliament back in session, assist the Norwegian peace process, and put an end to the fighting. But the U.S.'s efforts were shrugged off (The Los Angeles Times, 2001).

49. Sea Tiger Conducting Recon Against the Air Base

On September 3rd, the Navy was rounding up Tamil fishing boats that were in unauthorized waters (under the flight path of the Palaly Air Base) off the coast of Jaffna. One of the fishermen was an LTTE member and he blew himself up rather than face capture. He killed one sailor and wounded two more in the incident. Later, Sea Tigers would clash with SLAF Navy vessels in the same waters (The San Jose Mercury News, 2001).

50. LTTE Enforcement Terror

On September 5th, in the middle of an intersection in Batticaloa, the LTTE strapped a claymore mine to the body of a captured army informant and detonated it, killing the man in a public execution. This was reportedly the fifth execution in three months, and was meant to serve as a warning to the populace not to cooperate with the army (Gunaratna, 2001f).

51. JVP Resurfaces as a Somewhat Important Political Party

On September 5th, the JVP (the Marxist insurgents put down in the 1970s and again in the 1980s) came to the rescue of President Kumaratunga's ailing right wing People's Alliance party by lending it the parliamentary power of its ten seats. The JVP had been allowed to reenter politics in 1998 and won its seats mostly from Labor Union workers. In an unholy alliance, the formally Sinhalese extremist JVP and the defense-friendly PA wanted to finish off the LTTE, but the market-friendly UNP remained in favor of the Norwegian-sponsored peace negotiations. Ironically, the day before the historic 9/11 attacks on the U.S., President Kumaratunga extended an olive branch to the LTTE. But her overtures were rejected as insincere because the LTTE knew of her parliamentary crisis and the coalition she had entered with the anti-Tamil extremists of the JVP. This was in spite of the fact that the JVP said it would support recognition of the LTTE as a legal body. The air was thick with tension, and the prospect of renewed fighting loomed (Green, 2001, p. 24).

E. SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001 TO THE FUTURE

1. Effects of the September 11th Attacks

Although, the U.S., Britain, Canada, India, and Malaysia already had the LTTE blacklisted as an international terrorist organization which was supposed to make it illegal for citizens of those countries to be members of, or support, the organization in any way, the LTTE had been cleverly circumventing these restrictions for years through front organizations said to be raising funds for humanitarian purposes (not unlike many Palestinian and al Qaeda front groups). In a propaganda battle, the Sri Lankan

government accused the LTTE of having praised the 9/11 attacks, but the LTTE quickly denied this and countered that the government was using the 9/11 attacks for political gain. Probably in order to elicit more U.S. sympathy for the Sri Lankan fight against the LTTE, some Sri Lankan defense officials went on to claim that two of the attackers in the July 24th LTTE raid on the Colombo airport had intended to steal one of the civilian air buses and fly it into the Sri Lankan presidential palace.

The government's campaign was more effective than the LTTE counter-campaign and many of the LTTE's known overseas assets were quickly frozen, in part thanks to the general freezing done by the U.S. Treasury Department and other like-minded governments in the wake of 9/11. A group of powerful Sri Lankan businessmen sent both the government and the Tigers an equally strong message on September 19th. They organized country-wide demonstrations calling on both sides to reach a peace agreement. Thousands of citizens, both Sinhalese and Tamil, turned out and joined hands on the streets of the country's cities, including the Sinhalese-dominated capital of Colombo in the south and the Tamil-dominated city of Jaffna in the north. The businessmen's motives were not altogether altruistic as the country's tourism industry dropped off even more after 9/11, while the economy was also suffering from power outages and a drought. But regardless of the businessmen's motives, members of parliament took notice of the peaceful demonstration by large numbers of citizens of all races and religions (The Los Angeles Times, September 20th, 2001, p. 33).

2. Further Rise in Importance of the Sea Tigers

The most exciting final clashes of the war were largely between the Sea Tigers and the SLAF Navy. This could be indicative that, though the war was winding down, the LTTE intended to stay in business as a force that is able to circumvent the Indian and Sri Lankan Navies and thereby smuggle illegal items: arms, explosives, drugs, etc. through the region's waterways. Two severe incidents served as sharp reminders to the SLAF Navy that they do not control the island's waters by any stretch of the imagination, either in the east or in the north. On September 15th, a Sea Tiger suicide boat destroyed an Israeli-built Dvora gunboat in the eastern port of Trincomalee. In the north, the Tigers still controlled ground access to the Jaffna peninsula through their hold on Elephant Pass,

though the army controlled the peninsula. Apparently the army was reinforcing the peninsula with 1,200 more troops for a planned push south to recapture Elephant Pass. The Tigers must have uncovered good intelligence regarding this contingent of army soldiers on board the civilian ship, “Pride of the South”. On September 16th, 20 Sea Tiger boats surrounded the vessel. The navy and air force battled with the Sea Tigers for an hour and were able to chase off their suicide boats. The SLAF suffered eleven KIA, 47 WIA, and twelve MIA. The Tigers suffered 15 KIA and four boats destroyed (The Los Angeles Times, September 17th, 2001, p. 27). The navy and the Sea Tigers would clash again on September 24th and October 6th, the navy managing to sink two boats in the north and damaging two boats in the east, and killing approximately 25 Sea Tigers (The San Jose Mercury, October 6th, 2001, p. 15A).

Some in the defense establishment believe the rise in importance of the Sea Tigers was also due to the dire straits of the ground Tigers, who may have been down to as few as 1,500 cadre. The cadre were increasingly relying on the forced recruitment of children as young as 13, including girls. Amnesty International made headlines with its report exposing Tiger recruiting practices in the eastern Batticaloa district (Dugger, 2001, p. 5).

3. Deep Penetration Unit of the SLAF Special Forces Hits Close to Home

The Sri Lankan high command could see the growing world support for a U.S.-led war on terrorism. It knew that the U.S. would shortly be on a worldwide manhunt for Osama Bin Laden and his al Qaeda network. World opinion had quickly soured against all terrorists, but especially suicide bombers, even if they espoused nationalist separatist causes. Emboldened, the SLAF stepped up its own efforts against Prabhakaran. They may have come close to capturing or killing him around September 26th. The Special Forces “Deep Penetration Unit” caught and killed Prabhakaran’s second-in-command and close confidante, Colonel Shankar, in a vehicular ambush with claymore mines deep inside the Tiger stronghold of the Wannu jungle. The army denied responsibility for the ambush, but Prabhakaran knew it could have only been set by the Deep Penetration Unit. (LA Times, September 27th, 2001, p. 22) This occurred so deep within his beloved homeland that the ambush must have sent a chill down his spine. Outraged, he sent another one of his Black Tigers on a mission to kill President Kumaratunga.

4. Final assassination attempt by the Black Tigers

Luckily for the President, she was in London to support the growing U.S. / British coalition against terrorism. Sri Lanka was already one of the first four countries to ratify the International Convention for the Suppression of Financing of Terrorism adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1999. In an impassioned editorial, President Kumaratunga reminded the world that her country had been battling suicide terrorism for nearly 20 years and that the terrorists had been receiving funding from overseas support groups for decades while many governments looked the other way. While President Bush and Prime Minister Blair were focusing their efforts on money laundering organizations with links to al Qaeda, President Kumaratunga was reminding the world that the LTTE was still on Secretary of State Colin Powell's active list of international terrorist organizations. The President reminded the world that she lost her eye to a suicide bomber and re-iterated President Bush's principle that you are either for terrorism or you are against it (Kumaratunga, 2001, p. A29).

In place of the traveling President, Prime Minister Wickremanayake was attending a cornerstone-laying ceremony in Colombo on October 30th. A Black Tiger was picked out of a crowd by plain clothes Secret Service men because he was acting suspiciously. He self-detonated, killing himself and four others. The devastating blast injured at least 18 more people and reportedly destroyed eight nearby cars, but none in the PM's motorcade. The police had foiled an earlier assassination plot against the President when they discovered an LTTE-made Black Tiger suicide jacket with 3 kg of explosives cached in a Colombo park (New York Times, October 31st, 2001, p. 8).

5. Lingering Importance of the Sea Tigers

On October 30th, four Black Sea Tigers rammed an oil tanker carrying 650 tons of crude oil in waters off the northern coast with one of their explosive-laden suicide boats. They killed themselves and three sailors, but failed to sink the tanker though it did catch fire. The ship was later towed to port. The Sea Tigers used five boats in the attack - four provided cover while the fifth went in for the kill. Prabhakaran must have been discouraged by the results causing him to reconsider further use of his Sea Tigers. He later toned down his annual November 27th Heroes' Day speech saying the Tigers wanted

“neither separatism nor terrorism” and that they were only “freedom fighters” (Harris, 2001, p. 12).

6. The December Elections

Although the 1978 constitution did not envision the possibility of a President from one party and a Prime Minister from another, the UNP gained control of parliament in elections on December 5th, 2001 and Ranil Wickremesinghe became the new Prime Minister (replacing the glad-to-be-alive Wickremanayake) in a power-sharing government with President Kumaratunga’s now-minority opposition party, the PA. (As of this writing, the President has four more years remaining in her term.)

7. Christmas Eve Ceasefire

Election week violence was the heaviest in years but this was mostly due to clashes between the PA and UNP. The LTTE steered clear of the melee for the most part, though a Black Tiger killed himself and three others in Batticaloa on November 16th. Tigers in the east were definitely involved in an attack on a police station and an army camp that left a dozen dead and two more dozen wounded on December 12th. But events quieted down after these attacks. The most dramatic turn of events marked by the election was that all Tamil parties came out, united, in support of the LTTE. The support of the TULF may have been coerced by the November 16th suicide bomber mentioned above. Regardless, all Tamil politicians collectively demanded that the new government recognize and talk directly with the LTTE through the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the new Sinn Fein, so to speak, of the LTTE. (The new TNA of course should not be confused with the old TNA – the Tamil National Army - that was formed by the IPKF to battle the LTTE.) For the first time, Prabhakaran compromised on his insistence regarding a separate state and said the Tamils could settle on some form of regional autonomy which would grant them control of their own politics and economy. On Christmas Eve, 2001, the government and the Tigers agreed to a month-long ceasefire: the Tigers were to cease all suicide bombings and assassination attempts, and the army was to halt operations of its increasingly effective Special Forces “Deep Penetration Unit.” The ceasefire held and was extended again in January. Prisoners were even

exchanged. Prisoners released by the LTTE included soldiers and crewmembers from hijacked vessels. The Prime Minister, meanwhile, gained control of the country's finances and defense spending. He promised to work with the Tamil National Alliance in the Parliament. Then, through the Norwegians, the Prime Minister and Prabhakaran signed a peace accord on February 24th (Crossette, 2002, p.4).

8. The Norwegian Peace Accords

The Norwegians conducted serious shuttle diplomacy. The Sri Lankan government allowed the Norwegian delegation and S.P. Thamilselvan, the Tiger's political spokesman in London, to fly a small sea-plane deep inside the Wannu jungle and land on a Tiger-controlled lake to carry the final papers to Prabhakaran's hideout, at the old Mallavi Hotel, for his signature. The Norwegians replicated their Oslo Accords success by being sensitive to the security needs of both sides, facilitating compromise, promoting moderates, offering communication lines and codes, and providing back channels, deniability and neutral ground for negotiation. Reportedly, the Norwegians kept the American and Indian governments informed throughout the process (Crossette, p.4). And, as of this writing, the accords continue to hold the country together in a fragile peace with ongoing talks and an international conference scheduled for July to be held in Bangkok, Thailand.

F. SUMMARY

Having now reviewed the bloody history of the 19-year long modern conflict in Sri Lanka, the young U.S. military officer or non-commissioned officer should be able to glean many lessons from the successes and failures of the SLAF, IPKF, and the LTTE. I will more thoroughly analyze this history myself in Chapter V to test my theory about the effectiveness of the application of the principles of IDAD against the modern asymmetric threat.

At this point though, the reader should be struck by the myriad atypical tactics employed throughout the conflict by the LTTE, especially the prolific use of the suicide bombers. It is, in large measure, because of these tactics that I believe the LTTE can be

said to exemplify the modern asymmetric threat. In the introduction I mentioned that a secondary purpose of this thesis is to explain the asymmetry of the LTTE and in particular to de-mystify the notorious Black Tigers. I will take the time to do this now for the benefit of my primary audience, junior U.S. military professionals, who may be dealing with similar threats in the present or near future.

IV. THE ASYMMETRY OF THE LTTE

A. INTRODUCTION

1. General Description of the Asymmetry of the LTTE

Guerrilla insurgents were being described as asymmetric at least as early as 1975. (Mack, 1975, pp. 175 – 200) The LTTE have earned the dubious reputation of exemplifying the modern asymmetric threat, largely due to their prolific use of the suicide bomber tactic, both for political and military attacks. The LTTE suicide bombers are known as the Black Tigers and are the tool of the LTTE's supreme leader, Prabhakaran.

Prabhakaran is the mastermind behind the LTTE's asymmetry. He started his illustrious career by assassinating the mayor of Jaffna in retaliation for his cooperation with the Sri Lankan government in 1975. Through a series of bank robberies he raised enough funds to create the Tamil New Tigers. Having sought and received training for his unit from the R&AW in India, he also developed his own Maoist strategies of guerrilla warfare and trained his recruits to become capable urban fighters. When the IPKF intervention forced him out of Jaffna, he moved to the jungle and then became a capable jungle fighter (Joshi, p. 20).

Both the IPKF and SLAF became adept at interrogating / torturing captured guerrillas and rolling up their networks. When one dedicated Tamil swallowed a vial of cyanide to prevent his being exploited by his impending capture, this act captured Prabhakaran's imagination. Tamil farmers use small glass vials of cyanide as a pesticide on their plants, so the vials were readily available. As Prabhakaran grew The Tamil New Tigers into the LTTE (through a series of bloody takeovers of other groups) he also refined the initiation process into the LTTE, and made swearing an oath to him and wearing a vial of cyanide around the neck key components. In the event of impending capture, the Tiger was sworn to swallow his poison (Joshi, p. 23).

By most accounts, Prabhakaran is a charismatic leader and a strategic thinker. After witnessing the effects of several suicide bombings in the Middle East, it did not take him long to adopt the suicide bombing tactic. He first began using his suicide

bombers to drive trucks laden with explosives into Sri Lankan Army positions in 1987. Next he used one of his suicide bombers to kill Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India in 1991. Prabhakaran was upset with Gandhi for turning on him, and for the severe losses the IPKF had inflicted on the LTTE. Prabhakaran miscalculated the severe backlash the assassination would generate and he lost all logistical support from Tamil Nadu as the Indian Navy quickly moved to stop any supplies from making it across the Palk Strait (Joshi, p. 30). With the Indian and the Sri Lankan Navies strangling his operations, Prabhakaran developed another asymmetric response: the Sea Black Tigers. By ramming small boats, loaded with explosives, into both navies' vessels, the Sea Black Tigers have effectively created a seam through the Palk Strait. Reportedly, the Tigers now run heroin from Myanmar through the Strait and from there convey it to Europe and Canada (Gunaratna, 1997).

Having lost his support from India, Prabhakaran moved to extract support from the vast and large Tamil diaspora, based largely in London and Canada, but starting with middle class Tamils in Colombo and ranging to "wealthy doctors in California" (DeSilva, p. 21). Through a system of websites and overseas bank accounts, the LTTE laundered donations and drug money to continue to pay for their insurgency and pleaded their separatist case to the larger international community. At the same time, the LTTE disavowed any connection to the suicide bombers. However, the Sri Lankan government intelligence services were conclusive enough with their evidence to convince the U.S., British, Indian, and Malaysian governments to blacklist the LTTE as an international terrorist organization (Gunaratna, 1997).

2. Conventional Response of the Sri Lankan Government to the LTTE

Besides trying to elicit international support for its struggle against the LTTE, the Sri Lankan Government chose to grow a large, modern, mostly conventional military to battle the Tigers.

3. The Modern Sri Lankan Army

By the height of the conflict, the army grew to a strength of 95,000 men under the command of a four-star general. The commander's deputy is a three-star and he has a

two-star Chief of Staff. They directly command the capital military district of Colombo, but have two subordinate commands: Area Command North and Area Command South. Each area command has 10 sectors. Each sector has at least one dedicated infantry battalion, with five companies, of four platoons, of three squads, with ten men each (Country Study, p. 237).

During hostilities there are approximately 42,000 reservists that can be recalled to active duty, including around 1,000 female soldiers. The army consists of ten divisions with 23 infantry brigades. Additionally, there are three mechanized infantry brigades, one air mobile brigade, one independent Special Forces brigade, one Commando brigade, one armored regiment, three armored reconnaissance battalions, four field artillery regiments, and four combat engineer regiments. The Commando brigade receives additional training in dog handling and tracking. Elements of the Special Forces brigade are sometimes referred to as the “Deep Penetration Unit” (Country Study, p. 243).

The armored forces have 25 Soviet-made tanks. The recce forces have over 50 armored personnel carriers of various makes. The mechanized infantry forces have a total force of 276 armored personnel carriers of various makes. The artillery regiments have 94 towed pieces, roughly divided between Yugoslav 76mm, Chinese 85 mm, 88 mm, 122 mm, 130 mm, and 152 mm. Infantry forces have numerous 81 mm, 82 mm, 107 mm, and 120 mm mortars. Recce forces have 15 105 mm recoilless rifles and 34 106 mm recoilless rifles. The army also mans 24 40 mm air defense guns. The artillery has two AN/TPQ-36 counter-battery radars. The army also has one Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, a Seeker (Jane’s Information Group, 2000).

4. The Modern Sri Lankan Navy

The Sri Lankans maintain a 10,000 man, 39-ship navy. The SLAF Navy has four Naval Area Commands: North, South, East, and West. The two largest navy bases are at the ports of Colombo in the south, and Trincomalee in the east. There is a smaller naval base in the north on the Jaffna peninsula. During hostilities, 1,100 reservists can be recalled to active duty. The navy has two blue water vessels, five coastal patrol boats, and 32 inland waterway vessels. The navy also runs one marine landing ship, seven marine landing craft, and two fast personnel carriers (Jane’s Information Group, 2000).

5. The Modern Sri Lankan Air Force

The Sri Lankans also maintain a 10,000 man, 26-aircraft, 19-helicopter air force. The SLAF Air Force has two major bases and one minor base. The two major bases are the Katunayake Air Base adjacent to the Colombo International Airport and site of the July 2001 LTTE attack, and China Bay Air Base alongside the deep port of Trincomalee. There is a minor base on the Jaffna peninsula. The SLAF Air Force is divided into four functional squadrons. Squadron One runs flight training schools and Squadron Three is an attack aircraft squadron. Both are located at China Bay. Squadron Two is a transport squadron and Squadron Four is the helicopter squadron. Both are located at Katunayake (Country Study, p. 240).

Of note, among the Sri Lankan Air Force aircraft are twelve Israeli Kfirs and four Soviet MiG-27 Flogger's. In the recent suicide attack / raid at the Katunayake air base, two of the Kfirs were destroyed, three Chinese K-8 trainers were destroyed, two Soviet Mi-17 transport helicopters were destroyed, one MiG-27 was damaged, and one MiG-27 was destroyed by the two squads of LTTE fighters. The air force also has five UAV Superhawks, which remained unharmed (Athas, p. 1).

6. Modern Paramilitaries in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankans can also count an estimated 89,000-strong paramilitary force. This includes 30,000 active police, 27,000 reserve police, 15,000 national guardsmen, 13,000 home guards, a 1,000-woman Police Special Task Force, and a 3,000 man Special Anti-Guerrilla Branch (Jane's Information Group, 2000).

B. PRABHAKARAN'S ASYMMETRIC PLAN TO COMBAT THIS LARGE CONVENTIONAL FORCE

1. Insurgency as Practiced by Prabhakaran

Guerrilla warfare is first and foremost a mental game. The guerrillas usually start with small numbers, and are poorly resourced and unorganized. In order to become successful in their endeavors against the state they must develop a plan. They must figure out a way to grow their numbers, acquire resources, and get organized. The crafty

guerrilla leader knows that he does not have to accomplish all of these tasks overnight. If he commits himself, he can develop a long-range plan for achieving his goals (Leites and Wolfe, p. 11). Prabhakaran is an organizer with “clearly and consistently defined military and political goals,” and he developed a strong military organization to achieve his political goals (DeSilva, p. 7).

For nearly 19 years, Prabhakaran successfully led the LTTE in an ethno-nationalist separatist insurgency against the government and armed forces of Sri Lanka. During a particularly difficult period of his insurgency, from 1987 – 1991, Prabhakaran kept his organization functioning in the midst of an enormous effort by the Indian Army to hunt down, disarm, and destroy it. Having learned many lessons from those trying times, Prabhakaran and the LTTE continued to confront and confound the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) for the better part of the 1990s (See Ch. III).

Prabhakaran developed his own unique strategy of guerrilla warfare to defeat the strategy of the state. Additionally, he developed tactics for growing and maintaining his numbers, he developed techniques for acquiring resources, and he carefully structured his organization and developed procedures for maintaining it. Throughout the conflict, he developed asymmetric responses to the conventional approaches of the SLAF, including his prolific use of suicide bombers and the employment of SAMs.

2. Prabhakaran Develops a Maoist Strategy

Prabhakaran appears to have been a student of Mao Tse Tung and Che’ Guevara. He borrowed some principles of strategy from the two and then added his own 21st century flavor using the technologies of the modern day. From Mao he borrowed the concept of the three stages of guerrilla warfare: the Strategic Defense, Strategic Equilibrium, and the Strategic Offense. But unlike Mao, who considered the three stages to be unidirectional, Prabhakaran became extremely adept at moving back and forth between stages. In the past, many guerrilla movements have pushed from the Strategic Equilibrium into the Strategic Offense or a War of Movement too quickly, and they have been forced to pay a heavy price (Leites and Wolf, p. 58). Prabhakaran at times, too, pushed to the Strategic Offense, both against the IPKF and the SLAF. But Prabhakaran smartly chose appropriate times and places for these pushes. After receiving heavy

casualties, he smartly lowered the LTTE profile back down to the Strategic Equilibrium and sometimes even the Strategic Defense to lick his wounds (See Ch. III).

The strategic gains Prabhakaran made during the times he went on the Strategic Offense outweigh the tactical losses he suffered. For instance, the LTTE gained notoriety for being the only Tamil separatist group that would stand up to, and fight, the IPKF. This attracted great support for the Tamil cause from most Tamils in Sri Lanka, and even many Tamils in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Additionally, in several instances when the LTTE fought pitched battles with the SLAF, the LTTE, despite suffering heavy casualties, overran the SLAF camps, inflicting heavy casualties on the SLAF and capturing hundreds of weapons and ammunition to further sustain its cause.

Prabhakaran also followed Mao's concept of the protracted war. Although at times he expended great loss of life to overrun an SLAF camp, he did not needlessly hold onto pieces of valueless terrain. Prabhakaran was often willing to trade space for time. At the height of the IPKF involvement, there were an estimated 70,000 Indian soldiers pursuing the estimated 10,000-member LTTE. By the time of the 2002 peace accord there were roughly 120,000 SLAF personnel struggling against the LTTE. Prabhakaran borrowed another page from Mao's book while, though he was strategically one against ten, (or seven or twelve, as the case may be), tactically he turned the tables and made himself appear as ten against one (Leites and Wolf, pp. 63 - 64). Prabhakaran often maintained the initiative by largely keeping his forces decentralized. His forces effectively remained invisible within the jungle until they could achieve a local or relative superiority against a SLAF unit, and then they pounced. Prabhakaran's tactics could be equally described as Byzantine, in that he always attempted to lure the army deeper and deeper into his strongholds.

3. Asymmetry of Commitment

Prabhakaran's guerrillas often proved some critics' point that modern conventional armies can be irrelevant in sub-state conflict; conventional models often fail in unconventional wars. There was a clear asymmetry of commitment between the SLAF or IPKF and the LTTE. The SLAF and IPKF would never lose everything if they pulled

out of the Tamil-contested northern and eastern provinces. However, the LTTE won, so long as they did not lose (Van Creveld, 1991, p. 205; Leites and Wolf, p. 15).

4. Silence Equals Support

Prabhakaran presented the Tamils of the northern and eastern provinces with three options: they could choose to side with the regime, side with the LTTE, or remain silent. Those who sided with the regime were dealt with harshly. Those who sided with the LTTE were given extensive training in preparation for the fight that lay ahead. Those who remained silent provided an outer ring of security and comprised the sea, as Mao would have put it, in which Prabhakaran and the LTTE swam (Leites and Wolf, p. 10).

5. Success Against the IPKF Eased Recruitment Efforts Against the SLAF

Whether a Tamil decided to side with the regime, side with the LTTE, or remain silent was a function of the perceived probability of success. To a Tamil, the perceived probability that the LTTE would succeed in its stated goal of achieving autonomy for a Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern provinces, multiplied by the internalized value of this goal, yielded his expected value of joining the Tigers. The perceived probability that the SLAF would defeat the LTTE multiplied by the cost of joining (likely death by torture) yielded the expected cost of joining the Tigers. If the expected value of joining outweighed the expected cost of joining, a Tamil would likely join the Tigers. Because the LTTE was the only Tamil separatist group that would battle the IPKF, when the IPKF pulled out of Sri Lanka in 1990, the LTTE impressed upon the Tamil population its ability to defeat a modern army. This made it more likely for more Tamils to join the Tigers to continue the fight against the SLAF (Leites and Wolf, pp. 29 - 30).

6. Jumpstarting the Movement with Charisma

In the early years of any insurgency, there is a rational hesitancy to join the movement because the perceived expected value of joining is outweighed by the perceived long-term expected costs. Prabhakaran overcame some of these initial fears and jump-started his organization by being a charismatic leader in a time of great need

for the Tamil people. According to some, he is a forceful speaker and can mesmerize an audience with just his gaze (Munasinghe, p. 187).

7. Hiding in the City, Hiding in the Jungle

Prabhakaran also overcame some of the initial difficulties in starting a successful insurgency by basing his operations in the mostly Tamil-populated Jaffna peninsula and Jaffna City. The LTTE operated as urban guerrillas until they were pushed out of the city, not by the SLAF, but by the IPKF. Moving into the jungles, members of the LTTE were quickly forced to become capable jungle fighters. After three years of stumping the IPKF and forcing its withdrawal, the LTTE quickly moved back into Jaffna City and Jaffna peninsula. The LTTE effectively controlled the city until it was pushed out by the SLAF at the end of 1995. The LTTE was then forced to operate from the north-central Wanni jungle. This is when the LTTE began to more closely resemble a Che' Guevara-style military foco insurgency, trying to recapture the city from the jungle (Leites and Wolf, p. 64).

8. Recruiting Youth during the Vulnerable Teenage Years

Another means by which guerrilla leaders can overcome the hesitancy of potential recruits is to use early education and indoctrination to get young people to sign up for more than they realize. Prabhakaran's Tigers were "largely drawn from a generation whose aspirations were elevated by free education, exposure to mass media, and rash promises made by politicians" (DeSilva, p. 3), but whose hopes were then dashed by a struggling economy and high unemployment rates. Prabhakaran's recruiters reached into this unemployed young male - and increasingly female - population through a referral system. The "recruiters" conducted background checks and new recruits then went through an induction ceremony in which they swore allegiance to Prabhakaran. Recruits remained in a probationary status until they proved themselves trustworthy. Some initial missions they might be given were to post propaganda, conduct surveillance on government facilities, or stand guard on outer security rings (DeSilva, p. 41). Other reported missions were to evacuate casualties and collect firearms, ammunition, and equipment from battlefields. The LTTE may have also involved very young recruits in

ethnic cleansing operations and in human wave assaults against army positions (Munasinghe, p. 183).

9. Indoctrination and Symbolism

Members on probation were indoctrinated to conform to a strict code of conduct. They had to abstain from alcohol, drugs, gambling, and pre- and extra-marital affairs. This was designed to instill in them a sense of self-sacrifice and dedication to the cause (DeSilva, p. 42). This indoctrination was further deepened through the use of symbols. Leaders who use symbols understand that “human beings create symbols to resolve confusion and provide direction and that myths, rituals, and ceremonies help people find meaning and order in their experience” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 48). Prabhakaran was a truly gifted symbolic leader.

By requiring that all Tigers wear a vial of cyanide around their necks he created a telling symbol for all those inside and outside the organization. All Tigers knew they were sworn to complete loyalty and should die rather than be captured. Few Tigers were ever captured. Sri Lankan soldiers often came upon wounded Tigers on the battlefield, frothing at the mouth because they had swallowed their poison. Analysts in the Sri Lankan military estimate that those who had taken their cyanide to avoid being captured accounted for 15% of all LTTE battlefield casualties (DeSilva, p. 65).

All Tigers changed their names when they joined the organization. This amounted to a mental mind shift for each individual. Every fighter knew he was entering into an illegal and difficult life and it would be difficult to return to his or her old life. The forced name change was a symbolic reminder of this decision (DeSilva, p. 66).

Perhaps the most potent symbol used by the LTTE was Prabhakaran’s suicide bombers, the Black Tigers. They were held up as examples of complete loyalty to other Tigers and all Tamils (DeSilva, p. 67).

10. The Symbolic Violence of Terrorism

Guerrilla leaders can jumpstart and continue their movements through the use of symbolic violence. By using agitational terror against the state, it is possible for the guerrilla leader to confuse the public as to who is in control and who is on top (Leites and

Wolf, p. 99). On July 24th, 2001 (one day after the 18th anniversary of the beginning of the fighting between the LTTE and the SLAF), Prabhakaran launched two squads of Black Tigers in a daring suicide attack at the Colombo Airport. The Tigers destroyed eight Sri Lankan Air Force aircraft, three civilian aircraft, and damaged three more civilian aircraft. Twelve Tigers died in the attack, many of them blowing themselves up when cornered by government troops. Tactically, Prabhakaran ordered the attack in response to the SLAF's increased use of the air force in bombing LTTE positions in the north. But strategically, the attacks against the civilian passenger planes were for symbolic "disorientation" purposes. By crippling the Sri Lankan tourism industry and embarrassing the government in front of the populace, Prabhakaran called into question the SLAF's ability to protect its citizens and their way of life (Athas, pp. 1 – 3).

Before the airport attack, Prabhakaran's Tigers made a habit of blowing up cars, buses, trains, and buildings. Prabhakaran also acquired surface-to-air missiles to attack SLAF Air Force helicopters and planes. By destroying several air force transport planes loaded with troops, Prabhakaran sent fear through the ranks of the Sri Lankan Army and severely damaged the army's ability to find new recruits (Munasinghe, p. 219).

11. LTTE Never Abandon their Terrorist Tactics

Many insurgent groups begin with terrorist tactics and, as they evolve into their guerrilla structure, often abandon the use of terrorism. The LTTE were unusual because, although they grew into a very capable guerrilla force, Prabhakaran always maintained his terrorist wing. This was a strategic decision. By diversifying his organization, Prabhakaran lessened his overall risks. He was maximizing his strengths and minimizing his weaknesses. If his army was losing a battle in the north or east of the country, his terrorists could strike a blow at the politicians or military leaders in the south. Additionally, by maintaining a division between his terrorist wing and his guerrilla wing his support structure could still solicit donations from overseas. As one author notes, some guerrilla groups have found, "by fractionalizing the enterprise, most of the participants see themselves as decent, legitimate practitioners of their own particular trade rather than as parties to a death operation" (Bandura, 1998, p. 188).

C. THE PROLIFIC USE OF SUICIDE BOMBERS BY THE LTTE

1. Introduction

Prabhakaran's Black Tigers carried out the most symbolic violent acts of the LTTE. One recent article gave the Black Tiger suicide bombers of the LTTE credit for having conducted 171 suicide attacks between 1983 and 2000 (Sprinzak, 2000, p. 69 citing a St. Andrews' database). At the end of hostilities in December 2001, the LTTE claimed that 17,211 of their fighters had died in the fighting since 1982, and of these, 217 had been Black Tiger suicide bombers. There have been many other recent articles citing the high number of LTTE suicide attacks. The articles are usually alarmist in nature and are trying to make a claim that the world is on the verge of entering a new age of "religious" terrorism. According to Sprinzak, though, the LTTE were a purely secular group, and he actually used the group to illustrate his point that the terrorist tactic of suicide bombing is arrived at and implemented by "rational" leaders of the organizations, not by followers who may indeed be religious. In his view, many suicide bombers have really just been duped by their leaders.

The actual number of Black Tigers who killed themselves may have been more than 217, since the LTTE usually disavowed credit for attacks on politicians and civilians, since these would have meant the group would be declared an international terrorist organization by more countries than just Sri Lanka, India, the U.S., Great Britain, and Malaysia. It must also be remembered that many of these attacks were military in nature and took place within the 19-year guerrilla insurgency that the military wing of the LTTE waged against the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF). Many of these casualties occurred in what amounted to "human wave" attacks as assaulters attempted to breach SLAF defensive positions, and cannot be considered the same as those in which a suicide bomber approached a politician and detonated him or herself. It is also difficult to verify the number of LTTE fighters who committed suicide in the human waves because the SLAF was not only secretive about losses, but also did not like to admit when it was having difficulties. The SLAF also did not allow journalists into guerrilla-occupied areas to confirm or deny reports. The number of Black Tigers who committed their suicide attacks against political targets could be hidden within the total count of

Black Tigers that presumably includes a large number of the human wave attackers against military targets.

What is most instructive when trying to analyze the modern asymmetric threat is to separate the suicide bombers from the other fighters, and try to examine who they are and from where they come. Once this is done, one can begin to develop ways to stop them in the future. When focusing on the suicide bombers of the LTTE, one quickly discovers that they come from the specialized wing of the guerrillas called the Black Tigers (Sprinzak, p. 70).

2. Explaining the Black Tigers

When studying terrorist groups, most analysts usually attack the problem from one of four perspectives. They explain the use of terrorism as the result of the strategic decision making process of a group or leader, as the result of the inner-workings of organizational dynamics, as the result of the various psychologies of the terrorists themselves, or they look for a religious explanation (McCormick, 2001, class notes). Prabhakaran's professionalization of the use of the Black Tiger suicide bombers can be explained borrowing elements from all four perspectives.

3. The Strategic Explanation

Sprinzak believes the prolific use of suicide bombers began as a strategic decision made 19 years ago. The LTTE developed the tactic after its leader, Prabhakaran, was impressed by the October 23rd, 1983, suicide bombings of the U.S. and French barracks in Beirut by Muslim extremists (Sprinzak, p. 66). According to Sprinzak, Prabhakaran made a conscious decision to replicate this tactic. From Sprinzak's perspective, Prabhakaran recognized what Tel Aviv psychologist Ariel Merari has found, that "intense struggles produce ... people with the potential willingness to sacrifice themselves for a cause" (Sprinzak, p. 68). Sprinzak goes on to note that what makes Prabhakaran so unique is that he chose to make the Black Tigers a permanent strategic unit within his guerrilla force to be used for suicide bomb terrorism. Sprinzak also believes that another peculiar feature of the group is that although most Tamils are Hindus, the LTTE Black Tiger organization was secular. Prabhakaran selected male and female volunteers for the

unit from his best commando companies after they had proven their bravery and commitment, not their religious fervor. Prabhakaran, himself a suspected assassin, then indoctrinated them into his “cult of martyrdom” (Sprinzak, p. 71 - 72).

Proponents of the strategic school of terrorism analysis often study the typology of terrorist actions. That is, they analyze the terrorist incidents in terms of 1) the quality of the action, 2) the location of the incidents, and 3) the timing of the incidents (McCormick, 2001, class notes). In the case of the Black Tigers, the quality of the action was almost always very high. Most times, the suicide bombers used tailored, waist-bomb belt-suits loaded with plastic explosives. The suits contained no fail-safe devices. The bombers willingly took their own lives in their last highly symbolic act for the cause.

If we look at the location of the incidents, several took place in India and were directed at the Indian government when it was interfering in the Tamil Tigers' struggle with the Sri Lankan government. However, most attacks took place in Colombo and were directed at the Sri Lankan government and its decision makers. Some attacks took place in the defacto Sri Lankan Tamil capital of Jaffna and were directed at moderate Tamil politicians, rival groups, or to coerce continued support from the Tamil populace.

As for the timing of most incidents, they often occurred one to two months after the LTTE experienced a military and / or political setback at the hands of the IPKF, SLAF, or Sri Lankan police / government. Arguably, it took the LTTE intelligence wing a month to conduct the necessary reconnaissance, and for the support wing to conduct the necessary logistics and transportation to move the designated Black Tiger to the target area. The Black Tigers conducted, on average, roughly six symbolic suicide bombings per year for the last 9 years of the war up to the current ceasefire, or an average of one every two months. Sometimes, the target of influence was the proximate target, especially in the case of rival groups and moderate politicians. Other times, the target of influence was the SLAF Army in the field, and the proximate target was a SLAF general officer in the rear. Always, too, the audience included the Tigers and their own constituents, the Tamils of Sri Lanka. The bombings thus served as a recruiting tool, confidence builder, and warning against wavering support (McCormick, 2001, class notes).

Approximately one third of the Black Tiger suicide bombers were women, and these women were usually directed against political targets. This further supports a strategic explanation for the development of the Black Tigers. Prabhakaran employed the women in situations where he felt they would be less likely to be searched by security personnel (Gunaratna, 2001c).

Strategic analysts of the situation would no doubt consider Prabhakaran a rational actor. This does not mean that they would not recognize him as a cold-blooded killer. What strategic analysis points to is that Prabhakaran was involved in an intricate chess game being played in a dynamic environment. He conducted a cost / benefit analysis and when the ends outweighed the means he employed one of his high-end assets: a Black Tiger. Often these were used to augment actions taken by his military wing, for instance, when his military wing was having difficulty with an army brigade, he would strap a young girl with plastic explosives and infiltrate her into the camp to kill the brigade commander. If these ends could save his military wing from a costly fight, he would accept the cost of one low-caste girl. He demonstrated both the will and the ability, time and again, to make such decisions and conduct just such tactics (McCormick, 2001, class notes).

Strategically, Prabhakaran knew his military forces could not attack the SLAF as far south as Colombo, but he was capable of slipping Black Tiger squads into the crowded city. Strategically, Prabhakaran knew he could not attack Rajiv Gandhi in New Delhi, but he could in Tamil Nadu, so he did. He even had the Gandhi attack rehearsed to ensure it could be done.

The chosen tactics of the LTTE during the April 1993 assassinations of the National Security Minister and the President are telling. The Minister was shot and the President was attacked by a suicide bomber (Hechter, p. 53 and Munasinghe, p. 128). Presumably, when Prabhakaran calculated that a lone gunman could conduct an assassination he chose this simple solution. When the target was of higher value, possibly better protected, and he feared the perpetrator might be captured, he chose the more drastic tactic of employing the suicide bomber. From this point on, Prabhakaran further formalized the assassination training of LTTE suicide bombers within the Black Tigers (Sprinzak, p. 68). The Premdesa assassination is also evidence of Prabhakaran's

patience and planning. Reportedly, Premdesa's Black Tiger killer lived in Colombo, blending in, undercover, for three years before the attack (Gunaratna, 2001c).

There are yet a few more strategic reasons Prabhakaran chose to employ suicide bombers. In addition to determining the time and place of the attack, the human terrorist bomber can operate with considerable precision. The government can emplace huge cement barricades around what it feels are potential targeted buildings to deter truck bombings, but human bombers can easily walk around them. Human bombers can mingle with crowds to overcome the difficulties in attaining access to VIPs. Police often pre-search areas with bomb sniffing dogs. The human bomber can enter the area after the VIP enters, thus avoiding the dogs and police. The human bomber does not have to raise any secret service or bodyguard attention by reaching for a knife or pistol or perching in a window with a sniper rifle; he or she coolly and calmly moves to the proximity of the target and pulls a detonator. Additionally, Prabhakaran did not have to fear that his organization would be compromised because his assassins died in their deeds. The final payoff was that he struck fear into the Sri Lankan people by demonstrating his followers' willingness to die and their government's inability to stop them (Gunaratna, 2001c).

4. The Organizational Explanation

Other analysts tend to view terrorism as the consequence of an organizational dynamic. They would argue that the decision to use suicide bombing as a tactic by the LTTE was a function of the complexity of the group. Because, the LTTE was an organization that assimilated other Tamil separatist movements that had received terrorist training in Syria and Lebanon, proponents of the organizational school of thought would argue that Prabhakaran drew upon their exposure to the suicide bomber tactic from the Middle East and then assimilated this tactic (McCormick, 2001, class notes).

Prabhakaran certainly devoted an element of his organization to structuring the selection, training, support, and employment of the Black Tigers. There were actually three types of Black Tigers: the original Black Tigers who carried out minor assassinations and assaults against the army, Sea Black Tigers, and "Champion Black Tigers." Little is known about the Champion Black Tigers except that Prabhakaran trusted them enough to send them undercover for as many as three years before they

carried out an assassination attempt against a high ranking official. More is known about the regular Black Tigers and their training from intelligence gathered from a young captured suicide bomber. She reported having undergone four months of basic training, six months of advanced training, and four more months of target-specific training. Basic training included instruction on pistols and rifles. Advanced training included instruction on suicide jackets and explosives. There were about eight Tiger cadre involved in Black Tiger training. Each Black Tiger had at least two handlers who stayed with the Tiger throughout his or her training. Families of Black Tigers were rewarded financially after the young Tigers' missions (Munasinghe, p. 180). Some Black Tigers were trained to drive trucks and motorcycles (DeSilva, p. 63). These intensive training requirements of the suicide bombers caused the Black Tigers and their supporters to become an organization within the organization.

This group became so tight-knit that it fell prey to the organizational dynamic of "groupthink." One of the dimensions of groupthink is an "illusion of invulnerability leading to excessive optimism and excessive risk taking" (Janis, 1972, p. 10). The handlers who supported the young female Black Tiger who carried out the 1991 assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, for instance, had grown accustomed to moving about Tamil Nadu freely. They did not expect the Indian government to react as quickly as it did after the attack, when it cut off their escape, and rolled up their organization. Another potential outcome of their groupthink was that they did not calculate the likely backlash: "acts of violence that are intended to attract favorable attention from a relevant public often have the opposite effect" and that "backlash within the group that initially supported the terrorist's cause is even more devastating to the militants than backlash among the larger public" (Gurr, 1998, p. 94 - 95). After Gandhi's assassination, the 60,000,000 Tamils of Tamil Nadu effectively turned their backs on the 4,000,000 Tamils of Sri Lanka. After this debacle, Prabhakaran moved the training and employment of the Black Tigers under his direct control.

An organizational dimension that Prabhakaran probably understood full well and that he tricked the Black Tigers to fall victim to was "chain suicide." In this phenomenon "the partners' agreement that each one will kill himself in turn becomes irreversible upon the death of the first in the series" (Merari, 1998, p. 202). The ideological commitment to

group solidarity becomes deeply engrained. The group reveres those who have gone before as role models (Merari, p. 202). This was particularly the case with the Black Tigers, who Prabhakaran held up as role models for the entire organization. Prabhakaran was one of those “influential leaders” who knew “how to arrange group conditions to allow the principle of social proof to work maximally in his favor” (Cialdini, 1993, p. 156).

5. The Psychological Explanation

Proponents of the psychological perspective for analyzing terrorism believe that something must be occurring in the minds of individuals for them to participate in such heinous acts (McCormick, 2001, class notes). Most often, proponents of this school of thought attempt to define the moral justification process that goes through the individual terrorist’s mind. Others contend that the bombers are indeed “brainwashed by the organization” (The Baltimore Sun, September 19th, 2001, p. 3A). The LTTE rarely used the word “suicide”, but rather talked about the “sacrifice” that the Black Tigers made (Sangarasivam, p. 327). Within the LTTE, the Black Tigers were even praised as “higher beings” (Sangarasivam, p. 348).

In Prabhakaran’s own case, most psychologists would describe him as a vengeful man, bent on defending his honor, which is a strong component of his identity. He seemed to function on a principle of reciprocity. When he ordered the 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, Gandhi was no longer the Indian Prime Minister. Prabhakaran knew that this meant that Gandhi would probably be traveling with fewer bodyguards than the acting Prime Minister, but Prabhakaran would have ordered the hit anyway. Prabhakaran wanted vengeance against Gandhi for the losses the IPKF inflicted upon the LTTE, but more importantly he wanted to send a message throughout India and Sri Lanka - the message that Prabhakaran has a long memory.

The relationship between Prabhakaran and the Black Tigers who carried out his acts of vengeance is probably best described in terms of the "charismatic leader-narcissistic follower relationship." This is a well-documented phenomenon in which the "mirror-hungry personality" of the charismatic leader and the "ideal-hungry personality" of the followers combine to create a "quality of mutual intoxication in the leader's reassuring his followers who in turn reassure him" (Post, 1986, p. 682). Prabhakaran

reportedly gave each Black Tiger a personal presentation and a farewell dinner before they departed on their final missions (Jayasinghe, 1999, p. 3).

Prabhakaran subjected his Black Tigers to "intensive psychological training in moral disengagement" (Bandura, 1998, p. 163). The lack of fail-safe devices in Black Tiger suicide suits captured by the SLAF demonstrates that they were going through with the bombings on their own accord. They were adhering to group standards because it would be disloyal for them not to go through with the act. They would be betraying their comrades and all those who had gone before them. Prabhakaran's Black Tigers were probably not even aware that they were being transformed through education, indoctrination, and dis-inhibitory training. Cut off from any exposure to television, radio, or newspapers, Black Tigers were only shown videotapes of LTTE victories and atrocities against Tamil civilians supposedly carried out by the SLAF (Munasinghe, p. 178). They were also probably not aware that Prabhakaran targeted them for use as his suicide bombers because of their youth, which made them "unconstrained by obligations, responsibilities, and conventions" (Della Porta, 1992, p. 10). The Black Tigers were not only willing to die for their cause; they wanted to die in a final symbolic act. They were most often youth with a distorted sense of duty and questionable futures. They were taught (and with some good reason) that if they were caught they would be imprisoned and tortured for even being associated with the Tigers; therefore it was best to die in support of the cause (Jayasinghe, p.2).

6. The Religious Explanation

Critics of my conclusion that the decision to use suicide bombers by the LTTE resulted from strategic choices, organizational dynamics, and / or psychological predispositions may try to search for a fanatical religious explanation. Some contend that the practice of suicide bombing runs contrary to the Hindu virtue of non-violence and that, therefore, the LTTE must have been secular. But, what they fail to recognize is that the Hindu virtue of self-sacrifice, known as "Tiyakam" is considered a higher virtue than non-violence (DeSilva, p. 222). Gandhi himself professed self-sacrifice as a high virtue (to the point of absorbing beating by British soldiers and going on hunger strikes). Prabhakaran, it would appear, twisted the Hindu notion of self-sacrifice into a cult of

martyrdom, much as do many Islamic fundamentalist groups who employ suicide bombers. According to Prabhakaran's rules there were only two ways to be considered an LTTE martyr: to die a hero's death on the battlefield or by conducting a suicide mission (DeSilva, p. 65). A strong argument could be made that when Prabhakaran initiated the tactic of all Tigers carrying a cyanide capsule and swearing to die by suicide before being captured, he created a cult of self-sacrifice or martyrdom (Sangarasivam citing Gunaratna, p. 346). Proponents of this view may be on to something as evidenced by the fact that Prabhakaran reportedly had a Jaffna Tamil killed for collaborating with four Sri Lankan authors on a 1988 book on Hindu martyrdom entitled "The Broken Palmyra" (Menton, 1991, p. 37). Others contend that the LTTE was less a cult of self-sacrifice and more a ferocious cult of courage and commitment to Tamil nationalism (Sangarasivam, p. 347).

Regardless, religion was not completely absent; the Black Tigers, for instance, were encouraged to participate in religious activities. Captured Black Tigers were found with Hindu religious articles on their persons, such as prayer bracelets on their wrists (Munasinghe, p. 179 & 183). An LTTE leader's handbook reportedly admonishes that Black Tigers must possess "a mind like steel but a heart like the petals of a flower" (The Baltimore Sun, September 19th, 2001, p. 3A). The handbook does not say that Black Tigers must be Hindu, but the description of what is advised as desirable in a Black Tiger is similar to descriptions of ancient Hindu warriors.

There is an ancient history of Hindu terrorism in the region. The Thugs were a long-standing Hindu terrorist group in India. Though they were not martyrs per se, they are an example of a group who killed its enemies to please the Hindu god Kali. Kali is the Hindu god of time, power, anger, destruction, and is often "depicted in terms of awe-inspiring terror" (Harshanananda, 1981, p. 114). At least one anthropologist found a resurgence of Kali worship throughout LTTE controlled areas in the early 1990s. There was also a resurgence of the Hindu practice of "firewalking" for self-purification (Lawrence, pp. 213 – 214, 228, 230, 240, 259). The Sri Lankan Army tried to crack down on these practices in 1992, but the Tamil Hindus believe Kali protected their temples and firewalking ceremonies by causing mechanical problems in the army's vehicles and sending swarms of bees against the soldiers. There is a Hindu legend that

Kali similarly sent swarms of bees against Portuguese soldiers 450 years ago (Lawrence, p. 258 and 248).

Prabhakaran did have established connections with Islamic separatists in Southern India, which is where the modern suicide bomber tactic is thought to have originated during the 18th century anti-colonial struggle (Kushner, 1996, p. 329). He also assimilated other Tamil separatist groups who had received terrorist training in Syria and Lebanon and who may have come in contact with "Muslim extremists" in Lebanon. For instance, the ERPLF had ties to the PFLP. However, researchers who pursue these leads to explain LTTE suicide terrorism will discover that these are weak links at best. In reality, there is much more evidence that, within Sri Lanka, Prabhakaran carried out ethnic cleansing against Tamil Muslims. In the late 1980s and early 1990s he cleansed the Jaffna peninsula and northern province of most Tamil Muslims, and throughout the late 1990s he was pursuing similar operations in the eastern province. LTTE attacks against Tamil Muslims were mostly carried out because Prabhakaran feared that the government was infiltrating these populations and using them to gather information against the LTTE. Prabhakaran often denied involvement in violence against Tamil Muslims because he had links to several Islamic groups outside the country. His website often claimed that LTTE attacks against Muslim villages had been carried out by the Sri Lankan Army as attacks against Tamils.

The LTTE downplayed the fact that it was largely comprised of Hindus. However, several LTTE terrorist attacks against Buddhist targets within Sri Lanka could be evidence of Hindu fervor, at least on the part of Prabhakaran and some of the Tigers, and maybe especially the Black Tigers. For instance, Prabhakaran ordered a Black Tiger to conduct a truck bomb attack on the Sri Lankan Buddhist Temple of the Tooth in Kandy that resulted in 14 deaths. A captured Black Tiger reported that she had been brainwashed to believe that the Sinhalese intended to tear down all Tamil Hindu temples and replace them with Buddhist temples. Others might argue that Prabhakaran undertook the temple bombing to strike fear in the hearts of the Sri Lankan people and weaken their trust in their government. But at least twice before Prabhakaran had the LTTE lash out at specifically Buddhist targets. On May 14th 1985, the LTTE attacked and killed 120 Buddhist pilgrims and wounded another 85 in an eastern district, and on May 29th, 1987,

the LTTE murdered 30 Buddhist monks near the eastern city of Ampara (Munasinghe, p. 186).

Definitive proof of a religious explanation for the prolific use of suicide terrorism by the LTTE may be hidden by another fact. Many of Prabhakaran's Sea Tigers are Catholic, while a few others are Protestant. The Portuguese were successful in converting a large number of the coastal Tamils to Catholicism and these Tamils played an important role in Prabhakaran's organization. This explains why Prabhakaran was careful not to alienate the Catholics because they were strategically important to him (Lawrence, p. 39). They represented a significant part of his naval operations and were a crucial link to supply operations in Tamil Nadu in the early days of the struggle (DeSilva, p. 235). The Dutch also converted some Tamils to Protestantism and Prabhakaran focused LTTE rhetoric on nationalism instead of Hinduism so as not to alienate them either (Lawrence, p. 211). It would be interesting to uncover whether the Sea Black Tigers were predominately Hindu or Catholic or Protestant. To date, I have discovered no definitive information about this.

If someone could uncover that most of the Sea Tigers were Catholic or Protestants, but that the Black Sea Tigers were Hindu, this may lend credence to a religious explanation for the suicide bomber tactic as a perversion of the Hindu notion of self-sacrifice into a notion of martyrdom. If, on the other hand, it were shown that the Sea Tigers and Black Sea Tigers were an amalgamation of Catholics, Protestants, and Hindus, this would take away from a religious explanation. There is some history of martyrdom in the Catholic Church, but the Catholic teaching that suicide is immoral trumps the notion of self-sacrifice for most followers. This is also why the LTTE teach their Catholic (and Protestant) members that death by taking their cyanide capsule to avoid capture is equivalent to death in combat and not considered suicide (Sangarasivam, p. 345).

However, because there is some indication that many of the regular Black Tigers were Hindu, I believe that religion must have played some role in the prolific use of the suicide bomber tactic by the LTTE. Eventually, someone might be able to better describe this link. In the meantime, the prolific use of the Black Tigers by the leader of the LTTE can be explained through a combination of strategic, organizational, and psychological

explanations. Again, suicide bombing has been shown to be not so much a tool of the "radical fanatic" as it is the expressive tactical tool of the instrumental leader who plots and plans the strategy of the organization and psychologically manipulates his bombers (Sprinzak, p. 73).

D. EXPLAINING THE REST OF THE ORGANIZATION

1. Introduction

Just as a combination of strategic, operational, psychological, and religious explanations can be used to begin to make sense of the use of suicide bombers by the LTTE, its organization and structure can be understood by considering the role of caste, ethnicity, and studying the leadership development of Prabhakaran. Prabhakaran's leadership skills clearly developed over the years of the conflict. He had numerous successes and failures and he made an effort to learn from both. As he learned he developed the structure and operations of the rest of the organization. He tried to develop an organization that could thwart its enemy's strengths and exploit its weaknesses, and to do so he used caste and ethnicity to great advantage.

2. The Role of Caste in Shaping the LTTE

Prabhakaran and most of his lieutenants are from the Tamil "Karaiyar" caste of fishermen / warriors. The Karaiyar caste is second only to the "Vellala" caste of farmers / land owners. About 50% of the Tamils on the Jaffna peninsula and the northern province are from the Vellala caste (DeSilva, p. 222). This is important, because as noted earlier, Prabhakaran did not need their full support, he only needed them to not cooperate with the government. It appears that for the most part they did support him with silence, at the least. When the LTTE were being successful against the SLAF and IPKF, the Vellala caste was known to affectionately refer to the Karaiyar caste of LTTE as "our boys" and "our sons" (DeSilva, p. 227). The farmer / landowner caste appears to have appreciated the second rung caste of fishermen / warriors taking up the fight against the SLAF to secure them a homeland / more farmland.

The Karaiyar caste also historically includes sea faring merchants and mercenary soldiers. The caste is connected to a counterpart caste found all along the southern coast of India and Tamil Nadu. “Prabhakaran himself hails from Velvittiturai, a notorious smuggling center historically having strong trading links with south India, Burma, Malaysia, and Singapore” (DeSilva, p. 235). When studied through the prism of caste, the evolution of the LTTE into a guerrilla insurgency supported by a guerrilla navy fighting for a Tamil homeland makes sense.

3. The Role of Ethnicity in Shaping the LTTE

Sri Lankan soldiers believed they could pick out LTTE from amongst Tamils because they had “darker skin” which is “indicative” of their lower caste (Lawrence, pp. 222 – 223). This was not always the case, of course. For instance, after an anti-Tamil riot, some Sinhalese were asked how they had identified the Tamils; they responded that they had to inquire and that if they doubted the person they would make them recite Buddhist texts in Sinhala. This is another reason why the LTTE train some of its members to be able to sing Sinhala songs to deceive captors (Sangarasivam, p. 365).

Chastity is a high virtue in Tamil culture and there have been numerous accusations of rape by the Sri Lankan commandos against Tamil women (Lawrence, p. 270). There is also evidence that a large number of Tamil women were raped by Indian soldiers during the IPKF intervention (Sangarasivam, p. 279). Prabhakaran seized upon the fury of the raped women and allowed them to enter the ranks of LTTE fighters (Sangarasivam, p. 299).

4. The Personality and Leadership of Prabhakaran

An Indian who had dealings with LTTE leader Prabhakaran during the 1980s found him to be an intelligent man, a copious note taker, and a methodical planner. Now 47 years old, Prabhakaran has outlasted many in the Indian and Sri Lankan government who often made the mistake of underestimating him. The Sri Lankan Armed Forces no longer underestimate him but he repeatedly stymied their attempts to catch him. Prabhakaran has been described as a “forward thinker with a peripheral vision” (DeSilva, p. 274).

Prabhakaran was born in Jaffna City on November 26th, 1954. His father was a minor government official in the eastern coastal town of Mullaittivu and was reportedly a very peaceful man. He was involved with agriculture, though he was a member of the Tamil fishing caste. He reportedly felt disgraced after Prabhakaran was involved in the assassination of the mayor of Jaffna in 1975. Prabhakaran has an older brother and two sisters. One sister lives on Mannar island and the other lives in Colombo. In 1970, at the age of 16, Prabhakaran dropped out of the 8th grade. When in school, he preferred reading histories of the ancient Tamil kingdoms (Munasinghe, p. 172).

Prabhakaran became involved with the Tamil Youth Front when he was as young as twelve. His nickname in the TYF was “Thamby” which means the “younger brother” (DeSilva, p. 3). In his youth, he was known to shoot birds and squirrels with a slingshot. From his early days in the TYF he developed an affinity for pistols. Prabhakaran may have been one of two TYF members involved in the shooting of a Tamil member of parliament on June 7th, 1972 (Munasinghe, p. 173).

Prabhakaran was one of the members of the TYF who transformed into the Tamil New Tigers in 1975. For disciplinary, secrecy, and security reasons, Prabhakaran wanted the organization to adopt a strict policy of no alcohol / no tobacco / no gambling / no relationships with females. Prabhakaran designed these rules to instill self-sacrifice and dedication to the cause (DeSilva, p. 42). Prabhakaran’s insistence on these rules was a major factor in the split that occurred in the TNT, resulting in the PLOTE and LTTE in 1976. Prabhakaran’s strictness initially hurt his recruitment efforts, but ultimately proved his point about the benefits of discipline and security: witness the demise of the PLOTE. Later, Prabhakaran would wind up relaxing his policy about no relationships with women, as he himself would fall in love, and women would become an integral part of the LTTE (Munasinghe, p. 173).

Under the new rules, members of the LTTE could marry after they had served as a Tiger for five consecutive years. Sometime in 1984 or 1985, while he was leading the LTTE from Madras, India, Prabhakaran married a young Tamil woman from Jaffna University. They had a son in April 1985. Prabhakaran named his son Charles Anthony, after the code-name of one of his favorite lieutenants. Later, Prabhakaran and his wife had two daughters. Reportedly, one of the daughters died at an early age. For many

years of the conflict, Prabhakaran's wife and remaining son and daughter lived outside of Sri Lanka, maybe in Australia. They may now be living with him in the Wannu jungle (Munasinghe, p. 175 – 176).

Prabhakaran objects to being called a terrorist because, as one noted expert believes, "that is the application of a label, attached with an accompanying moral judgment" (Hoffman, 1998, p.31, quoting Jenkins). Nonetheless, few could argue he is not a terrorist, he is clearly even a "violent intellectual, prepared to use and indeed committed to using force in the attainment of his goals" (Hoffman, p.43). Prabhakaran displayed fierce loyalty to the most aggressive Tigers, and promoted cadre who returned loyalty and aggressiveness.

A shrewd operator, Prabhakaran certainly proved himself an adroit politician during the time of the IPKF intervention. First he used the Indians for arms, explosives, and training support in his struggle with the Sri Lankan government. When the Sri Lankan Armed Forces grew too strong for him, he influenced the Indians to intervene. Then, when the Indians turned on him, he admitted his losses to the Sri Lankans and successfully cajoled them into providing him some arms support. Having also grown tired of the prolonged Indian presence, the Sri Lankans welcomed the opportunity to use the LTTE to push the IPKF back off the island.

In general, as already mentioned, whenever his military wing was losing against either the SLAF or IPKF, he would lash out with his terrorist wing. He assimilated or wiped out all Tamil separatist competition outside of his organization. He consistently purged his own organization of any internal competition to his leadership. When moderate Tamil politicians attempted to deal with the Sri Lankans he had them killed. It is speculated that several terrorist incidents were conducted to elicit loyalty from a wavering Tamil population. He used "ceasefire agreements" time and again to buy time for his troops, recover from losses, and consolidate gains.

Prabhakaran made nearly all the critical decisions and exercised extreme control over the LTTE. Sometimes he chose guerrilla warfare on the land and sometimes on the sea. He also determined the location and timing of most attacks. In the earliest years, Prabhakaran established the initial target sets of the LTTE as: moderate Tamil politicians, informers, police patrols, and police stations. Killing one to two police officers at a time,

the LTTE had killed 20 officers by 1981. As the insurgency grew, after the 1983 riots, Prabhakaran specifically targeted police officers in the Criminal Investigation Department. After the LTTE grew in numbers and training they began engaging the Sri Lankan Army (DeSilva, p.54).

Prabhakaran set the LTTE on a mission to create a free and sovereign Tamil homeland. He focused LTTE efforts on gaining control of the Jaffna peninsula first, the northern province second, and the eastern province third. He almost succeeded by 1995 when the Sri Lankan government offered regional autonomy in exchange for the LTTE laying down their arms. Prabhakaran rejected the offer. Many speculated he rejected the offer at the time because he was wanted by the Indian government for the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and he felt that he would not be able to become a legitimate politician. In the current peace talks, the question has been posed to Prabhakaran again, about whether he can become a legitimate politician. He has brushed off the Gandhi assassination saying it happened over eleven years ago and that the guilty parties have been convicted. He protests his innocence and proclaims he is prepared to become a politician (The New York Times, 2002).

In the earliest days of the LTTE, Prabhakaran established seven priorities for the organization. They were 1) military training, 2) military engagement, 3) weapons collection, 4) propaganda, 5) fundraising, 6) international relations, and 7) intelligence operations. These seven priorities would eventually fall under the familiar structure of a guerrilla organization with an auxiliary support group and an underground intelligence agency (DeSilva, p. 13).

5. The Military Wing of the LTTE Organization

Prabhakaran also shrewdly organized his army. His army was divided between commando, infantry, artillery and engineer regiments. The infantry regiment could have upwards of 10,000 guerrillas. As many as 3,000 of these guerrilla fighters may have been women. Many of the women say they were fighting to avenge the death of a father, brother, or uncle. The females wore the cyanide vial just like the males, and Prabhakaran allowed them to break with Tamil tradition and cut their hair short so it did not interfere on the battlefield (DeSilva, p. 31).

The infantry extended its areas of operations by establishing strings of company-sized base camps of two to three platoons. A platoon roughly consisted of 30 fighters. The guerrillas operated in small squads led by cadre. Cadre trained the new fighters repetitively with weapons manuals that had been translated into Tamil. Some argue that the LTTE fighters were much better trained than their opposition soldiers in the SLAF Army. Within the infantry regiment there were commando units responsible for dangerous long-range missions. Prabhakaran selected amongst the bravest of the commandos for the Black Tigers (DeSilva, p. 39).

The infantry regiment was supported by the artillery regiment. (The artillery regiment was actually a mortar regiment because Prabhakaran moved all the artillery pieces to the engineer regiment where they could be better transported and maintained.) The artillery regiment had between 250 and 300 cadre. These cadre manned two 140 mm mortars, four 120 mm mortars, and hundreds of 82, 81, and 60 mm mortars. The engineer regiment performed typical engineer functions, reinforcing many LTTE positions with concrete. They had bulldozers and innovatively welded armor plating to the dozers to help breach SLAF positions. Once the engineer regiment became responsible for artillery support to the infantry, they took possession of a 152 mm artillery piece captured from the SLAF at Elephant Pass in April 2000. Altogether they fielded six 130 mm artillery guns (two reportedly Chinese-made and four Russian-made), and four 122 mm guns (two of which were captured from the SLAF Army in July 1996) (Munasinghe, p. 177).

Since 1998 it was known that the artillery crews used hand-held computers to calculate the data for the guns and their forward observers used global positioning systems to ensure accurate calls for fire. The regiment also owned two multi barrel (twelve) rocket launchers. The regiment dismantled one to turn it into six two-barrel rocket launchers. This was verified when the SLAF captured one of the two-barrel launchers during an LTTE attack at Trincomalee harbor in north eastern Sri Lanka (Gunaratna, 2001a).

Although Prabhakaran wanted to develop his own air force to answer the might of the Sri Lankan Air Force, this proved a nearly insurmountable task in terms of money, training, resources, and space available. When efforts to acquire small planes and

helicopters failed, Prabhakaran accepted that the best he could do to counter the Sri Lankan Air Force was to improve his own positions with concrete, attack the SLAF Air Force's planes while they were still on the ground, and procure SAMs (Gunaratna, 2001e).

Prabhakaran developed his own navy, the Sea Tigers. From their early days of shuttling supplies across the shallow waters between Tamil Nadu and the Jaffna peninsula in small boats, the Sea Tigers evolved into a formidable fleet. At the height of the conflict, the Sea Tigers may have numbered around 3,000 fighters with 200 boats. They did battle with Sri Lankan and Indian Naval vessels from their high-speed fiberglass gunboats, some with 225 horsepower motors. Sometimes the Sea Tigers used "wolf pack" type tactics to surround their prey. At other times, the Sea Tigers tried to lure Sri Lankan Navy vessels closer to shore where ground Tigers could fire upon them. The Sea Tigers may have operated from small islands near the Thai resort island of Pukhet and off the coast of Myanmar on a small island called Twante. In 2000, Thai police arrested a Norwegian man who was reportedly building a submarine for the LTTE on Pukhet. Late in the conflict, the LTTE may have been trying to procure mini-submarines from North Korea. The Sea Tigers reportedly wanted the subs to counter the Sri Lankan Navy's Dvora fast attack boats, which were having devastating effects on them. The navy's own suicide wing, the Sea Black Tigers did extensive damage to numerous vessels during the conflict and conducted at least 30 suicide attacks. After several Sea Tiger scuba divers were compromised by their bubble trails in 1993, Prabhakaran procured closed-circuit (bubble-less) military grade scuba equipment. The Sea Tigers also protected twelve commercial shipping vessels that Prabhakaran and the LTTE owned outright. Sea Tigers provided protection for the commercial vessels from several "50 foot long and 16 foot wide fiberglass" boats with four 250 horsepower motors each, long-range radios, and general purpose machine guns. By escorting the commercial vessels with these small boats, the Sea Tigers served as the liaison link between the auxiliary and the rest of the guerrillas (Gunaratna, 2001b).

6. The Training Program of the LTTE Fighters

The LTTE's efficiency greatly improved given the training approximately 2,000 cadre received from India's R&AW. A similar training regimen was adopted by the LTTE in at least two training camps deep inside the northern Wanni jungle. Young recruits received three months of basic weapons training. Basic training also included strength, stamina, survival, and political indoctrination training. The LTTE tried to fit the individual into the organization based on his marksmanship abilities, language skills, and regional ties. Fighters with exceptional aptitude were moved into communications, intelligence, or commando positions. After suffering a loss at Elephant Pass in 1991, Prabhakaran established an officer's academy in Jaffna where he pushed the study of theories of war written in English (DeSilva, pp. 63 - 64).

7. Supporting the Organization with an Underground

Like many guerrilla organizations, the LTTE also had an underground and an auxiliary. The auxiliary was responsible for the logistical support of the organization. The underground provided the organization with communications and intelligence, and became extremely sophisticated. For instance, within the communications branch, Prabhakaran invested large sums of money in long-range radios and other high-tech equipment as early as 1985. This was 15 years before the Sri Lankan government made a similar commitment for the SLAF communications (DeSilva, p. 31). The intelligence wing of the underground tried to plan LTTE attacks against the army to make the maximum effective use of moonlight, but Prabhakaran's superstitions and belief in numerology also influenced the timing of attacks (Munasinghe, p. 183). The intelligence analysts of the LTTE, meanwhile, also supervised three types of reconnaissance cadres: "ordinary, special, and champion" (Munasinghe, p. 181). Ordinary reconnaissance cadres were responsible for route recons and simple sketches of army positions. Special reconnaissance cadres were better-trained and equipped with night vision devices, global positioning systems, compasses, radios, and camera equipment. Special reconnaissance cadres infiltrated through the jungles to SLAF Army camps, videotaped them, and returned to build models of the camps or sand tables. From the sand tables, Prabhakaran and the analysts briefed the infantry, artillery, and engineers on upcoming attacks.

Champion reconnaissance cadres were often used for missions in urban areas like the capital of Colombo. They had to be fluent in Sinhala and English. Sometimes the champion reconnaissance cadres were used as sappers against SLAF Army positions. A champion reconnaissance cadre may even have penetrated and operated as a mole within the Sri Lankan Special Forces “Deep Penetration Unit” during the latter years of the conflict, keeping Prabhakaran one step ahead of the unit’s effort to ambush him (Munasinghe, p. 182).

Finally, the research wing of the underground tested the effects of explosives on dogs and goats to help ensure success for the Black Tigers. The research wing also developed the most sophisticated, best-constructed human suicide bomb suit known to terrorism (Gunaratna, 2001c).

8. Supporting the Organization with an Auxiliary

Prabhakaran developed an extensive auxiliary to acquire resources for his movement. The auxiliary consisted of numerous branches: informants, recruiters, overseas trainers, commercial ventures, arms and explosives procurement, engineering, logistics, food production, uniform production, fuel procurement, medicine procurement, transportation, accounting, finance, legal affairs, fund raising, propaganda, and politics (Gunaratna, 1997b).

From the earliest days of the organization, the LTTE always seized weapons from those it captured or killed on the battlefield and from raids on police and army arsenals. From 1983 – 1987 the LTTE acquired arms from the Indian R&AW. During and after the IPKF intervention, the LTTE wiped out rival Tamil separatist groups and captured all of their weapons. The LTTE started with a dozen shotguns, a few rifles, and a handful of pistols in the early 1970s. By the late 1980s, the LTTE had acquired RPGs before the SLAF had them. The arms and explosives branch of the auxiliary even produced improvised anti-personnel mines in makeshift munitions factories (DeSilva, p. 59).

Since the late 1970s, the LTTE ran dual-purpose farms in the northern province. The farms served as income generators as well as military training areas (DeSilva, p. 45). The engineering arm of the auxiliary found ways to run trucks on kerosene and vegetable

oil when fuel and motor oil were scarce. The engineering arm also built a juice factory for the logistics wing and a paper factory for the propaganda wing (DeSilva, p. 40).

The propaganda section of the LTTE auxiliary was very effective. Many members of the LTTE never even met their leader Prabhakaran, but the propaganda wing enhanced his cult of personality with pictures and audio and videotapes of his speeches. The propaganda machine accused the government of human rights abuses and acts of genocide against Tamils. As early as 1985 the LTTE began operating its own radio and television channels. The stations were shut down during the IPKF intervention, but were up and running again when the LTTE ruled from the Jaffna peninsula in the early 1990s. The propaganda branch also distributed videotapes of Tiger training and combat operations to Tamil youth as recruiting tools. When the LTTE uncovered evidence that the Sri Lankan Army was planning to procure 1,000 Israeli-made flame-throwers for jungle clearing operations, the propaganda wing launched a massive campaign on LTTE websites to derail the procurement, painting the purchase as a move by the army into chemical warfare (DeSilva, p. 51). In 1998, elements presumably from the propaganda wing calling themselves “The Internet Black Tigers”, conducted a massive denial of service attack for two weeks against computers at many Sri Lankan embassies worldwide in what some consider the world’s first incidence of cyber-terrorism (Harvard International Review, 2001, p. 70).

9. The Auxiliary Manipulates a Large Overseas Diaspora

The overseas coordinator of the auxiliary, Kumaran Pathmanathan, operated with some degree of autonomy from Prabhakaran because he carried out much of the important work of supporting the Tigers by manipulating the large Tamil diaspora from an office in London until only recently (Gunaratna, 2000). His overseas propaganda wing maintained various official and unofficial websites. The websites countered charges levied by the Sri Lankan government. Due to the somewhat secretive nature of the Sri Lankan government, the LTTE web sites were often out front on most breaking stories. The sites were also subtly coercive in asking for donations from Tamils. Consequently, the fundraising arm of the LTTE was able to do quite well in countries where the LTTE had not been outlawed (DeSilva, p. 47). In countries where the LTTE

had been outlawed, it operated under cover organizations such as the United Tamil Organization, the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization, and the World Tamil Movement. The fundraising effort proved quite lucrative and was estimated to account for 80% of the LTTE's \$82 million (U.S.) annual income. The other 20% of LTTE funds came from investments and trade, both legal and illegal (Gunaratna, 2000).

Notable Tamil support networks exist in New York, California, Canada, London, Paris, Zurich, Oslo, Madras, Sydney, Rangoon, South Africa, Mauritius, Fiji, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore (Lawrence, p. 35). At the height of the conflict, the LTTE may have had as many as 30 overseas offices. Tamils may be found in as many as 64 other countries. Many Tamils who were run out of Colombo by armed Sinhalese gangs found their way to Toronto, Canada. There, it is believed, an estimated 150,000 Tamils sent approximately \$22 million (U.S.) to support the LTTE annually. \$12 million came from personal donations and \$10 million from Tamil-owned business contributions. Tamil gangs in Toronto are known to sell heroin and it is thought some drug money is laundered electronically through Tamil-owned shops or transferred using a system similar to the "hawala" system used by many Islamic groups (where deposits in one country may be withdrawn in another country). Many supporters from the diaspora argue that they are just doing what the Jewish diaspora did for the state of Israel in its early years. For instance, the Federation of Associations of Canadian Tamils (or FACT) recently had a \$40 per plate fundraiser and supposedly tricked many Canadian politicians into attending, while a Toronto Tamil radio station hosted a phone-a-thon and netted \$600,000 (U.S.) (Gunaratna, 2000).

Additionally, Pathmanathan maintained some legitimate business ventures. He used the LTTE's twelve commercial shipping vessels to transport lumber for nations who would have dealings with him, like Myanmar (formerly Burma). There is also ample evidence of the LTTE's engagement in illegal ventures such as drug trafficking. U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency officials estimate 80% of the heroin used in the U.S. originates from Myanmar. In the late 1980s several hundred Tamils were arrested in London for heroin trafficking. LTTE ships were also used to bring arms, explosives, communications equipment, rice, other food products, uniforms, clothing, fuel, medicine, and cement to the peninsula. The Indian Navy has monitored the LTTE commercial

vessels sailing in and out of Singapore and Rangoon. The ships sailed under false flags from countries like “Honduras, Cyprus, Panama, Thailand, and the Cayman Islands” (DeSilva, p. 61). Profits from arms and drugs smuggling were channeled into gold reserves and investments to provide steady income to the organization (DeSilva, p. 46).

10. Protecting the Organization from Government Informants

Another way Prabhakaran maintained his organization was through the public execution of government collaborators. One well-documented case took place in March 1996 near Batticaloa lagoon in the eastern province. Prabhakaran had signs posted to notify the public of the impending execution of two traitors. The two were killed and their bodies were left on display for 24 hours as a grim reminder to any others who might consider assisting the SLAF against the LTTE (Lawrence, p. 254).

11. Maintaining the Organization through OPSEC and Purges

Prabhakaran developed his rules for operational security into “rigid codes of discipline binding members and ex-members where transgression is often punished by execution” (DeSilva, p. 14). Members could leave the organization after five years of service but they had to maintain absolute secrecy as to the role they played inside the LTTE (DeSilva, p. 43).

As already noted, Prabhakaran periodically purged his own organization of any internal competition to his leadership. Much like Saddam Hussein, he has been left with only the fiercest of loyalty. As late as August 1998, Prabhakaran had his former deputy commander executed because Prabhakaran believed he was maintaining ties with India’s R&AW (Munasinghe, p. 146). Many counter-insurgency analysts will argue that the use of enforcement terror to extract support is a sign of profound weakness (Leites and Wolf, p. 102). However, Prabhakaran’s enforcement terror was highly discriminate and designed to induce silence and some of his other acts of enforcement terror have been misinterpreted. For instance, in the past, when it was believed he was showing signs of weakness by using enforcement terror, Prabhakaran was actually assimilating or wiping out all other Tamil separatist competition, thereby strengthening his own organization.

E. CONCLUSION

For the past 19 years, Velupillai Prabhakaran successfully led a Tamil ethno-nationalist separatist insurgency against the Sinhalese government and armed forces of Sri Lanka. He did this by developing and implementing asymmetric strategies versus the largely conventional tactics of the state. He developed tactics to grow and maintain numbers in his organization. He became adept at acquiring resources to fuel his war. He provided leadership and organization for his movement. Prabhakaran is a skillful and artful leader who guided his organization through the changing environments of two decades. He introduced and refined logical organizational structure, one for the most part he employed skillfully. Consequently, the organization had many strengths, and few apparent weaknesses, whereas the Sri Lankan government demonstrated many weaknesses and few apparent strengths. Not only did the government and armed forces of Sri Lanka largely fail to penetrate and destroy Prabhakaran's organization given his strategy, tactics, and operational security procedures, but also they proved unable to successfully penetrate across the ethnic / religious / linguistic divide which Prabhakaran used to financial and political advantage. If other governments and armed forces intend to defeat asymmetric threats like the LTTE in the future, they will need to penetrate beyond these types of divides as well as through these security perimeters. Only then can they attempt to counter the asymmetric strategies, attack the leadership and organization, and sever its resources and support.

This chapter has attempted to logically explain how the LTTE evolved into one of the world's most adept asymmetric organizations in response to the massive conventional forces arrayed to destroy it. This chapter also offered four explanations for the LTTE's prolific use of the feared Black Tiger suicide bombers. Further, I analyzed Prabhakaran's leadership, organization, resourcing, and support of the entire LTTE, so that in the future, young U.S. military officers and non-commissioned officers should not be confounded when they come into contact with similar threatening organizations.

The next chapter will analyze the conflict from a neutral perspective to determine whether the government and armed forces of Sri Lanka and India could have defeated the

LTTE had they applied the principles of Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Internal Defense and Development (IDAD).

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V. ANALYSIS OF THE CONFLICT

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to assist U.S. commanders better prepare their troops to meet and defeat the modern asymmetric threat. In Chapter I, I hypothesized that the four principles in current U.S. Joint Doctrine for Foreign Internal Defense (FID) are the relevant independent variables for defeating the modern asymmetric threat. As a reminder, the four variables are:

- 1) Maximum Intelligence
- 2) Minimum Violence
- 3) Unity of Effort
- 4) Responsive government.

I further hypothesized that, as principles, all four must be adhered to in order to defeat the modern asymmetric threat. In other words, violating even one principle during any given phase of the operation would result in failure. The four principles are the independent variables which together lead us to the dependent variable: success in defeating the modern asymmetric threat.

I next searched the literature about the conflict for the presence or absence of the independent variables. Unfortunately, I found the literature and reporting clouded with biases and discrepancies. I undertook to re-tell the anthropology and history of the conflict in my own words, endeavoring to remain fair and balanced as best I could, serving as an uninvolved third party. I strove to write the anthropology and history and describe the Tigers with terms and significant detail to interest my primary audience, young U.S. officers and non-commissioned officers struggling for ways to defeat the modern asymmetric threat. That done, I now turn to examining the conflict for the presence and absence of the independent variables I identified in Chapter I.

B. DEFINING THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The current U.S. Joint Publication for Foreign Internal Defense offers definitions of the four principles of Internal Defense and Development (IDAD). The definitions, though limited, are sufficient for the young U.S. officer or non-commissioned officer to understand and employ.

1. Maximum Use of Intelligence

The maximum use of intelligence “requires that all operations be based on accurate, timely, and confirmed intelligence derived from reliable sources.” Operational security must be maintained to protect one’s own plans and counterintelligence operations should be conducted to “penetrate opposing force intelligence collection operations.” Friendly intelligence analysts should be able to “assess accurately the opposing force’s capabilities; to provide timely warnings” of impending attacks and to “compromise hostile operations on order” (JP. 3-07.1, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for FID, June 26th, 1996, p. C-3).

2. Minimum Use of Violence

The current doctrine defines the principle of the minimum use of violence as “the discreet use of force.” The doctrine urges the government and armed forces to use the minimum of violence necessary “to maintain order,” but recognizes that “at times, the best way to minimize violence is to use overwhelming force.” Most times, it is stressed, the armed forces should “proceed with caution, extending the duration but limiting the intensity or scope of the violence” (JP. 3-07.1, p. C-3).

3. Unity of Effort

The doctrine states that, “unity of effort means coordinated action and centralized control at all levels.” The government, armed forces and police / security forces are to be organized and controlled in such a way that the actions of one body does not hinder the action of another. The armed forces and police forces are to cooperate together on both operations and intelligence. The services of the armed forces are to conduct joint

operations to the greatest extent possible. The branches of the services are to conduct combined operations to the greatest extent possible. Operations are to be tailored to both urban and rural areas. Urban areas are not to be neglected while operations are conducted in rural areas and vice versa (JP. 3-07.1, pp. C-3 - 6).

4. Responsive Government

The current doctrine suggests that the leadership of the government must train and supervise the manpower administrators and resource managers in the bureaucracy to be as efficient as possible in addressing the needs of the population. Minority groups are to be represented and their grievances addressed. Consideration is to be given to religious differences. The government is to be admonished to attend to the educational, health, labor, agricultural, transportation, business, economic, and commercial needs of the country (JP. 3-07.1, p. C-3).

C. BREAKING THE CASE STUDY INTO PHASES

Because examination of the anthropology and history of the conflict between the Sri Lankans and the Tamil Tigers for the presence or absence of the independent variables would have been entirely too unwieldy, I broke this single case study into six separate case studies based on the definable phases of the conflict.

D. OPERATIONALIZING THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Because I found it difficult to operationalize the definitions of the independent variables, I considered only the preponderance of the evidence. If I found that in a certain phase, the preponderance of the evidence indicated that the government and armed forces were adhering to a principle as defined in the current U.S. Joint Doctrine, I awarded them a plus (+). If I found that in a certain phase a preponderance of the evidence indicated that the government and armed forces were violating a principle as defined in the current U.S. Joint Doctrine, I awarded them a minus (-). If the evidence was split between adherence to, and violation of, a principle, I awarded the government

and armed forces a null (o). My hypothesis, restated in these terms, would be that if in any given phase of an operation against a modern asymmetric threat, a government and its armed forces adheres to all four principles of Internal Defense and Development as indicated by a preponderance of the evidence, the government and armed forces should be successful in defeating the modern asymmetric threat.

E. DEFINING AND OPERATIONALIZING THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES

The dependent variables in my hypothesis are success or failure in defeating the modern asymmetric threat. I define success in defeating the modern asymmetric threat as besting the threat sufficiently through military means such that the enemy lays down his arms, gives up the use of his explosives, and seeks to end the conflict peacefully by political means. Bringing the threat to the political negotiating table by itself does not constitute success. I consider the phase a failure if the enemy is continuing to engage the armed forces militarily or continuing to conduct terrorist attacks regardless of whether or not he is engaging in political discourse. For the government and armed forces to achieve success, the enemy does not necessarily have to give up all of his arms and explosives, but he must at least lay them down and swear off their use.

Beyond this, it is difficult to find other measures of effectiveness that remain comparable through the different phases of the conflict in order to operationalize my definition of success and failure. For instance, in some phases one could try to measure an increasing or decreasing rate of suicide bombings to determine whether the Sri Lankan government and armed forces were being successful in defeating the LTTE. Alternatively, in other phases, one might have tried to measure battlefield casualties or battlefield successes. I chose to use these rates and the trends of these events to help weigh the preponderance of the evidence for the independent variables. For the dependent variable, success or failure, I simply looked to see if at the end of the phase the LTTE were defeated militarily, laid down their arms and explosives, and peacefully entered into political negotiations.

F. FINDINGS

Years:	1948 -82	83 – 87	87 - 90	90 - 95	96 – 01	01 – 02
Maximum Intelligence:	-	+	-	0	-	+
Minimum Violence:	-	-	-	-	+	+
Unity of Effort:	+	-	-	0	+	+
Responsive Government:	-	-	+	+	+	+
Result:	Failure	Failure	Failure	Failure	Failure	Success

G. EXPLANATION OF FINDINGS

1. 1948 – 1982

During the period between Ceylon's gaining of its independence from Britain and July 1983 when most historians mark the official beginning of the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE, the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) were taking steps to address the developing Tamil separatist insurgency. However, the preponderance of the evidence indicates that the army violated the principle of making the maximum use of intelligence. For instance, the army convinced itself that by the end of 1979 it had eradicated the Tamil separatist problem. In reality, the army had only succeeded in pushing most of the Tamil separatists to take refuge in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. There, the separatists regrouped and came under the influence of Indian intelligence and were trained for later re-insertion onto the island. In addition, the army received a very direct warning about the Tigers' leader, Prabhakaran, and his desire to push the insurgency to the level of a civil war, cutting the country in half. The army failed to heed the warning it received about Prabhakaran and instead focused its counter-insurgency efforts against the PLOTE. At the time, the PLOTE was a larger target, easier

to penetrate and destroy, and the army's focus on the PLOTE is understandable. Yet, the army cannot be forgiven for failing to heed the warning that Prabhakaran would be its true long-term threat as indeed he proved to be. Further evidence of the army and intelligence failure is that after Prabhakaran was arrested, but later released in India following a shootout in 1982, he was able to slip back into the Jaffna peninsula unnoticed by the Sri Lankans.

The President of Sri Lanka violated the principle of employing only the minimum required use of violence when he issued a blanket statement to the army in 1979 to use whatever means necessary to "eradicate terrorism." There is ample evidence that elements of the army abused these broad powers and may have been guilty of torture and summary execution of Tamil militants. This only led to Prabhakaran and the LTTE resolving to avoid being captured alive, taking up of the practice of carrying cyanide, and development of a cult of self-sacrifice that was later rather easily developed into serial suicide bombings.

The one principle that the government and armed forces of Sri Lanka did adhere to during this period was unity of effort. The police forces and army realized that Tamil separatists had the potential to go from bank robberies and political assassinations towards outright attacks against the army. Smartly, the Army Criminal Investigation Division and the Police Internal Security Division formed a joint task force to study the problem and combine their efforts.

However, many other officials were violating the principle of responsive government. Politicians were pushing legislation that was discriminatory to the practice of Hinduism and discriminatory to the admission of Tamil students in the universities. These moves only fueled the growing insurgency. Further, the government was slow to react to the arson of the Tamil library in Jaffna, which many Tamils saw as a direct assault on their culture.

2. 1983 – 1987

The initial evidence during this period indicates that the army was violating the principle of maximum intelligence. For the most part, the army confined itself to the safety of its camps at night, allowing the LTTE to "own the night." However, the

preponderance of the evidence suggests that for the most part the army was adhering to the definition of the principle. The army did begin conducting pinpoint raids against known LTTE hideouts and the army intelligence was becoming sophisticated enough to differentiate between LTTE, TELO, and ERPLF attacks. One ingenious thing the army did was hold a closed coffin funeral for a captured lieutenant in order to later exploit intelligence gained from his time in captivity. The family was lead to believe that the lieutenant was dead and the LTTE was lead to believe that the army was also writing the lieutenant off as dead. The LTTE continued to hold the lieutenant and moved him around as they interrogated him. Later, after the army liberated the lieutenant, he was debriefed and revealed actionable intelligence on LTTE locations.

The government and armed forces were clearly violating the principle of minimum violence. The army and police failed to control rioting Sinhalese in 1983 and some in the government even may have been complicit in the riots against Tamils. The riots inflamed ethnic tensions on the island, resulting in the displacement of a large number of Tamils, basically creating the Tamil diaspora. This diaspora would later provide funds sufficient to fuel the LTTE insurgency for nearly 20 years.

Also in violation of the concept of minimum violence, the SLAF used massive artillery and air bombardments to capture the Jaffna peninsula, resulting in many civilian deaths. Every civilian death undoubtedly resulted in surviving family members who would be more likely to support or join the LTTE insurgency.

During this phase, the Sri Lankans lost the plus (+) they previously scored for unity of effort. By directly attacking and terrorizing the country's police station, the LTTE drove all ethnic Sinhalese police officers out of Jaffna and most of the northern province. Few Tamils would volunteer for police duties. The army failed to re-establish any sense of lawfulness and could not coordinate a proactive response to the growing number of LTTE attacks against civilian planes, trains, and buses.

Further, police officials in the south failed to warn army officials in the north that they had uncovered evidence that the LTTE was developing the tactic of explosive truck bombing. The last strong piece of evidence that there was a lack of unity of effort between the government and armed forces was that the government failed to explain the

purpose, provisions, and implementation plan for the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord, resulting in an uncoordinated effort.

Officials also receive low marks for responsive government during this period. The LTTE repeatedly proved the government, army, and police could not protect the populace from numerous attacks. The government did host the All Party Conferences to address Tamil grievances but failed to prevent the LTTE from sabotaging the talks and causing their failure.

3. 1987 - 1990

Indian histories of this period declare a clear victory for the IPKF intervention. The preponderance of the evidence is to the contrary. Early in the conflict, the IPKF was convinced that the LTTE was cooperating fully with the disarmament goal of the intervention, but the LTTE only turned in unserviceable weapons. Later, in further violation of the principle of maximum intelligence, the LTTE ethnically cleansed Muslim villages right under the noses of the Indian Army. The IPKF never successfully penetrated the LTTE despite repeated attempts to do so. Tamils friendly to the Tigers repeatedly led the IPKF away from the LTTE, not towards it.

The IPKF also clearly violated the principle of minimum violence. After the intervention, hundreds if not thousands of Tamil civilians were left unaccounted for. Many were undoubtedly accidentally killed in the cross fire between the IPKF and LTTE, but the IPKF callously counted all Tamil dead as Tigers. Meanwhile, in remarkable violation of the principle of unity of effort, Indian intelligence agents continued to arm the LTTE in the midst of their fight with the IPKF.

The one high mark the IPKF should receive for their intervention is for adhering to the principle of responsive government. The IPKF tried to help the Tamils of Sri Lanka police themselves. They converted the separatist group known as the PLOTE into the Tamil National Army (TNA). The TNA did not defeat the LTTE, but did successfully push the LTTE out of the Jaffna peninsula. The IPKF coached the TNA in “hearts and minds” operations on the peninsula to some effect, greatly assisted by IPKF relief efforts for the populace. The IPKF also smartly and quickly shut down the LTTE radio station and propaganda apparatus in the Jaffna peninsula.

4. 1990 – 1995

For this period I award the Sri Lankans a null (o) for maximum use of intelligence because though at times they were adhering to the principle, at other times they violated it. The early days of this period were marked by the inability of the various Sri Lankan intelligence assets to disrupt the growing LTTE support structure in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Indian police and army networks did, however, disrupt the LTTE support structure in Tamil Nadu, but this only pushed the support structures further overseas to places like Britain and Canada where the structures continued to grow in sophistication.

In Sri Lanka itself, the government consistently failed to penetrate the LTTE and was unable to stop the increasing number of terrorist attacks. The LTTE were able to carry out political and military assassinations, bus bombings, ethnic attacks against Sinhalese, and religiously-motivated attacks against Tamil Muslims with little interference from the government. The army was trying to develop its capability to conduct deep reconnaissance into Tiger-held areas by building training camps to better train Special Forces in jungle infiltration and exfiltration, but the Tigers located and overran the camps. Army analysts scored an intelligence victory when they uncovered an LTTE plan to attack a brigade outpost in enough time to prepare the brigade to thwart the attack in July 1995. The army also smartly concluded one operation by successfully destroying 120 LTTE-owned small boats and motors. This operation indicated that at least some in the military were analyzing the situation thoroughly enough to recognize that the Sea Tigers had become a critical piece of the LTTE machine that needed to be destroyed.

I award the Sri Lankans a minus (-) for minimum use of violence during this period. The starkest evidence that the Sri Lankans were violating the principle is the increasing use of body counts by the army as a measure of effectiveness in their struggle against the LTTE. The army was increasingly relying on air and artillery strikes against the LTTE and all dead bodies were counted as LTTE dead. At the same time the army was convincing itself it was eliminating the LTTE, the heavy bombing was most probably helping the LTTE recruiting efforts amongst a besieged populace.

I award the Sri Lankans a null (o) for unity of effort during this period because there is evidence in both the positive and negative directions. The President started this

period off in the wrong direction by providing at least some new arms to the LTTE, supposedly to help him in convincing the IPKF to leave the island. After acquiring the arms, the LTTE entered a cease-fire agreement with the Indians. The IPKF declared victory and prepared for a hasty withdrawal. The President was caught with his pants down and did not coordinate the withdrawal of the IPKF with the SLAF, and the heavily armed LTTE moved back into the Jaffna peninsula. There is also evidence that officials within the Sri Lankan police hierarchy did not take the LTTE as seriously as did the Sri Lankan army. But the army unwisely failed to protect the police stations from an increasing number of attacks by the LTTE, and the LTTE raids continued to result in the capture of even more weapons by the Tigers.

By the latter stages of this period though, there is ample evidence that the SLAF was learning the importance of adhering to the principle of unity of effort if not with the police, at least among the services. Steps were taken to improve the joint capabilities of the SLAF, and the army, navy, and air force began conducting much more effective operations.

In large part due to the efforts of the army, the Sri Lankans receive a plus (+) for this period in responsive government. In early 1990, army soldiers showed great restraint in abiding by a cease-fire agreement with the Tigers even though they had been fired upon. The soldiers' restraint demonstrated a measure of good will on behalf of the government. After repeated attacks and the official breaking of the cease-fire, the army took steps to better protect the populace from the LTTE. The army stationed troops inside many Muslim villages in an attempt to deter LTTE killings. Unfortunately, the killings continued and the soldiers were killed along with the civilians. The army did develop a Public Affairs Office to try to better explain to the people what was happening in the conflict. The PAO was honest about the shoot-down of several planes by the LTTE. In August 1995 a new President went so far as to offer a peace agreement to the Tigers, allowing for unification of the northern and eastern provinces. During the entire period the government continued to send relief supplies into the Tiger-controlled Jaffna peninsula.

5. 1996 – 2001

During this period the Sri Lankans only receive a minus (-) for their treatment of the principle of maximum intelligence. This assessment and this phase further support my earlier assertion that if a government and armed forces violates even just one of the four principles, the result will be failure in defeating the modern asymmetric threat.

The first indicator that the Sri Lankans were not adhering to the principle of maximum intelligence is that analysts failed to anticipate the major LTTE attack that took place on July 18th, 1996 and became known as the “Battle of the Unceasing Waves.” Nearly two entire army battalions were wiped out in the attack and the LTTE captured tons of equipment. Intelligence analysts further failed to realize that the LTTE were expending their human capital in exchange for capturing artillery pieces from the army. The same analysts later failed to anticipate the “Battle of the Unceasing Waves II” in November 1999.

The fact that President Kumaratunga lost half her eyesight in a bombing on March 3rd, 1997 is evidence that the Sri Lankan Secret Service failed to learn a lesson from its counter-parts in the Indian Secret Service. After the Rajiv Gandhi assassination in 1991, the Indian Secret Service expanded its zone of VIP protection out to 18 meters. The Sri Lankan Secret Service allowed Kumaratunga’s attacker to come within twelve meters (Munasinghe, p. 163).

Towards the end of this period, the LTTE executed at least five people they identified as government informants. If this was true, it is evidence that the government failed to protect the few LTTE informants it did have.

The army did act on intelligence during this period to recapture Mannar Island from the LTTE, thus eliminating an important waypoint for Black Tigers being moved to Colombo. However, government intelligence officials had sat on this information for a long time and the army could have easily captured the island much sooner, possibly preventing numerous prior Black Tiger attacks in the capital.

During this period, intelligence analysts failed to even suggest any countermeasures to the LTTE’s increasing reliance on suicide bombers, SAMs, women, Sea Tigers, and children. The most egregious intelligence failure during this period was evidenced by the July 24th, 2001 Black Tiger suicide attack against the capital airport.

Despite repeated warnings and indicators by the Tigers, two squads of suicide bombers were able to infiltrate the airport and destroy large numbers of air force and civilian aircraft. Had it not been for the events of September 11th in the U.S., this attack probably would have been recorded as the most devastating terrorist act of the year.

The army started this period seeming as though it would violate the principle of minimum violence, as it fired over 50,000 artillery rounds to recapture the Jaffna peninsula. As the period progressed, though, the army relied less and less heavily on artillery bombardments. Ironically, this could have been because the LTTE captured a significant number of artillery pieces and ammunition from the army, but it is a fact nonetheless.

Regardless, the preponderance of the evidence does support the conclusion that the SLAF was trying to adhere to the principle of minimum violence. The army attempted more and more precise infantry operations to clear the LTTE from the Wannu jungle. The army's infantry division refocused its troops on rifle marksmanship and night fire training in the jungle environment. The commandos began conducting ranger-type ambush / counter-ambush patrols to regain the jungles. The Special Forces conducted increasingly successful raids and specifically targeted key leaders within the LTTE. The raids and ambushes became so successful that the LTTE began referring to the Special Forces troops carrying out the attacks as the (to-be-feared) "Deep Penetration Unit."

The Sri Lankan government and SLAF were also adhering to the principle of unity of effort. They strengthened the police forces with paramilitary and counter-insurgency training. There was increased cooperation between the army and the Police Special Task Force. The SLAF Navy was becoming increasingly professional and tried to relieve the army by going on the offensive against the Sea Tigers. The army began conducting combined operations with infantry in blocking positions and commandos conducting daring air assaults. The air force was demonstrating increasing proficiency in locating and bombing LTTE strongholds and providing Close Air Support to ground troops. The success of the air force was so great, though, that it prompted the asymmetric response of the LTTE to attack the planes on the ground in July 2001.

During this period, the government demonstrated increasing proficiency in adhering to the principle of unity of effort by lobbying against LTTE fund-raising activities and support coming from overseas. After the bombing of the Temple of the Tooth, the government was able to take advantage of a wave of sympathy from Thailand, and received assistance in clamping down on LTTE activities there. After a bank bombing in which foreign nationals were killed, the government gained yet more support from the U.S. and Britain in clamping down on the Tigers.

The Sri Lankans were also adhering to the principle of responsive government. Despite the fact that the conflict was increasingly being fought in the east, the government made it a point to keep all of its offices and schools functioning there, without having to resort to martial law. There is also strong evidence that government officials were winning the battle for the “hearts and minds” in the north, so much so that the LTTE repeatedly targeted the mayors of Jaffna and other Tamil moderates who were working within the government. The government realized that it needed to do a better job of protecting the moderates. Smartly it paid particular attention to improving protection for those responsible for rehabilitating captured Tigers. Yet, even these provisions did not stop rioting Sinhalese from killing 25 Tigers in rehab in October 2000, which proved to be a setback in getting other Tigers to surrender. Still, the preponderance of the evidence is that the Sri Lankans were being a responsive government as defined in the joint doctrine during this period.

6. 2001 – Present

During the final phase of the conflict, the Sri Lankan government and armed forces adhered to all four principles of Internal Defense and Development resulting in the successful defeat of the LTTE. The biggest improvement by the government and armed forces was in the area of maximum intelligence. The navy began uncovering growing evidence that the Tigers were heavily involved in drugs and arms smuggling, and showed greater capability in networking this information with other countries’ drugs and arms monitoring agencies. Sri Lankan Presidential and other VIP security service personnel demonstrated increasing proficiency in intercepting and minimizing Black Tiger suicide attacks. The army Special Forces teams that the Tigers were referring to as the “Deep

Penetration Unit” ambushed and killed Prabhakaran’s second-in-command for military operations, significantly hurting the LTTE organization.

The Special Forces’ use of deep reconnaissance for leadership targeting and attack is also evidence that the SLAF was adhering to the principle of minimum violence. After the counter-leadership targeting of just one very senior key leader, Prabhakaran and the LTTE began showing signs of unraveling. The navy also acquired better, faster, more high-tech attack boats, and began having more pinpoint successes against the Sea Tigers during this final phase.

After the September 11th attacks in the U.S., the Sri Lankan government successfully won the public relations battle against LTTE propaganda. For years the LTTE had been gaining financial support from the Tamil diaspora. The Sri Lankan President quickly aligned herself with President Bush and Prime Minister Blair, and LTTE protests that they were not a terrorist organization but a separatist movement began falling on more and more deaf ears. Assisted by the U.S. and Britain in clamping down on Tiger funds, the Sri Lankan President greatly assisted her armed forces in a strong sign of what now amounted to international unity of effort.

The Sri Lankans also continued to demonstrate proficiency in serving as a responsive government. When business leaders organized peaceful public demonstrations by members of all races and religions, the government took notice of the demands for an end to the conflict. The 2001 elections brought to power a Prime Minister from the opposing party of that of the President. This put the PM in a very strong position to negotiate with the Tigers. Though the President controls the military, the PM holds the country’s purse strings. He knows this and the Tigers know this. Assisted greatly by Norwegian efforts, the Tigers agreed to negotiate with the PM through their new political party, the Tamil National Alliance. The positive talks have already helped to bolster the country’s formerly struggling economy. If this trend continues, the PM should find it even easier to continue to be responsive in the future.

H. CONCLUSION

I defined success in defeating the modern asymmetric threat as besting the threat sufficiently through military means that the enemy lays down his arms, gives up the use of his explosives, and seeks to end the conflict peacefully by political means. With the February 24th, 2002 signing of a peace accord, having been greatly assisted by the global effects of the 9/11 attacks in the U.S., the Sri Lankan government and its armed forces finally achieved success in defeating the LTTE according to this definition. Whether wittingly or unwittingly at the time, the Sri Lankans were adhering to all four principles of IDAD: maximum intelligence, minimum violence, unity of effort, and responsive government. Some may argue that without the effects of 9/11 this would not have been possible and this may very well be true, but it does not negate my argument. For the purposes of testing my hypothesis, I do not care whether the Sri Lankans were employing the four principles knowingly or not, or whether they were assisted by outside events or not. I only care to see if the principles were consistently adhered to in a phase, and what the end result was. In the end, in the final (albeit very short) phase of the conflict from September 11th, 2001 until February 24th, 2002, the Sri Lankans defeated the LTTE because they were adhering to all four principles. The final chapter will further support this conclusion and make some recommendations for young U.S. military officers and non-commissioned officers who may come face to face with similar asymmetric threats in the near future.

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VI. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY

In Chapter I, I introduced the reader to the recently concluded 19-year conflict in Sri Lanka and proposed a theory that the four principles of Internal Defense and Development (maximum use of intelligence, minimum use of violence, unity of effort, and responsive government) are the key independent variables which I hypothesized could be used to defeat a modern asymmetric threat like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil – Eelam. I further stated I would attempt to explain the prolific use of suicide bombers as demonstrated by the LTTE for the benefit of my primary audience, junior military leaders.

First I had to do some background work. In Chapter II, I discussed some of the anthropology behind the modern conflict. Ethnic, religious, linguistic, and social competition among the various inhabitants dramatically shaped the early history of the island. Colonialism, WWII, nationalism, early Cold War politics, and economic struggle continued to shape the modern history of the island since its independence in 1948. The Sri Lankan government and armed forces succeeded in defeating a Sinhalese Marxist insurgency in the early 1970s, but the insurgency was successful in that it resulted in many government preferences throughout the country for the Sinhalese people, Sinhala language, and Buddhism. The resulting discrimination against Tamils and Hinduism set the stage for a militant entrepreneur, Velupillai Prabhakaran, to launch a separatist insurgency in the 1980s and 1990s. In Chapter III, I described the pertinent history of that 19-year struggle. A secondary purpose of this thesis was to clear up some of the fog surrounding the prolific use of suicide bombers by the LTTE. I did this in Chapter IV, offering at least four different explanations: one strategic, one operational, one tactical and another based on religion. I further discussed how the leader of the Tigers, Prabhakaran, developed and implemented some other asymmetric strategies to counter the largely conventional tactics of the state. He used terrorism in urban environments and guerrilla warfare in the jungles. He procured SAMs to battle the air force and built his own navy to battle the Sri Lankan Navy. I described Prabhakaran's leadership,

organization, resourcing, and support of the entire LTTE, so that, in the future, young U.S. military officers and non-commissioned officers should not be confounded when they come into contact with similar organizations.

Having done all of this important groundwork, I returned to my hypothesis. In Chapter V, I analyzed the conflict from a neutral perspective to determine whether the government and armed forces of Sri Lanka and India could have defeated the LTTE if they had applied the principles of Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and Internal Defense and Development (IDAD). I found that in the final phase of the conflict the Sri Lankan government and armed forces were consistently adhering to all four principles of Internal Defense and Development, which resulted in the successful defeat of the LTTE in that the LTTE laid down their arms and explosives, entered negotiations, and peacefully entered the political process, which was the fairest way I found to define success in defeating the modern asymmetric threat.

B. CONCLUSION

With the February 24th, 2002 signing of a peace accord, the Sri Lankan government and its armed forces finally achieved success in defeating the LTTE according to this definition. They did so, again, because advertently or inadvertently they finally consistently adhered to all four principles of IDAD.

My conclusion was solely based on my own independent analysis of open-source, unclassified information. I applied techniques and methods I learned in my 18 – month long course of study in pursuit of a Master’s of Science Degree in Defense Analysis from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. I drew from coursework in anthropology, history, deterrence, modeling, information operations, organizational design, international terrorism, guerrilla warfare, nationalism, analytical methods, command and control, low intensity conflict, military advising, ethnic conflict, psychological operations and deception, and ethical / critical thinking. I found that the key to defeating the modern asymmetric threat is already present in U.S. doctrine and, probably like a lot of other U.S. doctrine, only needs a good dusting off.

C. DEFENSE OF CONCLUSION

The most obvious criticism of my conclusion is that there is little evidence that throughout the 19 years of the struggle the Sri Lankan government had a clear and consistent Internal Defense and Development plan, and that instead it fought and won “a war of attrition.” This is an obvious criticism as wars of attrition are the oft-followed path when conventional forces are confronted by atypical threats (Mack, p. 198). I would not argue with this assessment, at least for the first 13 years of the modern struggle, as my own analysis indicates that the SLAF and IPKF often violated the principles of minimum violence and maximum intelligence with torrents of poorly directed artillery and aerial bombardments. There is also ample evidence that in the final years of conflict the Tigers were having to rely more and more on women and young children to fill their ranks. But the Sri Lankans can not truly be said to have won a war of attrition against these young Tigers because there is equally ample evidence that the Tigers were prepared to continue the struggle even after the events of 9/11: witness the September 16th, 2001 Sea Tiger attack against the army transport ship and the October 30th Sea Tiger attack on the oil tanker described at the end of Chapter III.

Ironically, though, it was the young Tigers who had actually forced the Sri Lankans to rely less on their artillery and air force in the final phases of the conflict by capturing many of the Sri Lankans’ artillery pieces, destroying their air force on the ground, and shooting their planes out of the air with SAMs. With the Sri Lankan Air Force and army artillery units marginalized, the Sri Lankan Special Forces were forced to come to the forefront of the struggle. By conducting courageous ambush operations deep within Tiger territory against senior Tiger leadership, they helped to convince Prabhakaran to end the struggle before he lost everything, including his life.

My hypothesis did not depend on whether or not the Sri Lankan government and armed forces even considered the independent variables I identified. In fact, there is ample evidence that many within the government and armed forces were actually pursuing solutions that would violate the U.S. joint principles. The Sri Lankan Army Major General whose book I relied on heavily to re-tell the history of the conflict, concluded himself that the SLAF could defeat the LTTE with more and better artillery

and improvements to the air force (Munasinghe, p. 238). Though initially trained as an intelligence officer, he was probably biased by his years of experience with the artillery and infantry. After retirement from the army, he went on to be elected to parliament and may have had the ear of the President, who was also seeking a heavy-handed military solution up until the final days of the conflict.

To prove my hypothesis I also did not need to find evidence that the Sri Lankans were actively trying to follow the IDAD principles. I simply had to look to see if the principles were in play during the final phase that did end in success. There is some evidence that the Sri Lankans may have actually been trying to knowingly follow the U.S. joint doctrine which was actually posted on the Tigers' own website. The Tigers used the website and a lobby of lawyers to try to keep the LTTE off of the U.S. State Department's list of known terrorist organizations. After this failed and the Tigers were blacklisted in 1997, the Tigers used the website to report on increasing military cooperation between the U.S. and the Sri Lankans. The Tigers linked U.S. advice given under the Joint Combined Exchange Training program and the Counter – Terrorism Enhancement Program to the increasing efficiency of what they were calling the Sri Lankan “Deep Penetration” unit. The Tigers tried to paint the ambush activities of the “U.S. trained - Deep Penetration unit” as government-sanctioned assassination attempts against the civilian leadership of the Tigers. The Sri Lankan government's own website was very silent about any training its forces may have been receiving from the U.S. probably (and smartly) for the operational security of the trainers and trainees. Whether U.S. advisors actually trained the Sri Lankan “Deep Penetration” unit or not, or coached them in the principles of Internal Defense and Development or not, is irrelevant. What is relevant is that the deep penetration ambush actions of the Sri Lankan Special Forces were in keeping with the principles of maximum intelligence and minimum violence and influenced Prabhakaran to come to the negotiating table.

A final criticism of my conclusion might be that the Sri Lankans were just plain lucky that things ended the way they did. One could say the Sri Lankans luckily benefited from the unfortunate 9/11 attacks in the U.S. that resulted in greater international support for cutting off funding for all terrorists, including the LTTE. But the Sri Lankan President herself would be the first person to say that nobody should

consider themselves lucky at the expense of the loss of innocents and would admonish anybody who would (Kumaratunga, 2001, p. A29). The impact of the 9/11 attacks only helped to solidify the unity of effort principle to which the Sri Lankans for the most part were already adhering.

One could also say the Sri Lankans were also lucky they did not lose their Prime Minister during the failed Black Tiger suicide attempt on October 30th, 2001 which could have further fueled the conflict. But the failed attack was not lucky. It was proof that the Sri Lankan Secret Service had learned considerably from its years of battling suicide bombers and could thwart such attempts.

What is fortunate is that the December 2001 elections brought a new Prime Minister to office whose policies and negotiating skills were in keeping with the principles of responsive government and were the final piece in the puzzle responsible for bringing the conflict to an end.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

Lessons learned from the nearly 20 year struggle of conventional armed forces against a modern asymmetrical threat within the island country of Sri Lanka should be used to improve the definitions of the principles of Internal Defense and Development in the next revision of the Joint TTP Manual for Foreign Internal Defense. The current definitions and their treatment in Appendix C of the manual are weak at best and could be improved greatly by simply taking into consideration some of the successes and failures of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces, Indian Peace Keeping Force, and their respective governments in their struggles with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

E. CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE DEFINITIONS AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE PRINCIPLES

1. Maximum Use of Intelligence

The current doctrine suggests that when coping with an asymmetric threat, intelligence efforts should be accurate, timely, reliable, penetrating, and compromising to

the enemy without offering too many explicit suggestions on how to do so. Further, many analysts are currently bemoaning the difficulty of studying groups like al Qaeda because, the analysts are hypothesizing that, al Qaeda is a highly amorphous / networked organization. This may yet turn out to truly be the case with al Qaeda, but my analysis of the LTTE, quite probably one of the most prolific suicide terrorist organizations in recent times, indicates that the LTTE was rather hierarchical. Similar to many other guerrilla organizations in the past, there was a leadership and an underground, an auxiliary, a body of fighters, and a wing of terrorists.

Based on this knowledge, whether the enemy is hierarchical or networked, I would suggest that intelligence analysts in the future should simply be urged to stay focused on identifying all of the military and paramilitary factions of the organization. They should identify the leadership and political arm of the organization. They should strive to determine the economical and technical backing and possible external support of the organization. Intelligence personnel should analyze the quality and personalities of the leadership, the strategies and tactics of the branches of the organization, the organization's competencies and weaknesses, and the psychological sympathies of the populace within which the enemy is hiding.

One analyst, who has studied the case of Sri Lanka for years, suggests that when dealing with the modern asymmetric threat, a country must develop a professional intelligence apparatus with comprehensive databases. He suggests that the government strive to map out the structure of the organization, locate and determine ways to isolate the elite leadership, and make a concerted effort to determine where the finances, arms, and explosives are coming from (Gunaratna, 2000).

He goes on to suggest that human intelligence (HUMINT) and informants must be employed to identify the true terrorists, and he cautions that the government must protect the informants it does acquire as highly valuable assets who are undoubtedly putting themselves in a high risk situation (Gunaratna, 2000). Most countries practiced HUMINT extensively during the Cold War. In the post-Cold War era, probably for fear of collusion / involvement with human rights abusers, many democracies allowed their HUMINT capabilities to wither in favor of more pristine signal and satellite intelligence systems. Recently, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S., many congressmen,

senators, and parliamentarians in democracies around the globe are expressing their desires to rebuild their countries' HUMINT capabilities to battle terrorism and rogue nations. Military, police, and intelligence organizations tasked with battling modern asymmetric threats should welcome this newly re-found interest and support for HUMINT. But simply having lawmaker / budgetary support does not make the job of conducting HUMINT operations any easier. Language, dialect, and cross-cultural communications skills cannot be developed overnight or in a crisis.

The Sri Lankan government and SLAF were able to penetrate and destroy the Marxist JVP because they were not hindered by an ethnic or linguistic divide. For the most part, the Sri Lankans never developed a similarly strong HUMINT capability for penetrating the LTTE, while there is evidence the LTTE may very well have been able to penetrate many elements of the government and SLAF. The SLAF largely proved unable to successfully penetrate the ethnically, religiously, and linguistically different LTTE. They may have tried to make up for this by exploiting the ethnicity and language skills of a select group of "Plantation Tamils" (versus the mostly "Jaffna Tamils" of the LTTE), but these efforts seem to have often only ended in the deaths of the informants. If other governments and armed forces intend to defeat asymmetric threats like the LTTE in the future, they will need to better cross these types of divides as well as jump these types of security perimeters.

Nor should governments sit idly by as they try to rebuild their own HUMINT capabilities. Information can, of course, always be bought, with intelligence to be derived from that information. Many suicide bombers justify their acts because their destitute families are financially rewarded for the bomber's actions. If governments are having difficulty penetrating organizations, they may be able to still gather needed intelligence by buying informants out of the organization. A reward program for defection could be extremely beneficial for developing a clearer picture of an asymmetric threat that employs suicide bombers, even if it only turned one bomber. A Sri Lankan general, for instance, developed a very clear picture of the internal workings of the suicide terrorist wing of the LTTE based on the interrogation of just one captured bomber. Besides the intelligence that can be gained from a defector, the psychological impact of defections from the organization can be devastating, sowing seeds of mistrust

throughout, as the British discovered in their successful endeavor in Malaya (Komer, 1972, pp. 72 – 75). Even without turning an informant, virtual HUMINT can be created by spreading rumors and misinformation that the enemy *has* been penetrated, causing the enemy to sometimes even turn on itself (Leites and Wolf, p. 142 –144). Based on the number of times Prabhakaran internally purged the LTTE, the Sri Lankans may have been employing some of these tactics. After the purges and years of fighting, he was left with only a hard-core center. It is against this core that I suggest the use of force must be applied to defeat the modern asymmetric threat.

2. Minimum Use of Violence

The current doctrine suggests that the use of force should be discreet, but again without offering too many suggestions about how to make it that way. One analyst of the conflict in Sri Lanka believed the SLAF would have been more successful if they had developed their highly mobile Counter-Terrorism (CT) and Quick Reaction Forces (QRF) sooner (Gunaratna, 2000). His assessment may be correct, because, in the end, CT and QRF forces did help the Sri Lankans bring the LTTE to the negotiating table; artillery and aerial bombardments did not. Air and artillery support was usually only effective when working in direct support of infantry and commando operations. The Sri Lankan Air Force seemed to have placed a lot of value on jet aircraft without considering switching to possibly more effective AC-130-type gunships. This may have been due to a realistic fear of SAMs. Future commanders, dealing with an asymmetric threat – and with combatants who hide in the jungle, and are equipped with and trained in the use of SAMs - will have to come up with a solution to overcome this threat to their airborne and air assault troops.

The Sri Lankans possessed several Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), but do not appear to have put them to much use. I suggest UAVs or drones could be used to locate or draw fire from SAMs, jet fighters could support gunships that could suppress the area, and infantry forces or heli-borne commandos, trained and equipped with night vision and Infra-Red devices, could clear the areas and destroy the SAM threats at night when the SAMs are less effective. Once the SAM threat is reduced, more and more raids can be conducted against other important pieces of the enemy infrastructure: boats,

explosives, weapons, munitions, trucks, motorcycles, food, fuel, training areas, caves, tunnels, communications, and cadre, etc.

Many democracies have a hard time stomaching counter-leadership targeting because some argue it is a form of state-sponsored assassination (Tucker, 1997, p. 113). In the wake of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S., there was heated debate about whether democracies needed to reconsider their policies on attacking enemy leaders for preemptive and disruptive purposes. The debate does not have to be heated. No democracy needs to state in a policy that it supports assassination (Tucker, pp. 114 –115). Rather, democracies simply need to recognize that the asymmetric threat has already declared war upon it, its citizens, and its leaders, and accept that the enemy leaders are legitimate military targets of war. The case of Sri Lanka proves, yet again, that counter-leadership targeting of the asymmetric enemy is not only prudent and an act of self-defense, but also very productive. The Sri Lankan Special Forces did not succeed in ambushing the leader of the LTTE, Prabhakaran, but they did succeed in killing one of his top generals. This may have greatly influenced Prabhakaran in his decision to negotiate the final peace agreement. Also, the knowledge of the efforts against him forced Prabhakaran to surround himself with bodyguards and stay constantly on the move, probably greatly reducing his effectiveness and disrupting his ability to lead (Gunaratna, 2000).

The Sri Lankan Special Forces “Deep Penetration Unit” appears to have focused its efforts on vehicular ambushes, maybe in a counter-response to the prolific use of the same technique by the LTTE. I would suggest that the employment of Special Forces snipers would have been an even better discreet use of force. By definition, snipers are discriminate. Again, democracies often shy away from the perceived ugliness or nastiness of sniper warfare. In reality, democracies should embrace the concept of “micro-targeting” for the snipers’ ability to legitimately eliminate the cadre of the organization when battling the asymmetric threat (Leites and Wolf, pp.137 – 138).

There is evidence that Sri Lankan Army Military Police and Commando units were trained in dog handling, but little evidence that they successfully employed the dogs in the jungles. Tracking with dogs or by highly-skilled men has long been known to be an effective tool against the guerrilla in the jungle (Komer, p. 47) and should be learned

by any unit about to enter that environment. Based on the considerable amount of noise the Tigers made on their web site about the possible procurement of flamethrowers by the Sri Lankan Army, one may want to consider their employment also, if not for their effectiveness, for their psychological impact alone.

I uncovered no evidence that Sri Lankan forces tried to employ non-lethal weapons in urban areas in an attempt to protect the innocent from undue harm. I did uncover ample evidence that Sri Lankan forces used lethal force to quell riots amongst the Tamil population, which may have led to even more years of strife and dissension. Commanders planning operations in the future, where their units may be faced with an angry populace, should strongly consider training and equipping the troops with at least some form of a non-lethal weapon.

3. Unity of Effort

The current doctrine stresses coordination and cooperation amongst operations and intelligence, between the military and police, and between the services and branches, and reminds the government not to neglect the rural areas in favor of the urban areas (or vice versa) in its definition of unity of effort. This definitional guidance, though more thorough than the definitions offered for the first two variables, may have to be expanded when facing the modern asymmetric threat.

For instance, information sharing might not be enough. Operations personnel must work closely with intelligence personnel. In the case of Sri Lanka, intelligence analysts may have been picking up indicators of impending LTTE attacks on several occasions that were not correctly identified, analyzed, reported, or sufficiently fused together for operational personnel. The key operational challenge is the development of actionable intelligence or warnings with sufficient reaction time. Operational personnel could assist the process by prioritizing the intelligence collection effort and assisting the analysts in de-conflicting contrary reports with more reconnaissance and surveillance.

The case of Sri Lanka further suggests that joint and combined operations work best when the ground commander issues a clear intent and air, naval, and artillery assets support infantry attacks while special operations and police forces conduct economy of force operations. When battling the asymmetric threat, justified and proportional rules of

engagement must be defined and troops must always maintain the right of self-defense. Goals and objectives must be stated and measures of effectiveness developed.

Once again, body counts proved not to be an effective measurement tool and may have led to exaggerations and atrocities and an actual prolongation of the conflict. A more effective goal may have been to reduce the number of suicide bombings by the LTTE. Objectives could have been developed, for instance, to locate and destroy the limited number of Black Tiger trainers and resources. A measure of effectiveness could have been the capture and destruction of Black Tiger explosives.

A final improvement to the definition of unity of effort that the case of Sri Lanka suggests is the need to sever outside or international support to the enemy. This need has been identified before (Leites and Wolf, p. 24), but its importance needs to be stressed again in the next revision of the U.S. joint doctrine. One effect of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. was a more international effort to freeze the assets of many groups like the LTTE.

The LTTE was a terrorist organization that long outlived the life expectancy of most such groups because it was tied to a national separatist movement. The insurgency resonated with an ethnically homogenous populace rightfully fearful and somewhat understandably vengeful towards a repressive majority. Prabhakaran even developed a motto for the group: “The Thirst of the Tigers is the Tamil Eelam Motherland” (DeSilva, p. 224). They were supported by an internationally organized crime, drug, arms smuggling, and shipping enterprise, and a vast diaspora. The LTTE became a multi-million dollar per year enterprise thanks to its illegal activities. One Sri Lankan general described his efforts to confront this enterprise as an attempt to defeat “the paradox of the diaspora” (Munasinghe, p. 229). Members of the diaspora donated to the terrorist organization so the struggle would continue and they could retain their refugee status in accepting countries like Canada. The terrorist organization used funds from the diaspora to launder funds from its other illegal activities. Without “sustained international cooperation” it was difficult to sever the resources and support (Gunaratna, 2000). Only after the events of 9/11 did the Sri Lankan government receive the international support it needed to begin to cripple the finances of the LTTE. Governments confronting similar organizations in the future will have to conduct similar efforts to garner international support for clamping down on terrorist fundraising activities.

4. Responsive Government

The current doctrine suggests that a government facing an insurgency be considerate of the needs of the minority as expressed by their representatives. This admonishment may not be enough for the government facing a modern asymmetric threat like the LTTE. When moderate Tamil politicians attempted to work within the Sri Lankan Government, Prabhakaran had them killed (Byman, 1997, p. 157). This suggests a need for the government to isolate the extremists and protect the moderates within the minority. Only towards the end of the struggle did the Sri Lankan government begin to make a more concerted effort to protect Tamil moderates.

The government may have to negotiate some form of regional autonomy or self-government to appease the minority, but concessions like this can give the impression that terrorism pays. This is why one examiner of ethnic conflicts has suggested that concessions be coupled with the concept of “in-group policing” (Byman, p. 149). The minority group is to be forced to take responsibility for combating the lawlessness within its own ranks (Byman, pp. 162 - 166).

In-group policing could be further assisted in the case of Sri Lanka if the government makes an effort to get Tamil representation back into the army and police forces. This would require a rehabilitation and insertion plan. Knowing this, the Sri Lankan government attempted to do a good thing by rewarding Tigers who gave up the fight with amnesty and rehabilitation programs. This approach met with great success when Italy was battling the Red Brigades in the 1970s (Ferracuti, 1998, pp. 59-64). But the Sri Lankan programs backfired because the Sinhalese guards failed to protect the Tigers in rehab from angry Sinhalese mobs after the active Tigers continued their assaults. In the wake of the attacks against Tigers in rehab programs, other Tigers no longer had a reward to give up their fight. Their only reward was to continue the fight for the intrinsic rewards of fighting itself or the intrinsic rewards of belonging to the group.

It has been noted that some people are drawn to terrorist and guerrilla organizations because membership rewards them with a sense of group belonging, achievement of status, and respect from a constituency and that these aspects may also serve as their motivation for staying in the group (Reich, 1998, p. 277). But it has also been noted that, “not even all individuals who share the goals of a terrorist organization

agree that terrorism is the best means” (Crenshaw, 1981, p. 380). The recent move by the current U.S. administration to more accurately label suicide bombers as homicide bombers is probably, therefore, very prudent. The bombers are not only committing suicide, but are also murdering innocents. By applying the more appropriate label, moderate elements within the asymmetric organization may begin to re-examine the goals of the extremist terrorist wing.

The military can assist the government by developing a Strategic Information Warfare campaign focused against the command and control of the terrorists and an Information Operation that addresses the public. The public needs to be informed that it is being victimized by the propaganda and psychological operations of the terrorists, and that the terrorist homicide bombers are being psychologically manipulated themselves.

The current doctrine also advises government officials to attend to the educational, health, labor, agricultural, transportation, business, economic, and commercial needs of the country. This may be an uphill battle for a small country like Sri Lanka, ravaged by two decades of fighting. The military can assist the government by developing a Civil – Military Operations (CMO) plan with long-term goals. Civil Affairs (CA) units can orchestrate engineering operations to rebuild roads and schools and medical and dental units can attend to the needs of a neglected populace (Leites and Wolf, p. 74). Minority youths must be brought back to school and taught more fair-minded histories.

One analyst also suggests the need for political bipartisanship when democracies confront asymmetric threats (Gunaratna, 2000). I would further suggest that the case of Sri Lanka demonstrates the need for strong leadership. Both bipartisanship and leadership were finally found when a Prime Minister with strong diplomatic skills was elected from the opposing party from that of the Sri Lankan President. The new Prime Minister has already made great strides in addressing the economic conditions and reassuring the security concerns of the ethnic and religious minority. He has taken steps to respect their language and culture in order to alleviate their grievances. Other democracies of the world should encourage and support his efforts in eliminating one asymmetric threat, as it will continue to take international efforts to defeat other current and future asymmetric threats.

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