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**INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION IN INTRA-STATE
CONFLICTS: THE CASE IN SRI LANKA**

by

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March 2013

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THE CASE IN SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIADMK	All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
APC	All Party Conference
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
DK	Dravidar Kazhagam
DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
EPRLF	Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
INC	Indian National Congress
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
JVP	Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil eelam
MDMK	Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam
MGR	M G Ramachandran
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
PDK	Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam
PMK	Pattali Makkal Katchi
PTA	Prevention of Terrorism Act
SLOC	Sea Lines of Communication
TADA	Terrorist And Desruptive Activities Act
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization
UK	United Kingdom

UN	United Nations
UNP	United National Party
UPA	United Pregressive AllianceRequired if thesis contains six or more.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

With the termination of the Cold War era, global conflicts have changed and resulted in a new global conflict management system. The world witnessed a rapid decrease of traditional interstate disputes and a comparable increase of intrastate disputes.¹ Most of these disputes were based on structural, political, socio-economic, and cultural/perceptual factors. Because these intrastate conflicts were during the Cold War era, most of them were subsumed under wide ranging U.S.-Soviet rivalry.² Sometimes, major international organizations intervened to solve these problems with the keen interest and directives of the major superpowers. The unipolar power system—which emerged with the termination of Cold War era—changed the global conflict management system and showed little interest in intrastate conflicts. Countries did not intervene unless driven by self-motivation.³ Sometimes, they intervened under the guise of humanitarian intervention to fulfill their self-interests. As a result, intrastate conflicts tended to be more autonomous from the sphere of major states.⁴ This situation has produced a new political order that encourages the emergence of intrastate conflicts all over the world leading to the situation we see today.

This new political order, in the absence of the classic competition of the great powers, demands the intervention of third parties—especially regional organizations and stronger countries—to solve the internal conflicts of other nations.⁵ Most continents, with

¹ Neil MacFarlane, *Intervention in Contemporary World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 50.

² Geoffrey Kemp, “Regional Security, Arms Control and the End of Cold War,” in *Resolving Third World Conflict: Challenges for a new Era*, eds. Sheryl J. Brown and Kimber M. Schraub (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1992), 124.

³ Chester A. Crocker, “Intervention,” in *Turbulent Peace : The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, eds. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 233.

⁴ Paul F. Diehl and Joseph Lepgold, *Regional Conflict Management* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 10.

⁵ Thomas Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), 133.

the exception of Asia, have their own region-wide organizations.⁶ Therefore, there is a greater chance that individual countries will get involved. When there is no effective collective conflict-management system to solve problems, the stronger country in the region—militarily and economically—usually tends to intervene to solve the intrastate conflicts between the weaker countries in the region; and this intervention is usually guided by self-interest.

The attitudes and motivations of the third party can change both the nature of the conflict and the end result of the intervention. Sometimes, interventions increase the severity of the conflicts in terms of killing more humans and resulting in many more billions of damage to infrastructures. According to Edward N. Luttwak, “their suggested ceasefires and armistices, sometimes, prevent the transformation of war into peace.”⁷ Meanwhile, some countries sabotage the processes of intervention to achieve their own political interests. Good motivations and attitudes do not always bring favorable results. The success or failure of interventions which have good attitudes and motivations depends on the capability of the intervener, the socio-political acceptance of the subjective country, and the stage of the conflict.⁸

Intervention is a projection of power. A powerful country’s aspiration to establish peace is often connected with many motives which project their power politics.⁹ As medium-strong countries have limited foreign policy instruments, they use their intervention as a tool to enhance the prestige and the power of influence in the region. Sometimes, this method is used to contain a dispute that may spill over into the mediator’s territory. It may also be used to deny their rivals’ opportunities to intervene in a particular regional problem.

⁶ Connie Peck, “The role of Regional Organizations in Preventing and Resolving Conflict,” in *Turbulent Peace: A Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Haampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 563.

⁷ Edward N. Luttwak, “The Curse of Inconclusive Intervention,” in *Turbulent Peace: A Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Haampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 268.

⁸ Crocker, “Intervention,” 233.

⁹ William Zartman and Saadia Touval, “Mediation: The Role of Third Party Diplomacy and Informal Peacekeeping,” in *Resolving Third World Conflict: Challenges for a new Era*, ed. Sheryl J. Brown and kimber M. Schraub (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1992), 243.

While intervention—without a doubt—is about projecting power, the decision to intervene is not always shaped by projection of power, and it may not be the only factor that shapes the decision to intervene. The focus of this thesis is to identify some of the factors that shape intervention. While projection of power motivation may drive the initial decision, the actual intervention is shaped by various other issues, including domestic ones.

The existing literature on intervention by strong countries into the intrastate conflicts of weaker countries can be divided into three categories. The first set of arguments support domestic concerns as the main cause of intervention. The second set of arguments outline strategic reasons as the main cause of intervention. The third category offers the argument that the primary motivation for intervention motivation is usually a combination of various factors, and cannot be categorized as falling exclusively under domestic or strategic concerns.

This thesis will try to discern the various factors involved in this type of intervention by looking at the case of India's intervention in Sri Lanka. In 1987, the Indian government forced the Sri Lanka government to stop their ongoing successful war against LTTE terrorists. In 2000, India chose not to intervene to save the lives of 40,000 Sri Lankan soldiers who were trapped in Jaffna peninsula due to an LTTE offensive—even though the Sri Lanka government requested intervention by India to save those lives. However, when the Sri Lankan government again launched a mass-scale operation against the LTTE terrorists in 2009, the government of India did not interfere as they did in 1987. This attitude of the Indian government gives rise to a series of critical questions: What is the driving force behind these two very different decisions? Is it domestic or strategic? What is driving India's foreign policy towards Sri Lanka? Why has India not intervened in the current state—one which presents a logical opportunity to do so? Does the case of Indian intervention policy in Sri Lanka support the domestic or the strategic argument in the literature?

B. IMPORTANCE

Although opponents in a conflict welcome intervention by a third party to produce favorable results, the third parties usually intervene with motivations that fulfill their own interests, rather than those of the two opposing forces. Such interventions can affect the continuation of the war, and may also amplify the severity of the war and increase the total amount of destruction.

Humanitarian interventions are among the most controversial, as they threaten the sovereignty of the subjective country under the pretense of protecting human rights.¹⁰ During the Cold War era, the sovereignty of weaker countries was maintained under 'big brother' protection; however, with the termination of it, stronger countries started to breach the sovereignty of weaker countries with varying intentions under the guise of humanitarian intervention.¹¹

Fluctuating decisions of the intervener, over a period of time, may drastically influence the war and the internal matters of the [target or subjective] country. Any shifts in intervention style during a war may affect the credibility of the intervener, and drastically change the shape of the dispute. Furthermore, improper intervention practices raise significant questions about state sovereignty, domestic jurisdiction, and the legitimate use of force. The case of Indian's relations with Sri Lanka will help us understand these various factors. Therefore, the study of this case makes an important contribution to the literature about intervention in the post-Cold-War period.

The case study is also important for Sri Lanka, and the region of South Asia in particular, as Sri Lanka has been invaded 17 times by India in the past 2500 years.¹² To understand what motives India (or Indian principalities over the years) had to enter Sri Lanka will also help predict the future. Knowing those concerns, the policy makers of Sri Lanka can formulate its national and foreign policy to establish a mutually beneficial

¹⁰ Joseph S. Nye, *Understanding International Politics: An Introduction to Theory and History* (New York: Pearson, 2009), 166–168.

¹¹ Richard K. Betts, *Conflict After the Cold War* (New York: Pearson, 2008), 246.

¹² Rohan Gunaratne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka: The Role of India's Intelligence Agencies* (Colombo: Gunaratne Offset, 1993), 473.

relationship with India. Furthermore, this finding is equally important for the region of South Asia, as India is a powerful actor and its relationship with a smaller country presents an important example for others and the future of the region.

C. PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESIS

India has always preferred keeping Sri Lanka under its hegemony. Geo-politically and socio-economically, Sri Lanka has remained very important for India during the post-colonial period. Therefore, the strategic concern of India in Sri Lanka has been constant—except when there was something specific to domestic policy that directly affected strategic concerns. The degree to which these strategic concerns have captured India’s attention has varied, but there is no doubt that India has always looked at Sri Lanka as an vital factor of its foreign policy. What then, explains the huge variation—from one situation to the next—in its policy towards Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict?

Therefore, my argument in this research is that the decision by the Indian governments to intervene in the Sri Lankan intrastate conflict is deeply shaped by its own domestic concerns. While strategic concerns have fairly remained constant or even when strategic concerns have been high, India’s intervention behavior has varied with changes in domestic variables. In other words, strategic interests remained fairly constant and domestic interest varied, resulting in an alternating pattern of intervention decisions. In fact, I support the argument in the literature that domestic concerns often trump the strategic concerns of intervention. That means that domestic concerns drove foreign policy, even though strategic concerns provided the primary reasons to intervene.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Domestic Concern as Motivation for Intervention

Michel Keren and Donald A. Sylvan’s work offers a summary of domestic reasons for intervention by looking at the case of American and French intervention in the conflict of Rwanda/Burundi in 1994 and 1996. According to their findings, the French decision to intervene in 1994 was driven by a mixture of three factors: guilt,

genuine concern, and domestic political pressure. When the same genocide took place again on a lesser scale, the French government did not intervene to solve the conflict. Karen and Sylvan argue that the Rwandan crisis in 1996 was less an issue of genocide and more an issue of humanitarian crisis. Therefore, they had no domestic political pressure to intervene as in 1994. The domestic decision was that it was a problem that should be dealt with by the NGOs.¹³

When the United States is concerned, they did not intervene in the conflict of Rwanda/Burundi in 1994, but they intervened in 1996 because of the changes of the domestic public opinion. According to Karen and Sylvan the main reason for non-intervention in 1994 was the ill-conceived humanitarian mission in Somalia four years before. Therefore, there was a strong public pressure against the intervention in another conflict. The ambiguity of whether the situation in Rwanda met the legal definition of genocide by international humanitarian law also affected the decision for non-intervention. However, in 1996, the United States intervened to assist the refugees with their immediate humanitarian needs, but the intervention force could only receive orders from U.S. commanders. Authors argue that this situation was a result of the constraint drum beat of domestic public opinion. However, there are some gaps in this study. For instance, these authors identified the different motives for intervention by the two countries in 1994 and 1996, but they did not address why those countries intervened differently, and at different stages of the same problem. Furthermore, they have not attempted to compare the situations in 1994 and 1996 to find out the similar and different factors, which directly impacted intervention decisions.

Meanwhile, Patrick M. Ragan provides a better understanding of the domestic pressure for intervention. He posits the conditions that the intervener should satisfy prior to an intervention. He writes that a “decision of intervention is not a function of the moves or countermeasures of the target country but rather a result of internal processes in

¹³ Micheal Meren and Donald A. Sylvan, *International Intervention: Sovereignty versus Responsibility* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), 63–69.

intervening country.”¹⁴ Furthermore, he says that “if the estimated probability of a successful outcome with an intervention is low, then the state is unlikely to intervene.”¹⁵ His argument rings true, but he needs to specify how internal processes contribute to the decision for intervention in another country. I hope to demonstrate this in the case of India’s intervention in Sri Lanka.

David Carment and James Patric state that cultural affinities between the intervening country and the target country initiate the intervention.¹⁶ This kind of intervention often occurs between border-sharing countries. In such circumstances, domestic concerns are the main cause of intervention. The case study of India in Sri Lanka is an example of an intervention based on cultural affinities. While accepting this humanitarian aspect of intervention, Robert L. Phillips and Duane L. Cady describe the moral foundation of the initiation of intervention. According to them, states intervene to help people who are in need, and the motive for intervention is ethical.¹⁷

Domestic politics sometimes play a major role, both as constraints and opportunities, in intervention. Furthermore, these domestic policies considerably affect the formulation of foreign policies that drive decisions to intervene. Thomas Princen sees the interests of intervention based on domestic concerns. He describes how representative governments have more constraints than governments based on one party. In addition to the intervener’s domestic concerns, he says that the domestic concerns of the opponents in the dispute also play a considerable role.¹⁸ In the issue of India’s intervention in Sri Lanka, the Indian government led by the Congress Party in 1987 and the government lead by the United Progressive Alliance in 2009 acted in a considerably different manner. Where the domestic concerns of the opponents are concerned, the LTTE expected India’s

¹⁴ Patric M. Ragan, *Ragon, Civil Wars and Foreign Powers: Outside Intervantion in Intrastste Conflic* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 42.

¹⁵ Ibid., 44.

¹⁶ David Carment and James Patric, “International Constraints and Interstate Ethnic Conflict: Towards a Crisis – Based Assesment of Irredentism,” *Journal of the Conflict Resolution* 39, no.1 (1995a): 82–109.

¹⁷ Robert L. Phillips and Duane L. Cady, *Humanitarian Intervention: Just War Vs. Pacifism* (London: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1996) 5–7, 65.

¹⁸ Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, 222–223.

intervention in 1987 and 2009, but the government of Sri Lanka wanted to settle the problem on its own.

2. Strategic Concerns as Motivation for Intervention

Saadia Touval and William Zartman examine the strategic causes of intervention. They say that stronger powers intervene to obtain the gratitude of either one or both opponents, to deny the non-regional powers' opportunities for intervention, and to become a responsible state in the region with the intent to project their power. In fact, they say, "states use intervention as a foreign policy instrument."¹⁹ However, they argue, comparatively, a "mediation by small and medium-sized powers is also self-interest, some of which is related to domestic issues."²⁰ Basically, they intervene to enhance their influence and prestige, since they have very limited foreign policy tools.

In his book, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, Thomas Princen divides the intervener's interests into two categories: public and private. He posits that public interest is the establishment of peace extended to the larger community. The other category—private interest—is settling the dispute with the intention of gaining prestige and a sense of worth among other countries. These kinds of motives address the strategic concerns of intervening countries. For example, Algeria enhanced its international status by successfully intervening in the U.S.-Iran hostage crisis in 1979.²¹

Martha Finnemore says that decisions for intervention are a combination of norms, interests, and actions. She understands that norms shape interests and interests shape actions. Sometimes, strategic factors—like power constraints—shape the behavior of the intervener. According to her studies, these norms make favorable conditions for

¹⁹ Saadia Touval and William Zartman, "International Mediation in the Post-Cold War Era," in *Turbulent Peace: A Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Haampson, and Pamela Aall (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 428.

²⁰ Ibid., 431.

²¹ Princen, *Intermediaries in International Conflict*, 50.

intervention, but do not determine it.²² In fact, she admits that it is strategic concerns that drive a state towards intervention.

Air Vice-Marshal R. A. Mason says that countries intervene in the conflicts of other countries to project their power over strategic concerns. He defines intervention as an instrument of foreign policy. According to his arguments, countries use intervention to achieve interests that are determined by politics. They use defensive intervention to maintain current external policies, and they use offensive intervention to change the regime and the policy of the target country. In sum, he says “intervention is an instrument of foreign policy that is applied by a superior state when its power fails to move the target state in the intended direction.”²³ Jacob Bercovitch also agrees with Thomas, and he further elaborates on the political incentive for intervention. According to him, countries intervene to achieve political interests without arousing opposition.²⁴

3. The Alternative: Understanding Motivations for Interventions

Some arguments about the motivation for intervention cannot be specifically categorized either under domestic or strategic concerns. Some arguments under this category are neither domestic nor strategic. Meanwhile, some arguments equally fit for both the concerns.

Patrick M. Regan explaining the terms of intervention, positing that, intervention takes place when, “there is a reasonable expectation of success, the projected time horizon for achieving the outcome is short, and domestic opposition is minimal.”²⁵ Converse to this argument, Robert C. Toth and Kohut Andrew say that humanitarian

²² Martha Finnemore, “Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention,” in *Conflict After the Cold War*, ed. Richard K. Betts (New York: Pearson, 2008), 236–238.

²³ Thomas G. Otte, “On Intervention: Some Introductory remarks,” in *Military Intervention: From Gunboat Diplomacy to Humanitarian Intervention*, ed. Andrew M. Dorman and Thomas G. Otte (Brookfield: Dartmouth Publishers, 1995), 7.

²⁴ Jacob Bercovitch, “Mediation in International Conflict: An Overview of Theory, A Review of Practice,” in *Peacemaking in International Conflict: Methods and Techniques*, ed. William Zartman and Lewis Rasmussen (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 133–135.

²⁵ Ragon, *Civil Wars and Civil Powers*, 5.

aspects are more salient in an intervention than the interests.²⁶ According to Blechman, the moral dilemma of the constituencies instigates the governments to intervene.²⁷

Micheal and Donald have studied about the social psychological profile of an intervention, and they have found three main psychological factors that drive the decision for intervention: cost/reward analysis, empathy, and similarity. First, they say, an intervention is a result of a cost/reward analysis. Intervention gets encouraged when its cost is relatively less and the expected benefits are high. Similarly, when intervention gives cheaper option to a problem. Second, an intervention is a result of empathy with the subjective party's pain. Mass media is a primary driver for interventions based on empathy. Upon being informed of catastrophes, countries sometimes intervene in another's conflicts even though the intervention does not support cost-benefit analysis. Third, decisions for intervention are influenced by an extended or constricted perspective. In other words, similarity between groups enhances empathy, and dissimilarity inhibits empathy.²⁸

Some scholars express that there are no common motives for interventions. For example, as Robert Cooper and Berdal Mats describe: "third party intervention is *sui generis*." According to them, "third party interventions are themselves unique and that therefore the motives and strategies of intervention will always vary from case to case."²⁹

According to the "Contingency Model," there is a direct combination between the state of intensity and the method of intervention.³⁰ According to that model, there are four stages of escalation in any conflict: discussion, polarization, segregation, and destruction. In the discussion stage, the methods of intervention are conciliation and negotiation, and when the conflict shifts to the polarization stage, the methods of

²⁶ Andrew Kohut and Toth C. Roberth, "Arms and People," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no.6 (1994): 47–61.

²⁷ Bary M. Blechman, "The Intervention Dilemma," *Washington Quarterly* 18, no.3 (1995): 63–73.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 52–54.

²⁹ Robert Cooper and Berdal Mats, "Outside Intervention in Ethnic conflicts," *Survival* 35, no.5 (1993): 134.

³⁰ Fisher, Ronald J. and Loreleigh Keashley, "The Potential Complementarity of Mediation and Consultation Within a Contingency Model of Third Party Intervention," *Journal of Peace Research* 28, no.1 (1991): 29–42.

intervention changes to consultation and pure mediation. In the next escalation stage, segregation, the third-party intervenes with arbitration and power mediation. Then, in the final stage of escalation, destruction, the interveners use peacekeeping and arbitration to solve conflicts.

However, when it comes to practice, this model is very simplistic. Most interveners do not follow this concrete sequence, and there is no definite criterion to differentiate the stages of escalation. Furthermore, the method of intervention is mostly dependent upon the different motives of the interveners. Also, interveners use different methods of interventions, even though the stage of conflict remains same.

E. METHODS AND SOURCES

This thesis considers logically whether India was driven by domestic or strategic concerns in its intervention in the Sri Lankan intrastate conflict, based on the descriptive case study analysis method. Four significant Indian intervention policy decisions—which shaped the decision to either continue or end the Sri Lanka war—are analyzed to discover India’s motivations. The first decision is India’s two-pronged policy approach in Sri Lanka after the anti-Tamil riots in 1983. The second intervention decision is India’s move to stop the successful government operation against the LTTE organization in 1987. The third is India’s non-intervention in 2000 to save the lives of 40,000 Sri Lankan soldiers who were trapped in Jaffna peninsula due to an LTTE offensive. At that time, the Sri Lankan government requested that India intervene to save those lives. The fourth is India’s non-intervention to stop the successful government operation against the LTTE organization in 2009. On these four occasions, the domestic situation in Sri Lanka, was more or less the same, but Indian decision of intervention was different. That means domestic situation in Sri Lanka was not the deciding factor of intervention. The decision of India’s intervention points to factors which are external to Sri Lanka. Therefore, these three significant incidents will be analyzed, to understand what the non-Sri Lankan motivations were for India.

This thesis is proceeded in the following manner. Initially, I explore India’s domestic policy in 1987, 2000, and 2009—and then I analyze the domestic situation in

order to find the possible differences that drove the decisions for intervention and non-intervention. Then, the thesis describes the nature of the foreign policy of India in 1987, 2000, and 2009—which is analyzed to determine the possible strategic policy differences, in an attempt to learn the differences in strategic concerns as they relate to intervention.

After describing the contemporary domestic and strategic concerns in 1987, 2000, and 2009, I then explore the connection between domestic policy and strategic policy in India. With that, I hope to determine whether or not domestic concerns trumped strategic concerns for intervention in the Sri Lankan conflict.

The resources for this thesis include publications comprised of books, news reports, journals, official documents, and academic articles available on reliable websites.

F. THESIS OVERVIEW

Chapter II focuses on the contextualization Indian intervention in Sri Lanka from contemporary independence to the initiation of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It discusses Indian intervention in Sri Lanka in four sections: historical Indo-Lanka relations, relations during colonial period, and relations during the Nehruvian and the post-Nehruvian periods. Chapter II argues that strategic concerns were not the factor that shaped India's intervention during this period, since India did not have many strategic reasons to intervene. Furthermore, it argues that there were domestic factors for India to intervene during this period, but they were not strong enough to convince the Indian central government to intervene. Finally, it shows that the non-availability of strong domestic concerns was the reason of non-intervention during this period.

Chapter III addresses dynamic Indian domestic concerns that supported intervention. It focuses on the first decade after the initiation of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. It addresses the question of why India suddenly changed to an interventionist phase in the 1980s. Focusing on two main incidents which led India to intervene in Sri Lanka, this chapter argues that the availability of strong domestic concerns was the reason behind new interventionist attitude of India.

The role of India's domestic concerns in this transformation—and its decisions for intervention in the 2000s—is the main focus of Chapter IV. This chapter basically analyzes India's shift to a hands-off interventionist attitude after the IPKF debacle and assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India. The first section describes the background setting of the hands-off policy. The other two sections focus on two significant incidents which show how domestic concerns—rather than strategic concerns—shaped India's decision to intervene in Sri Lanka. These two incidents exemplify how India's decision for intervention varied in direct accordance with its domestic concerns.

Chapter V concludes by analyzing how the decision for intervention varied with the contemporary domestic situation in India by considering the entire period following India's independence. Furthermore, it predicts how India's future decisions related to intervention will change in the future based on the analysis.

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II. CONTEXTUALIZING INDIAN INTERVENTION IN SRI LANKA: INDO-SRI LANKA RELATIONS UNTIL 1983

India and Sri Lanka gained independence in 1947 and 1948, respectively, yet both countries experienced different independence struggles and were exposed to very different political circumstances after independence. Their different political experiences and structures has shaped their relationship with each other. In other words, Indian intervention over Sri Lanka and the country's response to it is based on their experiences as well as current domestic events. This chapter illustrates this by looking at the history of the two countries until 1983.

Indians organized both violent and non-violent movements at national and regional levels to gain independence from the British imperial authority. The Quit India Movement reached its peaks during the World War II, and withdrew the British in 1947. Immediately after independence, India fought with Pakistan in dispute over Kashmir, and showed Indian superiority in the region. By contrast Sri Lankan independence occurred as a part of the British region in the department without any major independence movements, and there were no significant clashes in the country after independence. India's experiences have shaped defense structures as the country has a need to defend its borders. Meanwhile, Sri Lanka looks as Indian assertions in a defensive and suspicious way, because the Sri Lankan military strength was inferior to tackle possible aggression of India. This insecurity defined relations between the two countries after the independence.

In spite of the psychological impact of India's regional hegemonic power and its superiority in terms of geographical size, population, and resources, India did not intervene in Sri Lankan affairs until the emergence of Sri Lanka's civil war in 1983. Prior to 1983, there were reasons for India's intervention—most of them relating to India's strategic concerns—but it did not intervene, except to hold dialogue at the diplomatic level over common bi-lateral issues. This non-interventionist behavior leads to the question of why India did not intervene in Sri Lankan matters until the ethnic war started in Sri Lanka. This question is the main focus of this chapter. India did not intervene in Sri

Lanka during the post-independence phase until the initiation of ethnic conflict, since there were no important domestic concerns calling for intervention, despite the presence of a few strategic concerns. It would appear seems that that the lack of intervention during this period was the result of the non-availability of any such considerable domestic factors.

This chapter is divided into three sections describing the three eras of India policy towards Sri Lanka: the historical era prior to independence, the Nehruvian era, and the post-Nehruvian era (which extends up to the initiation of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka). The first section of this chapter describes the historical aspects of the Indo-Lanka relationship up to the contemporary independence of both countries, because understanding post-independence Indo-Lanka relations requires some knowledge of the historical relationship between the two countries. The second section describes Indo-Lanka relations during the Nehruvian era and how India and Sri Lanka continued post-colonial bi-lateral relations under the auspices of Jawaharlal Nehru. This era is of momentous importance to Indo-Ceylon relations because of the surfacing of issues rooted in the colonial period. Furthermore, this section describes the situational policies of the ruling regimes in Sri Lanka that affected the domestic and strategic concerns of India, and how Nehru shaped all those controversial issues as a universally admired and respected Asian leader. The third section covers the post-Nehruvian era up to 1983. This section describes in detail how the successive Indian governments after Nehru dealt with these issues through mutual dialogue and understanding.

A. HISTORICAL INDO-LANKA RELATIONS

Indo-Lanka relations have a long-rooted history of 2500 years. Sinhalese, the majority of Sri Lankans, are descendants of settlers who came from North India, and they inherited their religion—Buddhism, also from India—2300 years ago. The next largest population in Sri Lanka, the Tamils, has historical affinities with South India. Some of them are descendants of South Indian invaders,³¹ and some are descendants of Indian Tamils who were brought to Sri Lanka by colonial powers. These communal and

³¹ S.U. kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations* (Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries, 1965), 2.

religious affinities between the two countries provide the foundation of Indo-Lanka relations, but the same affinities sometimes cause problems between the two countries.

1. Communal and Religious Affinities

According to the great chronicle of Sri Lanka, *Mahawamsa*, the Sinhalese originated from the Aryans who lived in North India. The story is that King Vijaya, who came to Sri Lanka in 542 B.C. with 700 of his followers, was the first Aryan in Sri Lanka, and that Sinhalese history started with his arrival. The Sinhalese language and literature owes much to indigenous Indian languages and literacy forms, and until the eleventh century A.D. the Sinhalese were closely affiliated with North Indian culture.

According to Sinhalese mytho-history, Buddhism spread from India over 2300 years ago, and it was the main bond between the two countries in ancient history. King Ashoka, (273–232 BC) sent an emissary to propagate Buddhism in Ceylon—and therefore never invaded Ceylon because of the countries' close relationship based on Buddhism.³² As a result, ancient empires from North India did not extend to extreme south of peninsula.³³ Annually, thousands of people made pilgrimage to places sacred to Buddhism in India and brought arts and architecture which was Buddhist in character to Sri Lanka. The story of Indo-Lanka relations, therefore, began when Buddhism spread from India to Sri Lanka.³⁴

The South Indian invasions started during the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, as several South Indian empires—the Chola, the Pandyan, and the Vijayan—rose during this period. These empires had a profound impact on Ceylon, both politically and culturally.³⁵ Some of descendants of the Tamil invaders settled in the northern and

³² D Wijesinghe, "Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy," *Sunday Observer*, August 22, 2010.

³³ S.U. Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 1.

³⁴ Sumit Ganguly, *Indian Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 34.

³⁵ Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 2.

eastern parts of the country³⁶ and established an independent kingdom in the North during the ninth century, which continued until the Portuguese conquered the country in 1505.

South Indian influence in Sri Lanka increased with the bringing of wives for Sri Lankan kings from the Royal families of South India. The first king, Vijaya, brought his wife from a royal family in Madurai, and also brought wives for his followers Tamil areas³⁷ close to 542 B.C. After the tenth century, many Sinhalese kings continued this custom. These intermarriages paved way many other Tamils to come and settle in Sri Lanka.

After a few centuries, these Tamil settlers appeared as the second largest population in Sri Lanka. They predominantly settled in the northern and eastern part of the country. Even though Tamils mainly plantation workers, did not remain in contact with their South Indian ancestors, their linguistic, religious, and cultural affinities remained the same.

In addition to communal and religious affinities, India and Sri Lanka have been economically connected since ancient times. People traded their goods through the narrow Palk Strait between India and Sri Lanka. There were many ports along the Southern coast of India and northern coastline of Sri Lanka. With the British invasion, this trading system was prohibited because the British wanted to monopolize trade, keeping Colombo as the central marketplace. This ancient trading system therefore became a form of “smuggling” under the British.³⁸

2. Indian Labor-Immigration to Sri Lanka

Even though immigration from India to Sri Lanka was a traditional and long-rooted activity, Indian immigration during the British colonial period had some peculiar

³⁶ David Feith, “Tamil and Sinhala Relations in Sri Lanka: A Historical and Contemporary Perspective,” *Global Change, Peace and Security* 22, no. 3, (October 2010): 346, accessed November 18, 2012, <http://www.tandfonline.com/libproxy.nps.edu/doi/pdf/10.1080/14781158.2010>.

³⁷ Ibid., 346.

³⁸ Ibid., 34.

features. Traditionally, immigration from India to Sri Lanka was generally for the purpose of colonization. People settled in Sri Lanka and merged with the indigenous people.³⁹ Indian who migrated as part of the British Empire, were distinct in the sense that they were there as temporary labor. Indian immigration increased drastically during the nineteenth century as British government utilized Indians as a cheap labor force in the plantation and construction sectors.⁴⁰ The British used this strategy because a foreign labor force was easier to control than an indigenous one. Initially, British government developed coffee plantations in Sri Lanka in the 1830s, but these were destroyed by a leaf fungus in 1880s. After that, British capitalist enterprises started to grow tea instead of coffee. In the early decades of the twentieth century, rubber plantations were opened in the midland and low-country areas of the island. All of this was done through the use of labor from India. Furthermore, British utilized Indian workers for the construction of roads, railroads, ports, and other daily employment in the government and mercantile sectors. These new programs needed a considerable work force, and these programs paved way for Indian Tamils to migrate to Sri Lanka as unskilled labors.⁴¹ Therefore, they retained their connections with India.⁴²

B. THE ORIGIN OF INDO-LANKA QUESTION DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Indian Tamils who worked in the tea and rubber states became the source a rift between India and Sri Lanka. The Ceylon government--with the expansion of the Indian Tamil population under the British--faced a controversial question: whether this growing population could be assimilated into the island's permanent population or retained as South Indians who temporarily stayed on the island as workers. There were two main factors behind the origin of this controversial issue: first, the decision of His Majesty's

³⁹ Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 5.

⁴⁰ Nira Wickramasinghe, "Sri Lanka: The Many Faces of Security," in *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 373.

⁴¹ Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 5–6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 5–6.

government to introduce a new constitution in 1931; second, the anti-immigration attitudes among the Sinhalese that emerged during the depression of the early 1930s.

The growing Tamil population acquired political prominence in Sri Lankan politics in 1931 with the decision of the Donoughmore Commission to introduce a semi-responsible form of government to Sri Lanka based on the adult franchise.⁴³ With this decision, a controversial question arose about who should be given the voting privilege. The Indian Tamils, who were 818,500 in number by that time, were at the heart of the issue.⁴⁴ Since Indian Tamils were not assimilated into the island's population at that time, the unofficial Sinhalese members of the legislative council rejected the new constitution that enfranchised Indian Tamils. Later, the Commission proposed that Indian Tamils who have an abiding interest in the country—and those who have permanently settled in the country—should be enfranchised, but Sinhalese leaders did not accept any form of constitution that enfranchised Indian Tamils. Therefore, the Commission's proposal was revised. According to the revised constitution, Indian Tamils who had "either a literacy and property or income qualification or on possession of certificates of permanent settlement, which would be granted on proof of five years residence and a declaration of permanent settlement."⁴⁵

Sinhalese leaders believed and promoted the idea that the main reason for the unemployment problem during the depression in the 1930s in Sri Lanka was free immigration from India.⁴⁶ Therefore, they proposed an immigration act to control the flow of workers from India, but British officials were not supportive. They argued that free movement from India was a deep-rooted custom, and that it was essential to continue the plantation sector. However, with strong pressure from the Sinhalese, ultimately, the State Council passed the Immigration Bill of 1941. According to the bill, any person desiring entry to Sri Lanka must have a valid passport with visas. In addition, the Ceylon

⁴³ Sir Charles Jeffries, *Ceylon: The Path to Independence* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), 52.

⁴⁴ Kodikara, *Indo-Lanka Relations*, 83.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁴⁶ Neville Ladduwahetty, *Sri Lanka's National Question: A Collection of Articles* (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2010), 37.

Labor Union initiated negotiations with the labor contractors to decrease the Indian labor force in government departments. According to the new law, no non-Ceylonese were to be given jobs when Sinhalese were available.⁴⁷ As a result, Indians, who constituted 26% of the government labor force in 1936, were reduced to 12% of the labor force by 1941.

The India considered these rules of the Ceylon political leaders as clear cases of discrimination against the Indian community. Their opinion was that these workers had contributed to the development of Ceylon under the British and, hence, should have been recognized. Consequently, two Indo-Ceylon Relations Conferences were conducted in 1940 and 1941, and the problem was solved in a manner that was equally beneficial for both countries. If India and Ceylon had been independent countries at that time, the result would have been different. Ceylon leaders might have instigated Indian Tamils to force the Indian government to intervene into these matters. As both countries were under the British colonization, however, such a communal uprising did not take place.

C. NEHRUVIAN ERA: THE PERIOD OF NON-INTERVENTION

With the withdrawal of British colonialism from the region, India sought to fill the power vacuum, and began to think of Sri Lanka as a factor in Indian defense, since it was situated at a strategically important location. The new governments of independent India continued the theories of British defense and security which had three main factors: safeguarding the Northwest frontier (now Pakistan) of India, through which invaders entered into India; protecting the strategic area around the sub-continent from foreign powers; and commanding the Indian Ocean.⁴⁸ Therefore, the behavior of a new independent island was very important for India in formulating its defense strategies.

With independence, Indian leaders followed a non-alignment and national self-reliance policy, and they expected other countries in the South Asian region to follow the same policy. Especially, India wanted to keep the region out of non-regional power involvements. These policies of Indian power politics were viewed by the Sri Lankan leaders suspiciously even prior to independence. The first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka,

⁴⁷ Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 62.

⁴⁸ Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 25.

Mr. D. S. Senanayake, had good relations with Pandit Nehru's government. However, he was not sure about the behavior of future governments of India, especially in view of Indo-Ceylonese divergences over the citizenship question of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka. According to Sir Ivor Jennings, Mr. D S Senanayake always regarded India as the mother country under the leadership of Pandit Nehru. He goes on to say: "He was well aware of the danger implicit in having nearby a population of 350 million people pressed outward by a standard of living much lower than that in Ceylon and capable, under the wrong leadership, of becoming aggressive..."⁴⁹

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India—who strongly believed in *Panchsheel* policies⁵⁰—maintained a non-aligned attitude over the power blocks, but he expected Sri Lanka to incline towards India's regional power politics. Prime Minister Nehru himself, in 1945, pointed to the importance of unity between the two countries "presumably as an autonomous unit of the Indian federation."⁵¹ He expected Burma and Ceylon to join that federation, but Sinhalese Buddhist elites did not want to join such a federation, preferring instead to maintain national sovereignty.⁵² Nehru stated in his book, *The Discovery of India*, that "... the small state is doomed. It may survive as a cultural autonomous area but not as an independent political unit."⁵³

Indian scholarly opinion also shows the importance of Sri Lanka to India. Indian writer Ramachandra Rao stated, "Ceylon is the natural focus in the Indian Ocean, and therefore, of its defense. It possesses unrivalled geographical advantages. Consider its radiating distances towards the west and East, Sri Lanka's central in position."⁵⁴ This illustrates that India has had a natural interest to intervene in Sri Lankan matters.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 39.

⁵⁰ Panchaseel means five principles: non-intervention, non-aggression, mutual assistance and equality, peaceful co-existence, and mutual respect for territorial integrity. For further details see, Mayank Sharma, "What was Panchsheel," Preserve Articles, <http://www.preservearticles.com/2012010119381/what-was-panchsheel.html> (accessed February 23, 2013).

⁵¹ W. H. Wriggins, *Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation* (Princeton: Princeton Press, 1960), 399.

⁵² Ganguly, *Indian Foreign Policy*, 38.

⁵³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (London, 1944), 511.

⁵⁴ R. R. Ramachandra Rao, *India and Ceylon* (Bombay: Vani, 1954), 8.

However—and more to the point of this thesis—India under Nehru did not intervene in Sri Lanka even though several incidents might have warranted this, because of how they directly affected India’s strategic and domestic concerns.

1. Strategic Concerns and Non-Intervention during the Nehruvian Era

Even though Pandit Nehru wanted to establish a federation inclusive of Ceylon and Burma after independence, he maintained a friendly policy towards Sri Lanka. Attending a Commonwealth foreign ministers conference in January 1950, Pandit Nehru said: “some people fear that the great country India might want to develop or sort of absorb Ceylon. I assure you that if any people have any such idea it is completely wrong.”⁵⁵ As he promised, during his tenure India did not intervene in Sri Lanka even though Sri Lankan political leaders made many decisions that directly affected India’s strategic concerns during Nehru’s premiership.

The Lanka-British agreement in the 1950s is an example of this. Immediately after independence, Sri Lanka signed a defense agreement with Great Britain to secure the country from possible invasions from India.⁵⁶ The United National Party (UNP) leaders of Sri Lanka thought that this was an essential condition for Sri Lanka’s security considering India’s possible threat in the future. According to the agreement, the British were given the approval to access Sri Lanka’s naval ports and air bases with the condition of providing assistance to Sri Lanka in case of an emergency. In addition, Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake signed three bi-lateral trade agreements with Great Britain between 1949 and 1953. By signing those agreements, Sri Lanka became the first country to act against India’s denial of non-regional power intervention into South Asian regional affairs. All sections of the parliamentary opposition were strongly critical of the UNP’s policy towards India. Opposition parties preferred close relations with India to closeness with European countries.⁵⁷ India considered Sri Lanka’s closeness to Great Britain as a security threat to the country, and those pro-British policies of the Sri Lankan politicians

⁵⁵ Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 65.

⁵⁶ P. Sahadewan and Neil DeVotta, *Politics of Conflict and Peace in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Manak Publishers Pvt Ltd, 2006), 348.

⁵⁷ Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 44.

could be considered as a reason for engaging with a antagonist attitude in Sri Lankan affairs over strategic concerns.

British involvement in Sri Lanka was strategically disadvantageous for India as British involvement could constrain India's freedom of exercising hegemonic stance in the region. Even though the situation was strategically disadvantageous, India did not take any action with regard to agreements between England and Sri Lanka. However, India could engage antagonistically in Sri Lankan matters to counter strategic disadvantages by trumping Tamil issue, but India didn't. The reason was not the deterrence created by the British involvement. The reason was non-availability of strong domestic concerns. This shows that the policies of Sri Lanka that instigated Indian strategic concerns were not reason enough for intervention in Sri Lanka. In other words, strategic concerns were not the driving factor for intervention by India at that time.

The Sino-Indian War in October 1962 also affected Indo-Ceylon relationships negatively as it presented a grave strategic concern for India. With the escalation of war, Pandit Nehru solicited assistance from neighboring countries. By that time, Indo-Lanka relations were strong under the leadership of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. However, Sri Lanka followed a neutral policy. Sri Lanka did not extend the support expected by Pandit Nehru, and did not declare China as an aggressor. In addition, Sri Lanka signed a maritime agreement with China that granted a mutual most-favored-nation status, as well as a commercial agreement just one year after the Sino-India war. Sri Lanka's decision to favor China was due to its economic relationship. First, there was a rubber-rice agreement between the two countries according to which Sri Lanka exported more than 60% of its rubber to China and imported 40% of its rice from China. Second, China provided technical and economic assistance.⁵⁸ India might have considered this incident Sri Lanka's second act against India's strategic concerns. Sri Lanka's allowance for China to have a foot-hold in Sri Lanka directly jeopardized the security of India. Further, Sino-Lanka relations constrained India's influence over Sri Lanka with regard to the Tamil issue.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 53–54.

Indian defense interests caused a considerable rift between the two countries. Since the colonial period, the Indian Ocean has been of critical strategic interest for India, and they had realized the fundamental importance of controlling the Indian Ocean as a part of their defense.⁵⁹ As a result, in 1956, India extended its territorial water limits from three miles to six miles by Presidential Proclamation. In 1957, with another Presidential Proclamation, India claimed jurisdiction up to 100 nautical miles from the outer limit of the extended territorial water limit. The object was to acquire fisheries and other living resources for India. This decision was not accepted by Sri Lankan leaders, and they also issued a proclamation to extend the territorial limits and contiguous area up to six and 100 nautical miles, respectively. The proclamation was purely retaliatory. In response, India could have exercised antagonist behavior against Sri Lanka to protect its strategic concerns; however, India withdrew its claim in 1958 at the meeting of the United Nations Commission to maintain a cordial relationship between the two countries.⁶⁰

The Kachchativu Island issue is the other example over which Indian intervention could have occurred. Kachchativu is a small island in the Palk Strait, and Kachchativu is strategically very important for both the countries since it is a good observation post for most of the sea between the two countries. During World War II, this island was used for bombardment practice. In 1949, India informed the Sri Lankan government about its naval exercise in the Palk Strait to take Kachchativu, a bombardment target. The government of Sri Lanka opposed the bombardment of Kachchativu, claiming it as a part of Sri Lanka.⁶¹ This incident was viewed by members of the *Lok Sabha*, the Indian parliament, partly as an occupation of Indian territory by Sri Lanka. However, Pandit Nehru did not take further actions in this regard, as there were controversial issues regarding the ownership of the island. It was a great chance for India to intervene in Sri Lanka over strategic concerns, but India did not.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 32.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 62.

⁶¹ Sumanasiri Liyanage, "Introduction," in *Perspectives on India Lanka Relations*, ed. Sumanasiri Liyanage, P. Sahadewan, and Anisha Kinra (Colombo: Manak Publications, 2011), 13.

2. Domestic Concerns and Non-Intervention During the Nehruvian Era

Similar to strategic concerns, domestic politics in Sri Lanka also did not provide enough reason for India to intervene in Sri Lanka. Some political decisions of Sri Lankan politicians had an impact (to a certain extent) on Tamil Nadu, which drove domestic concerns for intervention in Sri Lanka; however, this impact was not strong enough to agitate the Tamil Nadu people to strongly pressure the Indian central government to intervene in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan policies deprived certain rights of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka, but those policies were not life-threatening for the Tamils, although they created refugee problems in Tamil Nadu. Therefore, such internal policy decisions of the Sri Lanka government only created weak domestic concerns for India to intervene in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, unfavorable domestic conditions for intervention and strong personal contacts between political leaders of both countries further weakened the impact of such domestic concerns. As a result, India did not intervene, even if weak domestic concerns were present.

As in the colonial period, the citizenship was the most controversial issue that agitated Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka. After independence, the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948 was passed by the Sri Lankan government. Under the act, Indian Tamils were granted two options to assimilate as Sri Lankan citizens: citizenship by descent and citizenship by registration. However, very few people were eligible to get citizenship under these provisions. For instance, they had to prove that they had been in Sri Lanka for seven years from an appointed day. People born in Sri Lanka had to prove that their father was Sri Lankan. In addition, many applications were rejected for clerical errors.⁶² After negotiations in 1953, as part of the solution, both the Sri Lankan and Indian prime ministers agreed to grant Sri Lankan citizenship to 400,000 and 300,000 people, respectively. However, the Sri Lankan government did not implement it as negotiated. The government of Sri Lanka strongly believed that increasing Tamil population in Sri Lanka would be a threat in the future. Because of the deteriorating condition of Indians in Sri Lanka, the Madras Legislative Assembly passed a resolution to push the center to take

⁶² Ibid., 107.

actions on behalf of those Indians in Sri Lanka. In addition, some South Indian Tamils were ready to come to Sri Lanka to support the *Sathyagraha* (a non-violent protest) arranged against the policies of the government of Sri Lanka; however, the Indian government refused to provide passport facilities for them at the request of the Sri Lankan prime minister D. S. Senanayake.

From the inception of Sinhalization in the 1930s, the policies of the Sinhalese hurt the Indian Tamils, as the main idea behind Sinhalization was to provide a higher percentage of Sinhalese in trade, commerce, and industrial activities. Since independence, the Sri Lankan governments had implemented more rigid policies to deprive Tamil Indians of chances for employment. Non-nationals could not enter the public or municipal services if Ceylonese were available, and—according to an agreement between the Senanayake government and the mercantile sector—clerical, technical, and managerial posts were given to Ceylonese wherever possible. Furthermore, the administration took steps to break the Indian Tamil monopoly over the import-export trade by imposing restrictions that were disadvantageous to Indian traders in the 1950s. By that time, overseas transactions were done mainly with India; therefore, Indian Tamils had more benefits than the Ceylonese. These policies affected a portion of the Tamil population, but the decision of Bandaranaike government in 1956 to recruit at least 50% of new recruits to the plantation sector from the Ceylonese affected many Indian Tamils. These activities drew the attention of Tamils in Tamil Nadu, who then pressured the Indian Central government through their representatives to take actions in this regard.

In a further move to Sinhalize the country and reduce Tamil influence in the country, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike enacted the official language act in 1956.⁶³ Since the 1930s, the state had been under pressure by Buddhists to protect the religion and the language from colonial influence. After independence, this xenophobia was transferred to the Tamil population. By that time Tamils were living in seven Sinhalese provinces, and the Sinhalese leaders foresaw a threat to the Sinhala language. As a result, Sinhalese was

⁶³ David Little, *Sri Lanka: The Invention of Enmity* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1994), 69.

implemented as the only official language.⁶⁴ This decision was a part of the Sinhalization effort to contain the India Tamil influx to Sri Lanka. Many were not Sinhala speakers. This then led to the break-up of the two main communal groups in Sri Lanka, and this decision was condemned by Sri Lankan Tamils.⁶⁵ They organized *Sathyagraha* (a non-violent protest) and *Pada Yathra* (a march on foot) to show their opposition to the new act.⁶⁶

3. Why Did India Not Intervene in Response to Domestic Concerns?

The other internal and external threats to the central government during this period allowed little room for the Indian government to think of intervening in Sri Lankan matters, even though the above mentioned incidents raised Indian domestic concerns to a certain extent. The India-Pakistan and Sino-India wars that took place in 1948 and 1962, respectively, destabilized the country economically and militarily. Therefore, India did not want to further destabilize its domestic condition by intervening in Sri Lankan matters. Such concerns played a considerable role in decision making.

As far as the internal condition was concerned, this was the period in which the people in Tamil Nadu in India initiated their fight for autonomous powers. Parties like Dravida Kazhagam (DK) and Nam Tamizhar demanded not only a separate state, but for union of that state with the northern part of Ceylon in an independent Tamil-speaking unit. In 1958 when Nehru visited Madras, supporters of Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) organized demonstrations in Madras by burning copies of the Indian Constitution and destroying idols in Hindu temples.⁶⁷ Therefore, Indian government thought that giving undue recognition to South Indians with regard to their demands on Sri Lankan Tamils would encourage Indian Tamils to struggle for an autonomous state in India in the future. They were in a position to ignore the demands of South Indians, as the Indian National Congress (INC) governed Tamil Nadu until 1967.

⁶⁴ A Jayarathnam Wilson, *The Break-Up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 41.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 164.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 84.

⁶⁷ Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations*, 230.

In addition to internal and external threats, the political relationship between the two countries also influenced non-intervention. The non-involvement policies of the Indian Prime Minister and his personal contacts with the leadership of Sri Lanka produced very strong contacts with Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, the Sri Lankan prime minister, in 1956. Based on those personal contacts, the Sri Lankan government amended its new acts several times at the request of India. For example, Sri Lanka amended the Citizenship Act No. 18 of 1948 two times in 1950 and 1955 in favor of the Tamils, for which he was assassinated later by a Sinhalese radical. Similarly, India also followed a very weak stance in taking decisions against Sri Lanka. As mentioned earlier, India did not issue passports to Indians who were ready to come to Sri Lanka to support the protesters.⁶⁸ Actually, India was not in a position to intervene in Sri Lanka over the Citizenship Act and Sinhala Only Act, as India itself was struggling with its implementation of Hindi as an official language. Indian Tamils in India, won their rights through struggles in the 1950s. In 1917, Tamils formed the Justice Party and forced the British to alter this language issue. As a result, the British declared Hindi as an optional language in Tamil Nadu. Later, Tamil became a national language in India.⁶⁹ Therefore, Indian leaders were not in a position to advise Sri Lankan leaders not to impose anti-Tamil barriers.

These activities dampened the relations of the Madras Government and the Central Government, but there were few consequences since both had always been Congress party governments since independence. Indian National Congress (INC) lost its power in Tamil Nadu for the first time in 1967, but INC lost its power at the central government in 1977 for the first time after independence. Because of this political connection between the center and periphery, the government of India could ignore the weak domestic pressure created by South Indians.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 222.

⁶⁹ Rohan Gunaratne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka: The role of India's Intelligence Agencies* (Colombo: Gunaratne Offset, 1993), 90.

D. INDO-SRI LANKA RELATIONS AFTER THE NEHRUVIAN ERA

Indian intervention in Sri Lanka during the post-Nehruvian era was shaped by two major factors. First, India and Sri Lanka both saw a change in their domestic, as well as their international strategic, scenarios. During the post-Nehruvian era, changes in the national and international atmosphere were not favorable for India's intervention. Second, regime changes in both India and Sri Lanka directly shaped policies of intervention. Some contemporary leaders had cordial relationships, and they submerged possible causes of intervention through mutual understanding. Meanwhile, some leaders had adverse relationships, mostly due to personal factors, and they highlighted possible causes of intervention.

1. Changes in the National and International Context and Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka

Changes that took place—in the national context in particular and the international context in general—affected the Indo-Sri Lanka relationship during the post-Nehruvian era, which started in 1964. American influence in South Asia became the matter of highest concern, in the international context, with regard to shaping Indian foreign policy. After the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, Americans sought naval facilities in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Pakistan to surround the point of crisis in exchange for military and economic assistance. In addition, China became a close ally of Pakistan after the Sino-Indian War in 1962. In addition, Pakistan's disagreement with India over Kashmir and India's assistance in creating Bangladesh had brought that relationship to a point of mutual hatred. Under these circumstances, India's sense of security in the region was weakened.

2. Regime Changes and Indian Intervention

In the post-Nehruvian era, Indian intervention in Sri Lanka was shaped by the close personnel contacts between the prime ministers of both countries. Personal contacts between Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike were significant during the early 1970s, and contacts between Mr. Moraji Desai and Mr. J. R. Jayewardne were prominent during the latter part of the 1970s. However, this Indo-Sri Lankan non-

intervention posture based on personal contacts changed in the early 1980s. During this period, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. J. R. Jayewardene ruled India and Sri Lanka, respectively.

Under the leadership of Mrs. Gandhi and Mrs. Bandaranaike, many controversial issues were settled which might have led to Indian intervention. The two decided to each accept 75,000 stateless Indian Tamils who were not covered by the Sirimavo-Shastri Pact in 1964. With that pact, India accepted nearly 500,000 Tamils back into India. Even though the reduction of Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka would lead to an increase in the Sinhalese nationalists' domination over Sri Lankan Tamils, successive Indian governments helped Sri Lanka settle this problem in good faith. Similarly, during a communist insurrection led by Sinhalese radical youths, India provided helicopters, naval ships, and \$55 million worth of military assistance in 1971.⁷⁰ In 1974, Mrs. Gandhi acknowledged Sri Lanka's claims over the Kachchativu island, even though there were speculations that the nearby sea contained deposits of oil.⁷¹

In 1977, Moraji Desai and J. R. Jayewardene were elected prime ministers of India and Sri Lanka, respectively. They had a close friendship. Therefore, there was also no Indian intervention in Sri Lanka during this period. Both of these leaders had common characteristics. They showed strong opposition to the actions of their predecessors, and that stance automatically brought them close to each other. Desai had a different ideology compared to Nehru and Indira Gandhi.⁷² Similarly, Jayewardene also had a different ideology from Mrs. Bandaranaike. When communal riots occurred in July-August 1977, protests in Tamil Nadu pressured the Indian government to settle the problem by intervention. Responding promptly, Desai sent a representative, Mr. S. A. Chidanbaram, to Sri Lanka to look into the problem. After an inquiry, he reported to Desai that the riots were internal in nature and that Indian intervention was not required. Therefore, India did

⁷⁰ V. Dutt, *India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Vani, 1987), 308.

⁷¹ K. M. De Silva, *Regional powers and Small State Security: India and Sri Lanka, 1977–1990* (Washington, DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1995), 29.

⁷² Dixit, *India's Foreign Policy*, 118.

not intervene. This was a classic example of how India's policy of intervention was shaped by personal contacts.

Desai's tenure terminated with the re-election of Indira Gandhi as the new prime minister of India in 1980. Thereafter, Indo-Lankan relationships were not as friendly as they had been previously due to rifts between the leaders.⁷³ During Gandhi's previous tenure, Sirimavo Bandaranaike was her closest friend. When Jayewardene became the president, he stripped away Sirimavo Bandaranaike's civil rights for seven years. Jayewardene portrayed that act as a victory for democracy. Gandhi condemned this act and publicly announced how the UNP government had mistreated her friend in Sri Lanka.⁷⁴ Another reason for the break between the two leaders occurred in 1977 when Jayewardene visited India for the first time after becoming president. He publicly described how Gandhi and Bandaranaike harassed opposition leaders during their tenure. Gandhi did not tolerate this behavior from the president of a neighboring country, and she referred to Jayewardene and Desai as two old foxes.⁷⁵

This interpersonal hostility led India to be more sensitive to the Tamil Sinhala rift in Sri Lanka. Meantime, the policies of Jayewardene that affected the regional hegemonic power of India further broadened the rift between them. This dissonance at the interpersonal level did not considerably affect Indian policy towards Sri Lanka in the short-run, but it did encourage Indira Gandhi to intervene in Sri Lanka when there was domestic pressure on her government in 1983.

3. Strategic Concerns and Non-Intervention In the 1970s and Early 1980s

Similar to the Nehruvian era, decisions of the Sri Lankan governments in the post-Nehruvian era affected the strategic concerns of India at a higher level. During this period

⁷³ Neil Devotta, "When Individuals, States, and System Collide: India's Foreign Policy Towards Sri Lanka," in *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and prospect* ed. Sumit Ganguly (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 42.

⁷⁴ Shelton Kodikara, *Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka: A Third World Perspective* (Delhi: Chanakya Publications, 1992), 67–68.

⁷⁵ i Liyanage Sahadewn and Kinra, "Perspectives of Indo-Lanka Relations," 38.

regional instability grew due to non-regional power interventions that India had not tolerated since its independence. Disregarding that policy, Sri Lankan governments allowed non-regional powers to enter into the region in various ways.

During this period, Indian security was threatened by tension between the two superpowers. Both the USSR and the U.S. were keen on taking part in disputes in the South Asian region. Both the U.S. and China kept good relations with Pakistan while India depended on the Soviet Union. During this era, India understood the importance of Sri Lanka in protecting India's geopolitical interests in the Indian Ocean, as some Sri Lankan policies created situations that India did not like.⁷⁶

Radical and comprehensive economic reforms that were introduced by Jayewardene worsened Indo-Sri Lanka relations, as they opened doors for non-regional countries to interfere in regional matters that challenged India's regional hegemony.⁷⁷ He wanted to develop Sri Lanka rapidly in an open economic system and collaborated with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This new open market economy required appropriate infrastructure in the country. Hence, Sri Lanka had to depend on Western donors like the U.S., UK, Canada, and West Germany, to name a few, without considering India's opposition to non-regional interference in the South Asian region.⁷⁸ In addition, Jayewardene made many decisions that were against the Indian strategic design: he attempted to join Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), allowing South East Asian countries to participate in South Asian affairs; he allowed Western countries to establish companies in Sri Lanka with the intention of increasing Western trade relations;⁷⁹ he condemned the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, knowing India's close relationship with the Soviet Union; furthermore, he instructed Sri Lankan diplomats in the UN to take the Pro-U.S. side when the matter was discussed.

⁷⁶ Rohan Gunaratne, *Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis and National Security* (Colombo: South Asian Network on Conflict Research, 1980), 114.

⁷⁷ Liyanage, Sahadewan, and Kinra, *Perspectives on Indo-Sri Lanka Relation*, 29.

⁷⁸ Neil De Votta, "Sri Lanka's Structural Adjustment Program and Its Impact on Indo-Lanka Relations," *Asian Survey* 38, no. 5 (May 1988): 453–473.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 32.

While having a pro-Western policy of economic reforms, Mr. Jayewardene established military connections with Western countries.⁸⁰ With the emergence of a militant Tamil group, he involved Great Britain in Sri Lankan matters—as with the British-Ceylon Defense Pact signed in 1947. His idea was to contain the Indian hegemonic attitude by being friendly with Western countries, but Britain did not support Sri Lanka as Mr. Jayewardene expected. However, Air Service Commandos from Britain and intelligence service members from Israel came to Sri Lanka to train military forces. Furthermore, he gave consent to establish a powerful Voice of America station in Sri Lanka to monitor intelligence activities in the Indian Ocean. At the same time, he permitted U.S. naval vessels to enter Sri Lankan harbors for recreation and refueling.⁸¹ He allowed U.S. companies to develop Tank Farm Project in Trincomalee in Sri Lanka. It could be used as a mass fuel storage facility for ships sailing in the Indian Ocean. Where Sino-Sri Lanka relations are concerned, the Chinese relationship with Sri Lankan government was strong during this period as Sri Lanka did not side with India during the Sino-Indian War in 1962. In return, China ironically helped to suppress a communist movement in Sri Lanka in 1971 by providing five gun-boats to the Sri Lanka navy to safeguard the country.⁸²

However, in spite of these strategic reasons to intervene in Sri Lankan matters, India still maintained a friendly environment between the two countries. India did not allow the destabilization of Sri Lanka at any cost. The best example was India's assistance in the suppression of the communist uprising in 1971. When Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a communist political party, started to topple the government, Mrs. Bandaranaike requested assistance from many countries including the U.S., the UK, Pakistan, and India. India, responding more quickly than the other countries, sent five frigates to seal off Colombo harbor and 150 troops to protect Katunayake international airport. In addition, India provided five helicopters and equipment for 5000 troops to

⁸⁰ R Hoole, *Sri Lanka: The Arrogance of Power: Myths, Decadence and Responses* (Colombo: University press, 2001), 59.

⁸¹ S Kodikara, *South Asian Strategic Issues: Sri Lankan Perspectives* (New Delhi: Sage, 1990), 15.

⁸² GB Keerawella and S. Hamachandra, *Sri Lanka Navy: Enhanced Roles and Challenges* (Nedlanda: Indian Ocean Center for Peace Studies, 1992), 4.

control further expansion of the insurgency. . India did all these things to help to maintain stability of Sri Lanka under the request of the government of Sri Lanka. Therefore, these activities do not come under the category of intervention. Actually, this was a good chance for India to let Sri Lanka destabilize. However, even though the policies of Sri Lankan government badly affected India's strategic interests in the region, India extended its assistance to Sri Lanka. This clearly indicates that strategic concerns did not drive India's policy of intervention in Sri Lanka.

4. Domestic Concerns and Non-Intervention in the 1970s and early 1980s

Similar to the Nehruvian era, decisions of the Sri Lankan governments in the post-Nehruvian era affected the domestic concerns of India, but did not rise to a level that instigated the Indian central government to make a decision to intervene. Many Sri Lankan political decisions during the 1970s and the early 1980s were a continuation of decisions made by previous governments. These internal political decisions of Sri Lanka had an impact on the Tamil Nadu people over communal affinities, but their pressure on the Indian central government was weak. Therefore, India did not take any action stronger than exchanging diplomatic arguments between two countries. The destabilized domestic situation in India, which was unfavorable for intervention, and the bilateral model in foreign politics, further weakened those weak domestic concerns.

Even though Sirimavo Bandaranaike maintained a friendly relationship with Indian political leaders, she did not take precautions to minimize Tamil issues in Sri Lanka that affected the Indian government, even to a minimal extent. She established a new republic constitution in 1972. This constitution guaranteed pre-eminence for the Sinhalese language and favored Buddhism over other religions in the country.⁸³ She also accepted Sinhala as the official language. Therefore, Tamils protested against this constitution, and they demanded a separate autonomous state for themselves, as they had prior to the Portuguese invasion in 1505. Later, as Jayarathnam Wilson states, Bandaranaike changed the university entrance system to favor Sinhalese by introducing a

⁸³ A. Jayarathnam Wilson, *The Break-Up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese-Tamil Conflict* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988), 128.

district-based quota system.⁸⁴ According to that system, the number of students who could enter universities from any one district was limited—and since Tamils were in seven out of 25 districts in Sri Lanka, the number of Tamil students who were eligible to enter universities was reduced.

President Jayewardene, who created many strategic concerns that encouraged India to intervene, also created issues that encouraged domestic concerns. Knowing the possible “spillover effect” which might create problems for the central government of India, he did not pay attention to the Tamil issue, which was turning into a military struggle in the North.⁸⁵ In fact, his policies of controlling Tamils further escalated the militant struggle in Sri Lanka. For instance, he introduced a new constitution in 1978 which accepted various fundamental rights, subject to limitations. That was an ethnically impartial document. According to Neil De Votta, “it maintained the state’s unitary structure, thereby ensuring that Tamils would continue to occupy a subservient position in their relations with all subsequent Sinhalese governments.”⁸⁶ Furthermore, he introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) in 1979. With that act security forces could arrest and detain Tamil youths up to eight months.⁸⁷

5. Why Did India Not Intervene in Response to Domestic Concerns?

The domestic situation in India did not favor Indian intervention in Sri Lankan matters during the post-Nehruvian era. The Kashmir issue remained unsolved. In addition, a war with Pakistan in 1965 and Indian assistance in creating a separate state for East Pakistanis destabilized India economically, militarily, and politically. Through 1974, there was a series of processions and strikes in Bihar to resign the congress government.⁸⁸ Later in June, 1975, India Gandhi imposed a state of emergency in India

⁸⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁸⁵ Neil De Votta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2004), 148–149.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 144.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 149.

⁸⁸ Ramachandra Guha, “Seventies: The Rise, Fall and Rise of Indira Gandhi,” *India Today*, July 2, 2007, <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/indira-gandhis-era-1970s/1/155690.html>.

to quell the opposition against deepening political and economic problems.⁸⁹ In addition, caste-based violence, communal tensions, corruption, coalition politics, and an absence of the rule of law also directly and indirectly contributed to instability in India. All these issues created tension between the Indian center and its periphery.

In this domestic environment, India was not in a position to hear Tamil Nadu slogans in support of Sri Lankan Tamils, who were struggling militarily for a separate and independent state in Sri Lanka. Therefore, India thought it would not be advisable to support a separation concept in Sri Lanka, for fear of a spillover effect.⁹⁰ Indian assistance to the Tamil movement in Sri Lanka would have been a cause for many states in India to fight for separate states. Tamil Nadu was at the top of the list in this regard, as they were keeping close contacts with military groups in Sri Lanka. For example, the DMK had contacts with the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), while AIADMK had contacts with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Actually, the case in Sri Lanka was the main issue in Tamil Nadu politics during this period. Considering this growing situation, Gandhi ousted ethno-nationalist parties that destabilized her government at the center.⁹¹

Second, India was concerned about its destabilized and insecure condition more than anything else during the post-Nehruvian era. Therefore, political leaders adopted bilateral relations with neighboring countries. Under that concept, three policy goals were involved: “first there was the need to sustain and broaden areas of agreements with smaller neighbors through confidence building measures; second, to adopt an assertive regional stance that would emphasize the parameters of foreign policy autonomy and ensure the negation of perusing policies anathema to Indian politics; third, to minimize the presence and/or influence of external powers in the region.”⁹² This practice led the

⁸⁹ “An Introduction to the History of India,” Indian Child, http://www.indianchild.com/history_of_india.htm (accessed February 22, 2013).

⁹⁰ Sumanasiri Liyanage and Kanishka Rathnapriya, “Indo-Lanka Relations in the Context of Sri Lanka’s Ethno-Political Context,” in *Perspectives on India Lanka Relations*, ed. Sumanasiri Liyanage, P. Sahadewan, and Anisha Kinra (Colombo: Manak Publications, 2011), 40.

⁹¹ Ibid., 37.

⁹² U. Pandis and N. Jetley, “Indo-Sri Lanka Relations: The Indira Gandhi Years, in *Indian Foreign Policy: The Indira Gandhi Years* (London: Sangman, 1990), 156.

Indian government not to intervene in Sri Lankan matters, even though there was weak political pressure from South Indian states to do so. In addition, the central government minimized the possible causes in Sri Lanka that might instigate Tamil Nadu. Providing Indian citizenship for some stateless Tamils and accepting Sri Lanka's claims over Kachchativu Island were examples of this. According to Indian political scientists, "bilateralism increasingly became the preferred model adopted by India in its relation with neighboring states after 1971 from its position of growing regional dominance."⁹³ To strengthen bi-lateral connections, in 1968 a Joint Indo-Ceylonese Tea Consortium was formed to negotiate a better international price for tea. One year later, a Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation and Joint Standing Committee on Tea were formed.⁹⁴

Prominent political figures in India also minimized Indian intervention in Sri Lanka. Relations between Mrs. Bandaranaike and Mrs. Gandhi, and between Jayewardene and Desai, were prominent. The best example of this is the way Prime Minister Desai responded to Tamil politicians in 1977 when they requested intervention in Sri Lanka to stop anti-Tamil riots. Responding positively, Desai sent a representative to Sri Lanka to inquire into the incident, after which he informed politicians in Tamil Nadu that the issue was internal in nature and contained no Indian dimension.⁹⁵ However, no good deed goes unpunished. He was defeated during the next election in 1980.

⁹³ Alan J. Bullion, *India, Sri Lanka and the Tamil Crisis 1976–1994: An International Perspective* (London: Pinter, 1995), 49.

⁹⁴ V. Dutt, *India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Vani, 1987), 305.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 30.

III. INTERVENTION IN SRI LANKA AND INDIAN DOMESTIC DYNAMICS SUPPORTING FOR INTERVENTION

India turned to an interventionist phase in the 1980s, changing its friendlier attitude discussed in Chapter II. This interventionist attitude lasted for almost a decade until the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by an LTTE suicide bomber in 1991. Changes in the international situation during this period were disadvantageous for India to have an interventionist attitude towards Sri Lanka. Still, Indian governments continued with their interventionist policy. The initiation of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka did not create a considerable impact on India's strategic interests in Sri Lanka, which led to an intervention. If there was no strategic setting behind the Indian intervention, some significant reason must have strongly affected the attitudinal change of India towards Sri Lanka.

In Indo-Lanka post-independence history, there were two significant incidents that paved the way for Indian intervention in Sri Lanka. The first incident was the anti-Tamil riots in Sri Lanka in 1983, and the second was the Sri Lankan government's massive military offensive to liberate Jaffna peninsula from the LTTE in 1987. Immediately after both of these incidents, India unexpectedly demonstrated an interventionist attitude. In Indo-Sri Lankan post-independence history, these two occasions are the most significant Indian interventions in Sri Lankan affairs. These interventions negatively affected the cordial Indo-Lanka relations that had a long history and drastically affected the length of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. This interventionist behavior leads to a question about why India changed its cordial attitude—an attitude that was obvious prior to the initiation of ethnic conflict—towards Sri Lanka, and so drastically within a short span of time. What was the impetus behind the sudden policy change towards Sri Lanka?

This is the question discussed in this chapter, based on the hypothesis that India was compelled to intervene in Sri Lanka due to strong domestic concerns. The first section provides background details of India's situation in the region prior to its intervention. It describes how India's diversified society, Cold War changes in the

international context, and India's historically interventionist stance in the region made a complex situation in terms of intervention in Sri Lanka. It shows that intervention was disadvantageous for India, unless there was a significant and unavoidable concern.

The second section addresses the first concrete foundation of India's domestic setting for intervention in 1983. It describes the domestic drive for intervention based on Tamil Nadu pressure, and how India was compelled to intervene because of various domestic concerns. Furthermore, the section addresses India's dual policy in order to reveal how India's main drive behind the intervention was fueled primarily by domestic interests.

The third section addresses the second concrete foundation laid by Sri Lankans for Indian intervention in 1987. This section shows how India's stand-offish policy towards Sri Lanka changed into an interventionist attitude based on domestic concerns. Furthermore, it describes how Indians sought to use the Sri Lankan problem to ease Tamil Nadu pressure on the Indian central government.

A. PRELUDE TO THE INTERVENTIONIST PHASE

India is the central country bordering almost every other country in the region, and this geographical connection has produced a complex ethno-political situation. Changes in the political, military, and economic policies of India considerably affect the survival of other countries in the region, as India is the predominant power in regional dynamics. Similarly, changes made by other regional countries also affect the domestic policy decisions of India. As a result, India always monitors the economic, political, and military policies of neighboring countries.

India's vastness presents a significant diversity in terms of culture, politics, and economics. Therefore, unlike other regional countries, maintaining the country's unity had been the most challenging task of Indian governments since independence. In addition, since there were many religious, communal, and cultural affinities with the people of neighboring countries, the India and others were very sensitive about activities in the region. Therefore, Indian governments promptly attended any internal and external problems that had implications for India. They did not hesitate to take either reasonable

or unreasonable measures against neighbors to maintain a peaceful environment in India. In fact, the drive of Indian foreign policy decisions was considerably shaped by the prioritization of domestic stability.

As far as Indo-Sri Lankan relations are concerned, non-regional power involvements in the South Asian region during the Cold War prompted India to intervene in the Sri Lankan conflict. India's inclination towards the Soviet bloc, unhealthy relations with the U.S., its long-standing interstate rivalry with Pakistan, and border disputes with China affected the regional power politics of India and limited India's interventionist behavior in Sri Lanka. Similarly, India's records of clandestine assistance to insurgent groups to fight against legitimate governments in the region, which had drawn international concern, affected India's decision making in the Sri Lankan conflict. In this light, intervention in Sri Lanka was not strategically beneficial for India.

Even though India was careful to isolate regional conflicts from outsiders, changes in the international context at the end of the 1970s and early years of the 1980s conversely affected Indian strategy. Regional conflicts facilitated non-regional countries to intervene in South Asian affairs, and such interventions degraded India's influence in regional matters. Some involvements of strong countries indirectly and directly affected Indian security, and some involvements reduced the probability of Indian intervention in regional conflicts. For instance Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 facilitated United States to involve in the conflict, and it reduced the probability of Indian intervention to solve the matter, and "with the intense war situation in Afghanistan and consolidation of relations among Pakistan, the U.S., China, and Saudi Arabia over the Afghanistan crisis. India's regional context appeared to be more and more insecure."⁹⁶

After India's independence, various U.S. administrations considered India a potential front against the Soviet Union and provided economic assistance to achieve the United States' strategic interests in the South Asian region. However, India tilted towards

⁹⁶ Sumanasiri Liyanage and Kanishka Rathnapriya, "Indo-Lanka Relations in the Context of Sri Lanka's Ethno-Political Context," in *Perspectives on India Lanka Relations*, ed. Sumanasiri Liyanage, P Sahadewan, Anisha Kinra (Colombo: Manak Publications, 2011), 37.

the Soviet block after the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971, ending its policy of neutrality.⁹⁷ As a result, Indo-U.S. relations became frosty. At the end of 1970s, with the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan, the U.S. paid scant attention to the South Asian region. The U.S. initiated a strategic relationship with Pakistan immediately after the invasion with the intention of utilizing Pakistan to contain the spread of communism in the region.⁹⁸ U.S.-Pakistan relations directly affected India's hegemonic stance in the South Asian region.

However, India was less concerned with U.S. proxy war in Afghanistan than with the Chinese involvement in the region. After the Sino-India border war in 1962, India had to keep an eye on two enemies, one on each side. As far as the China-Pakistan relationship was concerned, China provided conventional military ware to Pakistan to fight in Kashmir against Indian forces.⁹⁹ When India acquired nuclear power capability, China provided covert nuclear technology assistance to counter the power imbalance in the region.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, China-Pakistan relations also directly affected India's hegemonic stance in the region. Given this circumstance, India's intervention in Sri Lanka was strategically disadvantageous for India, since both the U.S. and China were concerned about Sri Lanka for their own strategic interests.

The deep- rooted Chinese relationship with Sri Lanka made India's intervention strategically disadvantageous. Starting with the Rubber Rice agreement in 1952,¹⁰¹ China provided economic and military assistance to Sri Lanka, since the strategic location of Sri Lanka was very important for China in protecting its sea lanes of communication. Growing American power in the region and an Indian hegemonic stance were seen by the Chinese as threats to its energy supply route, which lies in the Indian

⁹⁷ D. Kimche, "From Non-allignment to Commitment: Aspects of India's Foreign Policy," *Asian Affairs* 62, no.3 (1975), 275–381, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/60831975?accountid=12702>.

⁹⁸ James Phillips, "The Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan," The Heritage Foundation, January 9, 1980, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/1980/01/the-soviet-invasion-of-afghanistan> (accessed December 3, 2012).

⁹⁹ Jamal Afridi and Jayshree Bajoria, "China Pakistan Relations," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified July 6, 2010, <http://www.cfr.org/china/china-pakistan-relations/p10070>.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Salma Yusuf, "Indo-China Relations: A Role for Sri Lanka," *Daily Mirror*, October 29, 2012, <http://www.dailymirror.lk/opinion/172-opinion/23020-indo--china-relations-a-role-for-sri-lanka.html>.

Ocean. Therefore, the Chinese preferred to maintain a favorable regime in Sri Lanka. During the 1970s, the Chinese government provided five gun boats to the Sri Lanka navy with the intention of securing its energy route. After the emergence of the ethnic conflict, Chinese Prime Minister Zhao Zi Yang promised to stand with Sri Lanka in protecting its territorial integrity.¹⁰²

The history of Indian intervention in the internal matters of regional countries also came into play regarding India's intervention decisions in Sri Lanka. For Instance, Pakistan accused India in international forums of fomenting political violence in the southern Pakistan province of Sindh. Since 1983, a Sindh coalition has been launching violent disturbances against the Pakistan central government, demanding greater provincial autonomy.¹⁰³ Pakistan accused India of inciting violence in the region. Similarly, Pakistan accused India in 1971 of supporting the "Mukthi Bahini" group which struggled for an independent Bangladesh. Indian support for the creation of Bangladesh was obvious to the international community.¹⁰⁴ With this history intervention in Sri Lanka in support of Tamil Tigers (LTTE) was further tarnishing India's image. Yet India chose to intervene in Sri Lanka in the 1980s to first support the LTTE and then to eradicate them.

In this international context, intervention in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict in support of the Tamil tigers was not advisable for India for three reasons. First, India was an ally of Russia, and there was a chance that the U.S. might extend its assistance to Sri Lanka. The U.S. naval fleet wanted a back-up facility if it had to withdraw from in the Philippines. Second, Pakistan and Sri Lanka had a cordial relationship during the 1980s. Pakistani president Zia-ul-Haq presented Pakistan's highest civilian honor, "Nishan-E-Pakistan," to Jayewardene when he visited Pakistan in March 1985, and reiterated President Haq's support for the Sinhalese war against the Tamil Tigers. He also donated

¹⁰² Rohan Gunaratne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka: The role of India's Intelligence Agencies* (Colombo: Gunaratne Offset, 1993), 106.

¹⁰³ Beenish Shoro, "Problems of Sindhi Nationalism-What Way Forward," International Marxism Tendency, last modified May 29, 2007, <http://www.marxist.com/problems-sindhi-nationalism.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ "Pakistanis in Bangladesh Surrender," *The Liberation Times*, December 16, 1971, http://www.genocidebangladesh.org/?page_id=47.

one million rupees to Sri Lanka as a gesture of Pakistani assistance.¹⁰⁵ Third, Indian intervention might escalate the situation and pave a way for China to mediate the problem and secure China's Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs) in the Indian Ocean. In such a circumstance, another undesirable entanglement in Sri Lanka was disadvantageous for India, since supporting insurgents might encourage the government of Sri Lanka to join with non-regional nations for their safety. President Jayewardene said that he would accept assistance—even from the devil—to eradicate terrorism from Sri Lanka. Therefore, non-intervention was the most beneficial decision for India during the Cold War era.

Even though, the situation in the international context did not favor India's intervention, India could not ignore the domestic pressure. India unexpectedly intervened in the Sri Lankan internal conflict in 1983 and 1987. The governing party at the center, that is Indian National Congress (INC), did not want to lose its power at the center by making decisions based on international ramifications. Therefore, the domestic concerns of India played a major role in its intervention in Sri Lankan matters.

B. TAMIL NADU: THE SOURCE OF INDIAN DOMESTIC SETTING FOR INTERVENTION IN SRI LANKA

Tamil Nadu is the southernmost state in India, as well as the eleventh largest state in geographical size and the seventh most-populated state in India.¹⁰⁶ Tamil Nadu is the home for Tamils, and most of them are Hindus. Most area in Tamil Nadu comes under rural position, and many people in these areas engage in agricultural sector activities.¹⁰⁷ This situation remained same in the 1980s. Under this light, Tamil Nadu politicians could easily mobilize these people to pressure the central government to act in favor of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Mobilization was easy because of the high literacy rate in the state.

¹⁰⁵ Tripathi D, *Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy Dilemmas* (London: RIIA, 1989), 25.

¹⁰⁶ "Tamil Nadu population Census Data," Census-2011.co.in, <http://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/tamil+nadu.html> (accessed on February 23 2013)

¹⁰⁷ "Tamil Nadu People," Maps of India, <http://www.mapsofindia.com/tamilnadu/people> (accessed February 23, 2013).

Tamil Nadu has been problematic for the central government since the colonial period. This situation began with the emergence of a drive among the Tamils for their own separate state in 1960s. Viewing Brahmin domination in government, professional, and educational sectors in the Tamil Nadu Presidency as discrimination, Tamils formed the South Indian People's Association in 1916 to protect their rights. However, there were Brahmins in Tamil Nadu, but their percentage was very little compared to other casts. For instance, Brahmin percentage in Tamil Nadu was one in 2007.¹⁰⁸ Mohan Ram states that "the group's manifesto was an attempt at checkmating the challenge to Brahmin interests implicit in the support by Brahmins all over India to the Congress party's demand for Home Rule."¹⁰⁹ With the foundation of the Justice Party in 1917, Tamils managed to win non-Brahmin representation in the Madras Presidency and obtained the consent of the British to demarcate a separate country for them before the British left India,¹¹⁰ but later joined Gandhi in supporting the independence movement in return for a Tamil statehood.

The Tamils' inert drive to have a separate country was not abandoned after the independence of India. They destroyed Hindi idols and burnt copies of the Indian Constitution to demonstrate their rejection of Hindi as the official language when Nehru visited Madras in 1958. The hidden agenda behind these activities was to have a separate autonomous country for the Tamils.¹¹¹

Clearly understanding the future threat, Nehru introduced the Sixteenth Amendment to the Indian Constitution. According to that amendment, all politicians had to promise to protect the sovereignty and integrity of India.¹¹² Since then, any act that supports secessionism has been considered an illegal act. Therefore, Tamil politicians could not overtly support creation of a separate country in India, but they still covertly

¹⁰⁸ "Brahmins in India," *Outlook*, June 4, 2007, <http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?234783>.

¹⁰⁹ Mohan Ram, *Sri Lanka: The Fractured Island* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1989), 87.

¹¹⁰ Gunarathne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 90.

¹¹¹ Liyanage and Rathnapriya, "Indo-Lanka Relations," 56.

¹¹² The Constitution (Sixteenth Amendment) Act 1963, <http://indiacode.nic.in/coiweb/amend/amend16> (accessed November 20,2012).

had that desire.¹¹³ When Sri Lankan Tamils started to struggle for a separate country in Sri Lanka, Indian Tamils in India supported them as ethnic brethren. They started to pressure the central government of India in favor of Sri Lankan Tamils. As Indian leaders did not want to lose South Indian votes, they had to intervene in the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict, as desired by domestic Tamils. According to Neville Ladduwahetty, “Tamil Nadu was the determining factor in shaping India’s relations with Sri Lanka.”¹¹⁴ Venkatesh Rao states, “Policy makers in New Delhi were considerably influenced by the political dynamics in Tamil Nadu in dealing with the Sri Lanka ethnic problem.”¹¹⁵ Therefore, Tamil Nadu pressure was the prominent domestic concern of India affecting its intervention in Sri Lanka in the 1980s.

C. FIRST TURNING POINT: ANTI-TAMIL RIOTS IN 1983

Anti-Tamil riots, which took place in July, 1983, were the concrete domestic events that triggered the Indian intervention. Those riots created millions of sympathizers all over the world and agitated the Tamil Nadu people, in particular, to overtly support Tamil militant groups fighting for a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka. As a result of the riots, fighting for Tamil rights was accepted as a legitimate and reasonable activity. Sinhalese actions were condemned by many regional and non-regional countries, and Indo-Lanka relations deteriorated within a short span of time because of growing pressure from the Tamil Nadu people. The Government of India was compelled to get actions to settle the ethnic conflict of Sri Lanka as soon as possible.

Anti-Tamil riots on July 23, 1983 were the result of the killing of 13 soldiers of the Sri Lankan army, on a patrol close to Jaffna University, by the LTTE.¹¹⁶ By that time, the Sinhalese-Tamil relationship was tense, since Tamil militants had started to attack isolated army camps and police stations in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka.

¹¹³ Shantha K. Hennayake, “The Peace Accord and the Tamils in Sri Lanka,” *Asian Survey* 29, no.4 (1989):407.

¹¹⁴ Neville Ladduwahetty, *Sri Lanka’s National Question: A Collection of Articles* (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2010), 313.

¹¹⁵ P Venkateshwar Rao, “Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: India’s Role and Perception, *Asian Survey* 28, no.4 (April, 1988):423.

¹¹⁶ Pandnis U, *Nation Building in South Asia* (New Delhi: Sage, 1990), 203.

However, this was the first time that Tamil militants had killed 13 soldiers in one attack. Knowing the possible agitation in the South, the Sri Lankan government decided to cremate the dead soldiers somewhere in the North, but relatives strongly opposed that decision. Then, the government decided to cremate the soldiers in Colombo, silently, since sending bodies to villages would possibly spread escalation throughout the country. The plan did not work as expected and funeral had to be cancelled because of delayed arrival of bodies to Colombo on July 24, 1983. This incident agitated thousands of Sinhalese gathered to pay last respects. They started to attack Tamils in Colombo.¹¹⁷

The Sinhalese attack on Tamils was well organized, and it quickly spread all over the Colombo suburbs. The police were not in a position to control such a huge and violent public gathering. The army was called to normalize the situation, but even the army failed to curtail the violence. Meanwhile, the violence spread to predominant Tamil areas in the country. On July 25, fifty two Tamil militants—who were in the Welikada prison—were clubbed to death by Sinhalese prisoners. In the end, 3000 innocent Tamil people were killed and property worth an estimated Rs.150 billion was destroyed, many of them were Tamil businesses.¹¹⁸ In addition, 200,000 to 250,000 Tamils became refugees as a consequence of the riots, and most of them later migrated to India, Europe, and North America.¹¹⁹

1. Tamil Nadu Reaction: Domestic Drive to Intervene

The Anti-Tamil riots in Sri Lanka became the leading topic of South Indian politics, and Tamil politicians competed to support Tamil groups in order to gain political benefits. Both the DMK and AIADMK parties organized mass demonstrations, strikes, protest rallies, and *sathyagraha* by taking Tamils to the streets. Some demonstrators immolated themselves. Meanwhile, an all-party delegation of 16 members met Indira

¹¹⁷ Amaranath Amarasingam, “Black July: Remembering the 1983 Riots in Sri Lanka,” The BLOG, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/amarnath-amarasingam/black-july-riots-sri-lanka-1983_b_897591.html (accessed February 23, 2013).

¹¹⁸ Eleanor Pavey, “The Massacres in Sri Lanka During the Black July Riots of 1983,” Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence, last modified May 13, 2008, <http://www.massviolence.org/The-Black-July-riots-1983>.

¹¹⁹ J. N. Dixit, *Assignment Colombo* (Colombo: Vigitha Yapa Bookshop, 1988), 78.

Gandhi and urged her to mediate the problem by sending Indian troops or a UN peace-keeping force to protect the Tamils. Karunanidhi, the DMK leader, warned the central government that he would resign his seat in the assembly if the Indian government did not act against the Sri Lankan government. The DMK pressured the central government to suspend diplomatic relations, impose economic sanctions, and expel Sri Lanka from the Non-Aligned Movement.¹²⁰ Furthermore, he got 100,000 signatures to send to the UN Secretary General calling for a stop to the genocide in Sri Lanka.¹²¹

Similarly, M. G. Ramachandran, the leader of AIADMK, expressed the opinion that his party would not contest the by-elections to Purasawalkam and Annanagar constituencies if the Indian government did not get involved in the situation. He had a duplicitous policy. He was close to Congress (I) and accepted Gandhi's stance of the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. However, at the same time, he supported the LTTE in forming a separate country in Sri Lanka.¹²² Ramachandran and Karunanidhi posed for photographs with insurgent leaders to show their assistance in maintaining the separatist struggle in Sri Lanka. In general, South Indian politicians urged the Indian government to support the separatist Tamil movement—as they had for the movement which created Bangladesh in 1971.¹²³

Overtly expressing sentiments in favor of Tamil insurgents, Tamil Nadu politicians strengthened the Tamil militants militarily and financially after the anti-Tamil riots. South Indian politicians allowed Tamil militant groups to freely move in the state. Sri Lankan Tamil militant leaders who were in Tamil Nadu were given armed bodyguards and escort cars to ensure their safety. Both police and custom officers in the state were instructed to pay some respect to these groups and not disrupt their activities.¹²⁴ Tamil groups, especially the LTTE, were allowed to establish arms factories

¹²⁰ Abdur Rob Khan, *Strategic Aspects of Indo-Sri Lanka Relations* (Dhaka: Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, 1986), 26.

¹²¹ Sivarajah A, "Indo-Sri Lanka relations and Sri Lanka's Ethnic Crisis in *South Asian Strategic Issue*, ed. Kodikara S. (New Delhi: sage, 1990), 141.

¹²² Mohandas K, "A Costly Sri Lankan Policy," *Frontline*, July 31, 1992, 91.

¹²³ Liyanage and Rathnapriya, "Indo-Lanka Relations," 58.

¹²⁴ Gunarathne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 114.

in Coimbatore which manufactured guns and explosives. Meanwhile, factories in Mysore and Bangalore produced military boots and spare parts for AK-47 rifles. Some factories made 5000 grenades a day for Tamil groups.¹²⁵ Furthermore, they were allowed to purchase explosives from Kerala, Orissa, and Karnataka with the blessings of South Indian politicians.¹²⁶

2. India's Intervention: A Compulsory Act Based on Internal Concerns

Considering the increasingly tense domestic situation in Tamil Nadu, Prime Minister India Gandhi initially thought to terminate the problem by negotiating with her ally, M G Ramachandran, of AIDMK. If India had any pre-determined interest in intervening in Sri Lankan affairs, this was the best chance to do so, but she asked Ramachandran to stop his assistance to Sri Lankan Tamil militants and to stabilize the state without making troubles for the central government. Ramachandran said that he could not control the urge of the Tamil Nadu people to support militant groups. Furthermore, he said that as his opponent, the DMK leader Karunanidhi, was mobilizing people with this issue, not supporting the people's desire at this stage would badly affect his political career.

Indira Gandhi was in a dilemma with regard to Tamil Nadu's activities in Sri Lanka. She needed to remove Ramachandran, since he opposed stopping assistance to militants, and she wanted to control Tamil Nadu military assistance to militia groups in Sri Lanka. However, she could not do either of these things. Gandhi could not remove Ramachandran since she was heavily dependent on him to preserve power for the central government. He had been an electoral ally of the Congress (I) Party since his victory in 1977. Similarly, she could not move against the Tamil Nadu people since they helped to retain Indira's power at the center when she lost her power in the North in the 1977 elections. In return, she had offered prominent civil service positions and important posts to South-Indian Tamils. For these reasons, she needed to take some sort of action against Sri Lanka, even though she was reluctant to do so.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 425.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

In that light, the only option that Indira had was to persuade the Sri Lankan president to solve the problem with militant groups through negotiation. By that time, she had realized the possible future ramifications and threats for India due to the growing Sri Lankan issue. Specifically, Gandhi did not want Tamil militants to win a separate state in Sri Lanka, since such victory would instigate the Tamil Nadu people to fulfill their long-held desire for a state in India. Therefore, she needed to settle the problem in a peaceful manner, without aggravating it. According to J N Dixit, “there was a perception that if India did not support the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka and if the government of India tried to question the political and emotional feelings of Tamil Nadu, there would be resurgence of Tamil separatism in India.”¹²⁷ Unfortunately, this option was also not available for Gandhi, as the Sri Lankan president preferred a military solution to a peaceful one. He correctly believed that Mrs. Gandhi was acting under pressure from Tamils in Tamil Nadu. Domestic concerns were setting the stage for India to intervene in Sri Lanka.

Gandhi’s interest in Sri Lanka was driven by her domestic need to keep Tamil Nadu’s support for her party. In a statement to the Indian parliament on August 5, 1983, she said, “India does not pose any threat to Sri Lanka nor do we want to interfere in Sri Lankan affairs. We want the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka to be preserved.”¹²⁸ P. Venkateshwar Rao states, “Policy makers in New Delhi were considerably influenced by the political dynamics in Tamil Nadu in dealing with the Sri Lankan ethnic problem.”¹²⁹ These were the circumstances under which Gandhi had to shape and decide Indian policy towards Sri Lanka.

¹²⁷ Vinod F. Khobragade, “Indian Approach Towards Sri Lankan Conflicts,” *The Indian Journal of Political Science* 69, no.4 (December, 2008): 912, <http://nps.illiad.oclc.org/illiad/illiad.dll?Action=10&Form=75&Value=101615>.

¹²⁸ P. Venkateshwar Rao, “Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka: India’s Role and Preception,” *Asian Survey* 28, no.4 (April, 1988): 420, <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.nps.edu>.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 423.

3. India's Dual Policy

Considering these factors, ultimately, India launched a two-pronged strategy which had an overt political, and a covert military, approach to settle the issue.¹³⁰ Through the overt approach, Indian government proposed power sharing to accommodate the militants' demands, but not a separate state. However, India allowed the militants to believe that India would take all possible measures to achieve their desires. Through the covert approach, Indian government supported militant groups in Sri Lanka to please Tamils in Tamil Nadu, in order to preserve the INC's southern political front. This approach was known only by Tamil militants in Sri Lanka and pro-LTTE factions in Tamil Nadu. It was covert to rest of the world. In exercising this approach, Indian political leaders were careful to provide financial and military assistance via Tamil Nadu politicians.

a. Political Approach

India utilized its political approach to convince the world of its responsible behavior in the region as the regional superpower. With the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, India became more concerned about establishing its hegemonic stance in the South Asian region. In addition to its leading economy and possession of resources, India increased its military, naval, and nuclear power to strengthen its hegemonic position. The situation in Sri Lanka in 1983 was a good chance for India to signal its leading role to other countries in the region. To mark India's responsible behavior, Indira Gandhi expressed her deep concerns while addressing the United Nations Correspondents Association in September 1983.¹³¹

India also required a peaceful solution in order to maintain its economic interests. Since 1947, India had a steadily increasing population, but it had experienced agricultural stagnation in the 1960s and 1970s. India had domestic problems in three fields which hindered economic growth: aid, trade, and foreign investment. Meanwhile,

¹³⁰ Alan J. Bullion, *India, Sri Lanka and the Tamil Crisis 1976–1994: An International Perspective* (London: Pinter, 1995), 44.

¹³¹ Gunarathne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 3.

India wanted to develop its economy with the least negative impact on its political and economic independence. These economic policies directly related to the non-aligned foreign policy of post-independent India. However, Indian government had to shift India's fundamental policies to be on par with the developing global economic system. Especially after the Sino-Indian War, many Indian governments realized that non-alignment and the self-help system did not match well with the prevailing global system.

To achieve this economic development, India had to establish extensive contacts outside the South Indian region to establish investors and to maintain a healthy market for productions. In pursuit of that goal, India established new economic contacts with European Community and Western countries in the 1980s. India systematically diversified its patterns of trade, both in terms of commodities traded and trading partners. Similarly, India obtained aid from various sources to develop infrastructure facilities. However, India always attempted to diversify its economic partners, as it did not want to keep its economic system dependent upon just a few countries. Indira Gandhi said, "No country should even think of using aid to make India change its fundamental policies. If any country has such ideas, it is nurturing wrong notions."¹³²

After her death, her son Rajiv Gandhi strengthened that step with free market policies. It was a less-rigidly structured and less-tightly controlled framework. With this new economic policy, India ranked 13th in terms of total value-added in manufacturing. India was 15th in 1971.¹³³

Considering all of these factors, in August Indira Gandhi appointed G. Parthasarathy, an experienced diplomat, as special envoy and mediator to settle the dispute.¹³⁴ His main function was to get all concerned parties in Sri Lanka to the negotiating table and find a political solution for the dispute. As there was a general election in 1984, Indira Gandhi wanted to settle this problem before it affected her

¹³² A. Appadorei, *The Domestic Roots of India's Foreign Policy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), 47.

¹³³ Robert Bradnock, *India's Foreign Policy Since 1971* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1990), 40.

¹³⁴ M R Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas* (Delhi: Nonark Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1994), 96.

election campaign. Parthasarathy met with the concerned parties and made a proposal to form North and East councils by uniting existing district councils.¹³⁵ Later, Indira Gandhi proposed merging the North and East provinces and making one province as per the demand of Tamils in Sri Lanka. She wanted to settle the problem in the quickest way possible to remove domestic pressure. However, the Sri Lankan president did not agree with the proposal, claiming that a decision should be taken by an All Party Conference (APC).¹³⁶ Therefore, an APC was held in January 1984, but the participants rejected the merging of provinces..

b. Military Approach

Under these circumstances, the Gandhi government had to acquiesce and cooperate with Tamil Nadu's activities in order to alleviate domestic pressure.¹³⁷ That was the only course of action available please Tamils in India. Therefore, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) was entrusted with providing military support for Tamil youths.¹³⁸ However, her strategy was "to use the military to harass Colombo only to the extent of forcing it to reach an agreement acceptable to New Delhi."¹³⁹ According to Vinod Khobragade, Gandhi wanted "to provide support to the Sri Lankan Tamils to generate sufficient pressure on the Sri Lankan government to make it responsive to Tamil operations so that Sri Lanka [did] not disintegrate."¹⁴⁰

After RAW engaged in training, three new training camps were opened in Chakrata near Dehra Dun in Uththara Pradesh, at Ramakrishnapuram in New Delhi and at a location near the Delhi International Airport¹⁴¹ In addition, eight camps in North

¹³⁵ Rohan Gunaratne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 99.

¹³⁶A. Jayarathnam Wilson, *The Break-Up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese Tamil Conflict* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 176.

¹³⁷ Rao, *Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*, 424.

¹³⁸ Rajesh Kadian, *India's Sri Lanka Fiasco: Peace Keepers at War* (New Delhi: Vision, 1990), 100–101.

¹³⁹Rao, *Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka*, 424.

¹⁴⁰ Khobragade, "Indian Approach Towards Sri Lankan Conflicts," 913.

¹⁴¹ Gunaratne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 39.

India and 35 training camps in Tamil Nadu were established with the blessings of RAW. Retired Indian army officers were hired for the military training, and weapons were provided by RAW. Many militant groups were trained in these camps, but these groups were not trained together. Meanwhile, various politicians backed different groups. For instance, Ramachandran preferred the LTTE, Karunanidhi preferred the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), while RAW preferred the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO) as it was the least ideological and fanatical group.¹⁴² The TELO worked as a private army of RAW. As a result, other groups started to look at the TELO suspiciously. Other militant groups, the LTTE in particular, started to view RAW as an organization that worked for Indian interests rather than the benefit of militant groups.¹⁴³

4. Indo Sri Lanka Relations Under Rajiv Gandhi

After the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, relations between India and Sri Lanka entered a less interventionist and more cordial phase, as Rajiv Gandhi's policy orientation was different from his predecessors. According to Sumanasiri Liyanage and Kanishka Rathnapriya, "The unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, the fulfillment of legitimate demands and aspirations of Tamils in Sri Lanka with the absence of external intervention, were the main pillars of Rajiv's Sri Lankan policy."¹⁴⁴ He appointed Romesh Bandari, instead of Parthasarathy, to establish relations with both the government of Sri Lanka and Tamil groups on a strong foundation and to have "quick and decisive results."¹⁴⁵ Since the setting behind intervention was based on domestic pressure emanating from Tamil Nadu, Rajiv Gandhi could depart from his mother's way, but when Tamil Nadu agitated again in 1987, Rajiv Gandhi was compelled to embrace

¹⁴² Sumit Ganguly, *India's Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 44.

¹⁴³ Syed Hussain Shaheed Soherwordi, "Impact of International Pressure on Sri Lankan Ethnic Conflict: Global Actors but Local Failures," *Pakistan Journal of International Relations* 2, no.2 (December, 2010):21.

¹⁴⁴ Liyanage, Sahadewan, and Kinra, "Indo-Lanka Relations," 57.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 57.

his mother's way. Rajiv Gandhi also faced considerable pressure from the lower caste parties in the North, so it became essential to gain support of the parties in the South.

In the initial stage of his government supporting Tamil militants in Sri Lanka was not a priority of Rajiv Gandhi, and he maintained a hands-off policy regarding the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.¹⁴⁶ In July 1985, he publicly stated, "The Sri Lankan Tamils should not expect a separate state or a federal state, but something similar to what India has."¹⁴⁷ He was trying to shift the debate on the Tamil problem to a constructive plane rather than let the problem remain confined to one of protest and counter-protest between the two governments.¹⁴⁸

At the same time, Rajiv Gandhi did not take any action to intervene with Tamil Nadu support to Tamil militants, as he had to govern under his mother's legacy. Due to this dual but balanced policy, Rajiv Gandhi did not have any domestic pressure to intervene in Sri Lankan affairs, and he could manage both Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka in a cordial manner. In this setting India did not need to intervene in Sri Lanka.

This non-interventionist policy had to change in 1985 with the LTTE massacre of 150 people at Anuradhapura. Following the incident, the Sinhalese realized that it was necessary to find a settlement to the conflict, and they pressured the Sri Lankan government to find some sort of solution. Considering the situation, Jayewardene made a fresh effort with Rajiv Gandhi, and for the first time he agreed with Gandhi's proposal for conducting talks with separatist groups. As a result, peace talks were conducted in July and August 1985, in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, under the facilitation of India.

The Thimphu talks deadlocked, as Sri Lankan delegates did not accept the demands of Tamil groups. Tamil representatives were rigidly dedicated to winning a separate Tamil state. They demanded "Recognition of Tamils as a distinct nationality, recognition that the northern and eastern provinces are the traditional Tamil homeland,

¹⁴⁶ Venkatesh Rao, "Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka," 426.

¹⁴⁷ A. Jayarathnam Wilson, *The Break-Up of Sri Lanka: The Sinhalese Tamil Conflict* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 183.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

recognition of their right to self-determination, and granting of citizenship to all Tamils in the island.”¹⁴⁹ The Sinhalese delegation strongly opposed giving the right of self-determination, as they regarded it as tantamount to conceding Eelam. However, Rajiv Gandhi did not give up his attempt. He subsequently conducted talks with the TULF and Sri Lankan representatives in New Delhi, but it was unworkable since Tamil groups—the LTTE, in particular—opposed the results. The hope was to replicate Punjab peace accord signed by Sikh leader Harchand Longowal and Rajiv Gandhi.¹⁵⁰

After this incident, Rajiv Gandhi realized that Tamil groups could not be controlled as India wanted, even though they received financial and military training facilities from India. Therefore, he ordered all militant leaders to leave India within 48 hours. In November 1986, Tamil Nadu police undertook operations under the directives of the central government and seized SAM missiles, AK 47 rifles, mortars, grenades, and communication equipment.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, Rajiv Gandhi agreed with president Jayewardene to increase naval patrols in the Indian Ocean to control arms smuggling from India to Sri Lanka. Taking this situation as a grant, the Sri Lankan president resumed defeating Tamil militants militarily, and he mobilized troops to defeat the LTTE with the help of friendly countries.

Rajiv Gandhi’s sudden policy change towards the LTTE seemed to have two objectives. First, he wanted to pressure the LTTE to agree with the peace negotiations if they wanted to continue friendlier relations with India. He knew that the LTTE could not survive without the covert support of India. Second, this sudden policy change convinced the Sri Lankan government that India was now involved with the issue in good faith. These two objectives helped Rajiv control both parties to a certain extent, bring them to the negotiating table, and reduce domestic political pressure on the central government of India. As Rajiv had a super majority in the parliament after the assassination of his mother, he was free to get decisions without based on the influences of Tamils. This is a

¹⁴⁹ Alan J. Bullion, *India, Sri Lanka and the Tamil Crisis*, 56.

¹⁵⁰ Panda K, “The Punjab Imbroglio: The Persuade to the Accord of 1985 in *Peace Accords and Ethnic Conflict*, ed. De Silva K M and Samarasinghe A (London: ICES, 1993), 83.

¹⁵¹ Bullion, *India, Sri Lanka and the Tamil Crisis*, 96.

clear example of the fact that Indian government made decisions with regard to intervention in Sri Lanka that were based mostly on domestic concerns.

D. SECOND TURNING POINT: OPERATION LIBERATION IN 1987

Four years after the anti-Tamil riots in 1983, Sri Lanka laid another concrete foundation for India to intervene in Sri Lanka. After leaving India in 1986, Prabhakaran obtained control of the LTTE and planned to declare Eelam on January 1, 1987.¹⁵² At that time, government forces were not strong in the peninsula. Therefore, a communication and economic embargo was imposed as an operational tactic to control LTTE activities in the area. Supporting the government's effort, the Sri Lankan Government Parliamentary group unanimously passed a resolution on March 7, 1987 "to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Sri Lanka where necessary by military action."¹⁵³ With the new resolution, president Jayewardene instructed the military to raze the Jaffna peninsula and rebuild it. His ambition was to eradicate the problem from Sri Lanka while the new government in India was unsupportive of the Tamil groups.

On May 26, 1987, Sri Lankan forces launched a massive offensive operation against the LTTE. Eight thousand troops from the three armed forces encircled the Jaffna peninsula. Prior to the operation, all civilians were instructed to gather in schools and temples for their protection, and a 48-hour curfew was imposed in the peninsula to minimize civilian casualties. Troops advanced towards Jaffna city with the help of air raids and ground artillery supports. By May 28, troops were at the door step of enemy strong-holds, and the operation was very successful. The Sri Lankan Defense Minister said, "The military blows would force the LTTE to realize that the only path for them is to come for talks with the government."¹⁵⁴ According to government orders, about 4000 people between the ages of 15 and 45 had been arrested and sent to detention camps in the southern part of the country. As a result of the embargo and severe fighting, people in

¹⁵² Gunarathne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 170.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 174.

¹⁵⁴ Wilson, *Tigers of Lanka*, 226.

the Jaffna peninsula started to migrate to Tamil Nadu in India and to European countries causing a crisis for the Tamil Nadu state.

This situation was similar to the situation after anti-Tamil riots in Sri Lanka in 1983, and the domestic setting compelled India to embrace interventionist attitude. People in Tamil Nadu pressured Indian central government to intervene to halt ongoing operation against the LTTE. Under this domestic setting, India had to intervene as India could not compromise its ethical responsibility on protecting Tamils in Sri Lanka. Non-intervention might lead to domestic instability and political ramifications. However, the main objective of intervention was to address the domestic issue in India rather than solving the Sri Lankan problem.

1. History Repeats: Reaction from Tamil Nadu

With the influx of refugees, Tamil Nadu put pressure on the Indian government to save Tamils from annihilation by the Sri Lankan military. The arrival of new refugees created many administrative problems for the Tamil Nadu government, as it was still struggling with the effects of refugee arrival in 1983. Beyond that, Tamil Nadu politicians were highly concerned about the fate of Tamils trapped in the Jaffna peninsula. After hearing horror stories from the refugees, the Tamil Nadu people pressured the Tamil Nadu government to force the central government to take action as soon as possible. As in 1983, voicing outrage over this issue was a good way for Tamil Nadu politicians to increase their number of votes. Therefore, the MGR sent a fax to Prime Minister Gandhi to intervene to save innocent trapped civilians from the military advance.

While presenting this humanitarian side of the issue, Tamil Nadu politicians sought to protect Tamil militant groups from the offensive by government forces. In the five year period following 1983, the MGR donated 200 million Indian rupees from the Tamil Nadu government to the LTTE for civilian welfare,¹⁵⁵ but the LTTE had nothing to do with money for the welfare of people. They used this money to buy weapons and to acquire ships to transfer military equipment. Further, they used this money to bribe Tamil

¹⁵⁵ Rohan Gunaratne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 418.

Nadu officials to work for the LTTE. It is reported that the LTTE funded MDMK leader, Vaiko's election campaign on behalf of his sustained support.¹⁵⁶

2. India Reaction due Domestic Dynamics

The full scale war on the insurgency in the post—1987 period increased pressure on the Indian state. Unlike 1983, in just 40 months the Sri Lanka military had become a full-fledged force with sophisticated equipment. It was ready in all respects to eradicate the militant struggle in Sri Lanka militarily. In addition, there were several countries with Sri Lanka who backed the military response to the LTTE organization such as China, Pakistan, and Israel. However, the LTTE was also no longer a fragmented military group. With the assistance of RAW and the state of Tamil Nadu, it was strong enough to fight with government forces. Considering that tense situation, the Indian government put its maximum effort into negotiating with both sides without directly intervening to force the Sri Lankan government to terminate its offensive. It was a golden chance for India to intervene in Sri Lanka if India had any strategic motivation to intervene. Further, India could produce enough evidence to convince the legitimacy of intervention, but India did not intervene. This indicates that India did not have any strategic motivations to intervene in Sri Lanka, unless some other concern was formulated in the interventionist setting.

The message sent by Rajiv to Jayewardene on February 12, 1987, while the Sri Lankan offensive was under way, clearly shows that India did not have any strategic concern to intervene in Sri Lanka. Rajiv wrote:

It appeared to be a definite move away from a political solution. You will agree that this is a dangerous political signal that is being transmitted. There is still time to get back to the negotiating table but the present trends are rapidly closing that opinion. I would earnestly suggest that you kindly consider the serious implications of these happenings. It would be in everybody's interest to halt the military operations immediately, as you will agree, it will be difficult for India to persuade the militants to resume political negotiations in the current circumstances. I would humbly request you to consider a negotiated settlement.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 418.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 173.

The Sri Lankan government responded to this message promptly, but it mentioned that ongoing offensives would be terminated only if militants gave up activities aimed at establishing a separate state and put down arms.¹⁵⁸ The Sri Lankan government insisted on this condition to discontinue its military offensive—and the government was sure that the LTTE would not accept this condition.

The military victory of Sri Lankan forces in 1987 was a defeat for the Indian central government in two aspects. The deaths of civilians and the defeat of militants in Sri Lanka would compromise India's responsibility for protecting Tamils in Sri Lanka. Similarly, it would break the hopes of the Tamil Nadu people, which might lead to internal instability and unhealthy political ramifications. When "Operation Liberation" reached a decisive phase in May 1987, there was strong pressure from the Tamil Nadu center, as in 1983. As a result, India warned Sri Lanka not to touch Jaffna. If the military offensive was continued, India was ready to support the LTTE.¹⁵⁹ On June 2, 1987, the Tamil Nadu people sent humanitarian assistance to the people of Jaffna in a convoy of 19 trawlers but, when it reached Sri Lankan waters, the Sri Lankan navy intercepted and turned back the boats.¹⁶⁰ After this incident, Tamil Nadu put pressure on the central government to provide humanitarian intervention. Therefore, Rajiv Gandhi was compelled to follow his mother's basic policy framework of supporting Tamil insurgents to preserve a responsible stance of the government. The Tamil Nadu pressure once again was the foundation for a domestic push for intervention. In addition, by 1986, Rajiv Gandhi saw a weakening support in the parliament so therefore, could not afford to isolate the Tamil State.

This domestic setting paved the way for India to intervene in the Sri Lankan issue. Initiating the interventionist phase, on June 3, 1987, five AN-32 air craft with the protection of four Mirage fighters forcibly entered Sri Lankan air space, violating

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 171.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 178.

¹⁶⁰ Narayan Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka*, 236.

international aviation rules, and dropped 25 tons of relief material over Jaffna.¹⁶¹ It was how India responded to the Sri Lankan blockade of the Indian flotilla. This act addressed two parts of the Indian community. It gave symbolic Indian support, concern, and credibility to the desires of the Tamil Nadu people. Mainly it was done to preserve the Southern political front of Congress party. Similarly, this act showed the rest of India that the government was strong enough to make any decision to maintain India's dominant role in the South-Asian region.

3. Seeing Solutions for Sri Lanka in Indian Domestic Political Dynamics

After successfully controlling the Sri Lankan government's offensive against Tamil groups, Indian policy makers continued their interventionist attitude to find a settlement for the Sri Lankan issue. The main objective was to stop Tamil Nadu pressure on the central government over the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict. Actually, they hoped to terminate the Sri Lankan issue prior to the Indian election in 1989 by finding a solution that would please the people of Tamil Nadu, if not people of Sri Lanka. India had two options with which to counter Tamil Nadu pressure: they could intervene either politically or militarily. By that time, India had tried several times to solve the problem by intervening politically, but a favorable result could not be achieved. The second option—military intervention—also could not be launched, as India was not in a position to send its troops without a legitimate reason. It was under these circumstances that the Indo-Lanka peace accord appeared. As the Indian government was in an extraordinary hurry to find a solution through this accord, arrangements were made to sign the accord without adequately eliciting consent from the Tamil and Sinhalese communities. In sum, the main drive behind Indian intervention was to address the domestic Indian issue, not the issue in Sri Lanka, yet without the consultation of the Indian population. President Jayewardene, meanwhile, was under pressure from Tamil radicals as well as the increasing radicalization of the left in Sri Lanka.

¹⁶¹ “Operation Poomalai- The Jaffna Food Drop,” <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History/1987IPKF/Chapter1.html> (accessed October 20, 2012).

India's domestic concerns behind the intervention in Sri Lanka were best explained by J. N. Dixit, on March 10, 1989, when he addressed the United Service Institution in New Delhi. He stated:

We went to Sri Lanka to preserve our own unity; to ensure the success of a very different experiment that we have been carrying out ourselves. We claim to be the biggest functional democracy in the world....What the Tamils in Sri Lanka were compelled to follow, in terms of their life, which would have affected our polity. Because let us not forget that the first voice of secessionism in Indian Republic was raised in Tamil Nadu in the mid-sixties.¹⁶²

Fundamentally, the objective of the peace accord was satisfying the Tamils in Tamil Nadu. In other words, to address India's domestic concerns. In 1990, Dixit wrote in Lanka Guardian magazine:

I would like to elaborate that we have to respect the sentiments of the 50 million Tamil citizens of India. They felt that if we did not rise, in support of the Tamil cause in Sri Lanka, we are not standing by our own Tamils and if that is so, then in the Tamil psyche, Tamil subconscious the question arose; is there any relevance or validity of our being part of a large Indian political identity, if our very deeply felt sentiments are not respected? So, it was a compulsion. It was not a rationalized motivation, but it was a compulsion which could not be avoided by any elected government in this country.¹⁶³

Even though India enthusiastically prepared a peace accord, both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE only agreed to follow the conditions of the accord reluctantly. Many Sinhalese considered the contents of the accord as preliminary arrangements to provide Eelam for Tamils.¹⁶⁴ Specifically, they did not like the merging of the North and East provinces to make one administrative unit. Later, a North-East council was set up by the Thirteenth Amendment to the constitution, but the Sri Lankan government refused power sharing as per the accord. Amidst these problems, Jayewardene signed the accord, since some elements of the deal would have benefited his government. His main

¹⁶² Rohan Gunaratne, *Indian Intervention in Sri Lanka*, 208.

¹⁶³ J. N. Dixit, "Why Rajiv Sent the IPKF," *Lanka Guardian* 12, no.17 (January, 1990):18, http://www.sangam.org/2010/05/IPKF_Folly.php?uid=3962.

¹⁶⁴ Bryan Pfaffenbeger, "Sri Lanka in 1987: Indian Intervention and Resurgence of the JVP," *Asian Survey* 28, no.2 (February, 1988): 142, <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.nps.edu/stable/2644815?seq=4>.

motivation was the Indian guarantee to maintain the arrangements of the accord.¹⁶⁵ He wished to hand over the problem to India and find a relief for his deteriorating economy by reducing military expenditures. By that time, the Sri Lankan government had to allocate 18% of the SLR 65 billion budget to the military.¹⁶⁶ Even though President Jayewardene focused upon the positive side of the accord, a majority of Sinhalese and some cabinet ministers considered the signing of the Indo-Lanka accord a betrayal of the nation.

The LTTE also gave its consent for the accord, as it had no other option. Prabhakaran did not agree with the accord since it was signed without adequately consulting Tamils in Sri Lanka.¹⁶⁷ It was a bi-lateral agreement between India and Sri Lanka. He perceived the accord as “binding Sri Lanka within India’s big power orbit,”¹⁶⁸ and he was reluctant to hand over weapons to the government of Sri Lanka, as per the peace accord, but he could not ignore any possible support from India that would allow him to continue his movement. He could especially not reject Gandhi’s promise to provide five million Indian rupees per month to the LTTE organization to rehabilitate its members.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, he agreed with India’s proposal; however, he refused to contest for the Provincial Council election in order to mark his reluctance to the accord.¹⁷⁰ Why had India been so keen to intervene and force both parties to sign an accord which was not accepted by them? Obviously, India wanted to control the Southern domestic pressure on its central government. Meanwhile, the deal satisfied the India’s Tamil pressure on its government to do something about the civil war in Sri Lanka.

In addition to controlling the pressure of Tamil Nadu upon the central government, the Rajiv Gandhi administration expected to address many domestic

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.,142.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.,146.

¹⁶⁷ Ralph R. Premdas and S W R A Samarasinghe, “ Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Conflict: The Indo-Lanka Peace Accord,” *Asian Survey* 28, no.6 (June,1988): 682, <http://www.jstor.org.libproxy.nps.edu/stable/2644815?seq>.

¹⁶⁸ Kadian R, *India’s Sri Lanka Fiasco: Peacekeepers at War* (New Delhi:Vision,1987),168.

¹⁶⁹ Hoole R, *The Broken Palmirah* (Colombo:Sri Lanka Studies Institute, 1990),177.

¹⁷⁰ M. Bandara, *Lionsong: Sri Lanka’s Ethnic Conflict* (Colombo: Godage, 2002),217.

interests by signing the accord. According to the terms of the accord, Tamil refugees had to be repatriated back into Sri Lanka, and given assistance to settle in their previous villages. In addition, according to the accord, Rajiv to remove safe heavens of Tamil militants remains in Tamil Nadu, who might be potential threat in the future.¹⁷¹ It served to reduce periodic skirmishes that often disrupted the public peace. In fact, this accord helped India to not only control practical problems in Tamil Nadu, but also to showcase the central government's political image in Tamil Nadu.¹⁷²

The main drive for sending the IPKF on July 30, 1987 to Sri Lanka was to maintain the terms of the accord in order to achieve two Indian domestic goals. First, Indian political leaders could convince the people in Tamil Nadu that the central government sent the Indian army for the security of innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka.¹⁷³ Sri Lankan Tamils welcomed Indian troops as their protectors who had been sent by mother India, and it was a victory for the Indian Tamils' long struggle in support of militant issue in Sri Lanka. Second, India wanted to maintain the peace process in a rigid frame allowing no room for either party to stray from the terms of the peace accord. When the Indian army was present, both parties had to obey the terms of the accord. If the Indian army could maintain a ceasefire until both parties fulfilled their obligations as per the accord, the Indian government could relieve themselves of Tamil Nadu pressure. Unexpectedly, the LTTE launched attacks against the IPKF, destroying all Indian expectations.

This is considered to be one of the biggest political blunders in Indian political history. The fourth biggest army in the world was defeated by a primitive guerilla force, which had been trained by them. Dr. Rohan Gunaratne equates this defeat to the American, Chinese, and Soviet defeats in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Afghanistan, respectively.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Seth Mydans, "India Signs Pact with Sri Lanka: Dends Soldiers," *New York Times*, July 30, 1987, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/426541464?accountid=12702>.

¹⁷² Premdas and Samarasinghe, "Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict," 685.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 681.

¹⁷⁴ Gunaratna, *Indian intervention in Sri Lanka*, 237.

The Indian government sent its army to achieve domestic political goals. It did not have a comprehensive long-term strategy behind sending its troops to Sri Lanka. In addition, Indian government was not adequately concerned about the possible repercussions of deploying troops. When Prabhakaran started to kill innocent Sinhala/Tamil civilians and launched attacks against IPKF members, Rajiv Gandhi was compelled to retaliate as per the obligations of the peace accord. People in Southern Sri Lanka pointed out that the mighty IPKF could not keep the peace. Even though the IPKF was losing the battle, Rajiv Gandhi could not recall the Indian army as a defeated leader. Large number of Indians, except those who were in Tamil Nadu, saw this as a blunder. He could not risk hurting his political image by painting himself as a person who makes poor decisions.

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IV. ROLE OF INDIA'S DOMESTIC CONCERNS IN TRANSFORMING ITS DECISION OF INTERVENTION IN THE 2000S

India's interventionist attitude, which was discussed in Chapter III, drastically changed with the setbacks of the IPKF in Sri Lanka and the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.¹⁷⁵ Since then, India followed a hands-off policy in the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka until the war there ended. Socio-political changes in the Tamil Nadu, which occurred after Rajiv's assassination, encouraged the government of India to continue with its new policy.

As far as India's decision to intervene in Sri Lanka was concerned, there were two significant incidents after the implementation of a hands-off policy. The first incident was the trapping of 40,000 Sri Lankan army soldiers on the Jaffna peninsula in 2000 amidst the LTTE's military offensive. The second incident was the launching of the Sri Lankan government's three- year- long offensive, which wiped out the terrorist problem in Sri Lanka.

Surprisingly, India did not intervene in any of these incidents, even though both the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE requested India's intervention in various occasions: India stuck to its hands-off policy. This situation brings forth a series of critical questions. Why did India embrace such a different attitude? What was the reason behind India's negative response to saving the lives of 40,000 Sri Lankan soldiers? Why did India not intervene to halt Sri Lanka army operations in 2006, as they had in 1987?

This Chapter argues that domestic concerns were the driving force behind an attitudinal transformation of India. In 2000, India's hands-off policy was shaped by domestic interests. India did not want to instigate Indian Tamils and destabilize the domestic situation in India because of an unwanted intervention. In 2006, the historically anti-LTTE attitude of the Indian central government was bolstered by weak pressure from

¹⁷⁵ Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict*, 156.

Tamil Nadu, and these together shaped India's hands-off policy and non-intervention. Overall, India's decision regarding intervention was deeply shaped by domestic concerns.

This chapter contains three sections. The first section describes the socio-political transformation of India in view of the Sri Lankan issue, including the background of India's hands-off policy and measures taken to implement it. Further, it describes changes in the Tamil Nadu and how they persuaded the central government to maintain its new policy. After that, the second section focuses on India's hands-off attitude during the debacle in 2000. It shows how domestic concerns discouraged India's decision of intervention in support of the government of Sri Lanka, even though intervention would have been strategically advantageous. The third section focuses on India's behavior during the final war in Sri Lanka. First, it describes how Tamil Nadu pressure weakened support for intervention, compared to the 1980s. Then, it argues that weak Tamil Nadu pressure was the main factor that contributed to a hands-off policy and non-intervention. It describes the complexities of the domestic aspirations of India during this period, and how India worked to achieve its aspirations by avoiding intervention. Finally, the chapter elaborates how Indian policy in Sri Lanka after the ethnic conflict was shaped by domestic dynamics in India.

A. BACKGROUND OF INDIA'S HANDS-OFF POLICY

After a disastrous interventionist attitude towards Sri Lanka in the 1980s, India unexpectedly stepped back from intervention in the Sri Lankan issue at the beginning of the 1990s. Activities of the government of Sri Lanka, the LTTE organization, and both the Sinhalese and Tamil people in Sri Lanka discouraged India from actively participating in the Sri Lankan internal conflict. As a result, many Indian rulers steered clear of the issue, but India cautiously kept an eye on the progress of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, as the political front in Tamil Nadu could instigate an action at any time in favor of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. This domestic situation circumscribed India's ability to intervene in a considerable manner.

1. Anti-Indian Activities of the LTTE

India's policy towards the Sri Lankan issue entered an entirely different phase in the postaccord period, since the LTTE treated the IPKF in a hostile manner.¹⁷⁶ The LTTE resorted to guerilla warfare and confronted Indian soldiers on Sri Lankan soil. Ultimately, the Indian force that came to safeguard the rights of Sri Lankan Tamils became victims of the LTTE. The IPKF lost 1200 lives, and over 3500 were wounded.¹⁷⁷ In addition, India spent 20 million Indian rupees per day to maintain their force in Sri Lanka. These incidents created a situation in which the non-Tamil Indian communities could blame the central government for involvement in an unwanted war—one that was the result of pressure from the Tamil Nadu people. Non-Tamils regarded the LTTE solely as a terrorist organization that was responsible for Gandhi's assassination. In fact, activities of the LTTE made India's decision of intervention questionable. This situation drastically reduced the Indian government's support for Tamil militants in Sri Lanka.

These circumstances paved the way for the Indian government to create a wedge between the LTTE organization and the rest of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. When the LTTE started to kill members of other Tamil groups in Sri Lanka to highlight its position, India further isolated the LTTE. India wanted the LTTE to be a powerless organization which can't win the hearts and minds of the Tamil Nadu people. India did not want the LTTE to be strong enough to represent the Sri Lankan Tamil community. India viewed strengthening of the LTTE as a threat to internal stability of India from the beginning of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. In the 1980s, India initially supported the TELO. Later, with tremendous pressure from Tamil Nadu, especially from AIADMK leader M. G. Ramachandran, India had to treat the LTTE with undue recognition.¹⁷⁸ As the domestic stability of India was at the top of the central government's agenda, India had to assist the LTTE unwillingly.

¹⁷⁶ Sudha Ramachandran, "Sri Lanka's Wounded Tigers Growl at Delhi," *Asia Times*, March 28, 2008, http://www.atimes.com/atimes/South_Asia/JC28Df01.html.

¹⁷⁷ Dianne Sturgess, "New Delhi Offers to Mediate in Sri Lanka," World Socialist website, International Committee of the Fourth International, May 12, 2000, <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2000/05/ind-m12.html>.

¹⁷⁸ Sudra Ramachandran, "India and the LTTE: For Better, For Worse," in *Perspectives on India-Sri Lanka Relations*, ed. Sumanasiri Liyanage, P. Sahadewan and Anisha Kinra, (Colombo:Manik, 2011), 191.

Since the LTTE knew this situation from the beginning, it was compelled to fight with India. It established its own independent ways of acquiring arms,¹⁷⁹ and it did not agree to hand over such acquired weapons to the government of Sri Lanka, in spite of the obligations of the peace accord that was brokered by India.¹⁸⁰ Ultimately, this paved the way for the LTTE to fight with the IPKF fiercely between 1987 and 1989. In the end, the IPKF became a lost mission for India. It was this domestic circumstance that prompted India to adopt a hands-off attitude towards the Sri Lankan issue in general, and develop an antagonistic attitude towards the LTTE.¹⁸¹

2. Anti-Indian Activities of Sinhalese

India's hands-off policy was not solely a product of the LTTE's behavior. Activities of the Sri Lankan government and the Sinhalese nationalist parties also contributed equally in this regard. President R. Premadasa, who was the successor of President J. R. Jayawardana, vehemently emphasized that the IPKF should be withdrawn from Sri Lanka to solve the ethnic conflict in the country. It is reported that president Premadasa gave military equipment to the LTTE to fight with the IPKF, in order to outflank India.¹⁸² Encouraging Premadasa, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), a leftist group in Sri Lanka, protested all over the country to pressure the Indian government to remove its forces from Sri Lanka.¹⁸³ Even though India hesitated to leave, as it would have left unfinished business in Sri Lanka, Sri Lankans no longer expected India's help in resolving the conflict.

¹⁷⁹ V. Surianarayan, "Sea Tigers: Threat to Indian Security," *The Hindu*, July 28, 2004, <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2004/07/28/stories/2004072802311000.htm>.

¹⁸⁰ Sumantra Bose, *States, Nations, Sovereignty: Sri Lanka, India and the Tamil Eelam Movement* (New Delhi: SAGE, 1994), 154.

¹⁸¹ C. Jayasinghe, "Sri Lanka: Back to the Gun; With the Ceasefire Act as Good as dead and the War Between the Government and the Tigers Escalating, There is Fear the Country may Slip into Anarchy," *India Today*, May 28, 2007, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/libproxy.nps.edu/docview/98764550?accountid=12702>.

¹⁸² Sarath Munasinghe, *A Soldier's Version* (Colombo: Market Information Systems, 2000), 38–39.

¹⁸³ G. H. Peiris, *Twilight of the Tigers: Peace Efforts and Power Struggles in Sri Lanka* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press and Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2009), 18.

Considering the growing pressure in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister V P Singh agreed to withdraw the IPKF by March 31, 1990. This decision had a huge impact on the INC's political stability. Many non-Tamil Indians started to look at the INC as a political group that made decisions to protect votes coming from the Southern flank. The loss of Indian lives in the battle against the LTTE was a leading theme in Indian politics. Gradually, India changed its priorities and objectives regarding involvement in the Sri Lankan case, as a result of these circumstances, and moved towards a hands-off policy.

Under the new policy, V P Singh had to follow a reciprocal course based upon the "Indira Doctrine," which encouraged India to play a big brother role in the South Asian region. He disassociated himself from the Congress party in Sri Lanka¹⁸⁴ and adopted a new doctrine, prepared by the External Affairs Minister I K Gujral, which declared, "as long as Sri Lanka does not attempt to undermine India's security interests and does not muddle its internal ethnic conflict to avoid its effects spill over to India, it [India] would not interfere again in Sri Lankan affairs." This was a clear message that India was sending to Sri Lanka. Long after the rule of V P Singh was over, key points of his hands-off policy remained an active part of Indian policy towards Sri Lanka. It included following main elements:

(1) India had been wrong in getting involved in the ethnic crisis of Sri Lanka; (2) [the] Indo-Lanka agreement conceived by Rajiv Gandhi and Jayawardana was an ill prepared effort which resulted in misunderstanding between India and Sri Lanka; (3) Sending of the IPKF to Sri Lanka was interference of that country's internal affairs; (4) this situation has been remedied by India completely withdrawing from Sri Lankan affairs and withdrawal of the IPKF. The Sri Lankan government should deal with its Tamil problem as an internal affair in which India would not take any interest. The continuation of the internal conflict in Sri Lanka or support for the settlement from Tamil Nadu are matters which will be dealt with through normal diplomatic channels.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Liyanage and Rathnapriya, "Indo-Lanka Relations," 78.

¹⁸⁵ Dixit, *Assignment Colombo*, 294.

3. Assassination of Rajiv Gandhi

In addition to the IPKF debacle, the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by an LTTE suicide bomber in an election rally in Tamil Nadu also was a significant factor in distancing India from the Sri Lanka issue.¹⁸⁶ As revealed, the bomber killed Rajiv Gandhi because of his anti-LTTE policies—he did not accept the LTTE as his mother did, although he let the Tamil Nadu politicians maintain connections with the LTTE to preserve his Southern political front. However, he was well aware that the LTTE’s objectives were different from those of India. Specifically, the LTTE’s strong desire to have a separate state in Sri Lanka, which was opposed by India, was viewed by Rajiv Gandhi as a possible threat to the unity of India. The leadership of the LTTE viewed Rajiv Gandhi’s attitude as a threat to its movement. Therefore, it planned to kill him prior to the election.¹⁸⁷ As this incident was a clear sign that Indian territory was vulnerable to LTTE infiltration attacks, India decided to take an even stricter approach to its hands-off policy towards Sri Lanka. No future Indian government was willing to risk LTTE association, and they maintained a hands-off policy until the mid-2000s.¹⁸⁸

4. Nationalist Politics and Political Uncertainties of India

Growing nationalist politics and political uncertainties in India also affected the continuing hands-off policy towards Sri Lanka. From 1991 onward, not a single political party could get a majority in elections to form unitary governments. V P Singh’s government, which was elected in 1991, was a coalition of many regional parties. Vajpayee’s government, which came into power in 1998, was also a coalition. The election results in 2004 also did not give the required majority to any party to form a unitary government. In general, parties in these governments had varying and opposing political ideologies on issues that had national and international importance. Under this

¹⁸⁶ C. Jayasinghe, “Sri Lanka: Back to the Gun; With the Ceasefire Pact as Good as Dead and the War Between the Government and the Tigers Escalating, There is Fear that the Country may slip into Anarchy,” *India Today*, May 28, 2007, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/libproxy.nps.edu/docview/198764550?accountid=12702>.

¹⁸⁷ Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict*, 154.

¹⁸⁸ Liyanage and Rathnapriya, “Indo-Lanka Relations,” 80.

new political constellation, the Indian central government always preferred to avoid political risk to the center. The hands-off policy was the best remedy.

Intervention by India in favor of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, as in the 1980s, was not an advisable policy for India, as it had an indirect impact on increasing communal tensions between Hindus and Indian Muslims. In 1992, Hindus demolished the Babra Masjid temple in Ayodya, but the Union Government at the center failed to make preventive decisions promptly.¹⁸⁹ This situation attracted militant Muslim politics and allowed Pakistan to intervene in Indian internal matters.

At the same time, the LTTE began to chase away Muslims from the area it had demarcated to establish its imagined Eelam state. Many innocent Muslims in the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka had to escape to Sinhalese areas in the South.¹⁹⁰ Unlike India, Muslims in Sri Lanka had a separate religious identity, and their concerns had to be addressed separately. Hence, support for the Sri Lankan Tamil movement by India, as in the 1980s, might have agitated both the Sri Lankan and Indian Muslims. In addition, if India ignored the rights of Muslims in Sri Lanka, there might be a chance of creating undesirable ramifications for thousands of Indian employees in Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, India allowed the Sri Lankan government to find solutions for their internal problem,¹⁹¹ as India did not want to radicalize docile Islamic groups in South Asia. These domestic circumstances also worked to make the hands-off policy the best option for India to follow in terms of Sri Lankan issue.

When all of the root causes for India's maintenance of a hands-off policy towards Sri Lanka are analyzed, it is evident that Indian domestic concerns were the driving force that shaped this policy. Indian rulers did not want to put their country in a dangerous situation because of an unwanted internal conflict in another country. The willingness of

¹⁸⁹ Prashant Pahday, "Shinde is right....even Babri and Godhra examples of Saffron Terror," *The Times of India*, January 22, 2013, <http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/the-real-truth/entry/shinde-is-right-even-babri-and-godhra-are-examples-of-saffron-terror>.

¹⁹⁰ Nirupama Subramanian, LTTE and Muslims, *The Hindu*. October 21, 2003, <http://www.hindu.com/2003/10/21/stories/2003102101211000.htm>.

¹⁹¹ D. B. S. Jeyaraj, "Why Indian Policy Towards Sri Lanka Changed," Federal Idea.com, <http://federalidea.com/focus/archives/261> (accessed December 28, 2012).

nationalist Sinhalese groups’ and some Sri Lankan Tamils to keep India out of direct intervention also worked to help the Indian government maintain its hands-off policy.

5. Implementation of Hands-off Policy

In the light of the events described, the Congress party government under Narasimha Rao carefully defined its attitudes toward the Sri Lanka issue. His policy consisted of three main features. First, he decided not to play the “guardian” role of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka in the context of the ethnic problem. Second, he separated the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka from the LTTE issue and did not accept the LTTE as the sole representative of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. With that, demands of the LTTE were no longer considered synonymous with the aspirations of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. Third, he determined to defuse security and political challenges posed by the LTTE in the region in general, and inside India in particular.

The Narasimha Rao government initiated many steps to bar LTTE activities on Indian soil. Initially, he proclaimed the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act (TADA) in Tamil Nadu to crackdown on LTTE activities in Tamil Nadu.¹⁹² With that, he expected to stop the inclination of nationalist Tamil Nadu factions towards the LTTE movement. Furthermore, in 1992, he declared the LTTE an “unlawful association.”¹⁹³ The primary reason for the ban was to stop possible secessionist aspirations in Tamil Nadu. On May 14, 1992, in the Rajya Sabha, the Indian Home Minister stated, “the larger objective of the LTTE went beyond the establishment of a Tamil homeland in northeastern Sri Lanka and hence posed a threat to Indian sovereignty and territorial integrity.” In addition to the ban, India charged Prabakaran and his intelligence chief Pottu Amman with the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, Prabakaran became a wanted man in India. As a result, he could no longer move freely in

¹⁹² T.S.Subramanian, A Crackdown in Tamil Nadu,” *Frontline* 19, no.15 9 (2002), <http://www.flonnet.com/fl1915/19150200.htm>.

¹⁹³ J Gajanaathan, “India’s LTTE Ban Renewal, Politics of Security,” Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, last modified July 24, 2012, <http://www.ipcs.org/article/south-asia/indias-ltte-ban-renewal-politics-of-security-3682.html>.

¹⁹⁴ T.S. Subramanian, “The Accused, The Charges, The Victim,” *Frontline* 15, no.3 (February, 1988) <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl1503/15030150.htm>.

Tamil Nadu—no more than he had been able to in the 1980s. In sum, India isolated the LTTE, both from the Indian Tamil community and the Sri Lankan Tamil community, with these legal measures.

Altered security perceptions in both Sri Lanka and India led to a convergence of their security interests over the issue of growing LTTE terrorism, and compelled India to implement its hands-off policy. The killing of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President R. Premadasa in 1991 and 1993 respectively highlighted the LTTE as a common threat to both India and Sri Lanka. This growing terrorist problem—capable of killing the Indian prime minister—was considered a top threat that should be addressed immediately. The LTTE's connection with Tamil Nadu nationalist groups further compelled India to seek a solution to the problem. For success, India had to maintain a strong relationship with Sri Lanka to jointly counter their common enemy. In this light, the new rulers of Sri Lanka during this period looked at India as a positive source of support for eliminating terrorism from Sri Lanka.¹⁹⁵ Relations at the top political level gradually left to the formation of a positive image of India in Sri Lankan society. Similarly, India also perceived Sri Lanka from a different angle than it had in the 1980s. To symbolize their happiness with India's new attitude, the Government of Sri Lanka accepted 13,166 Sri Lankan refugees back home from India.

Responding positively, India agreed to sign a free trade agreement with Sri Lanka in 1998 to strengthen ties between the two countries on the economic front.¹⁹⁶ According to the agreement, India would provide free duty on 102 items and 50 percent duty reduction for over 400 items. Furthermore, India assisted the Sri Lanka navy in its mission of blocking illegal transportation to Sri Lanka through the Palk Strait. On January 16, 1993, the Indian Navy intercepted a 280-ton LTTE cargo ship, “MV Ahat,”

¹⁹⁵ P. Sahadewan, “India's Foreign Policy in the Post Cold-War Period: Implications for South Asia and Indo-Sri Lanka Relations,” in *Perspectives on India Lanka Relations*, ed. Sumanasiri Liyanage, P. Sahadewan, Anisha Kinra (Colombo: Manak Publications, 2011), 37.

¹⁹⁶ Muttukrishna Sarvanathan, “The Nature, Causes and Effects of Counterband Trade and Capital Between India and Sri Lanka,” *Contemporary South Asia* 8, no.2 (1999): 211–217, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.nps.edu/docview/207585630?accountid>.

with a load of weapons, communication equipment, and explosives in the Palk Strait. This was a blow to the LTTE in acquiring military ware for their organization.

B. CHANGES IN TAMIL NADU WITH REGARD TO SRI LANKAN ISSUE

With the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, many Tamil Nadu political parties moved away from their support for the LTTE's separation struggle in Sri Lanka. Similarly, the IPKF debacle in Sri Lanka also considerably distanced Indian political parties from the LTTE, since many of the Indian soldiers killed in Sri Lanka were from Tamil Nadu's Madras regiment. Therefore, many Tamil Nadu politicians willingly supported the hands-off policy of the central government. Sometimes, growing public opposition to the LTTE compelled some political parties to join with the policy of the central government. Contrarily, there were also nationalistic groups in Tamil Nadu who continued their support for the LTTE, even though it was an illegal act. However, in general, Tamil Nadu support for the LTTE was drastically reduced compared to the 1980s. This less supportive situation translated into less pressure upon the central government, which was able to continue its hands-off policy smoothly.

1. Distracting Major Political Parties from the Sri Lankan Issue

The Sri Lankan issue was a vote-making machine in Tamil Nadu politics in the 1980s, but shouting out support for the LTTE's separation movement in Sri Lanka was no longer a valid way to get votes in the 1990s.¹⁹⁷ The DMK government, which supported the Tamil movement in the 1980s, was toppled in a 1991 election. By that time, the Tamil Nadu people realized the real nature of the civil war in Sri Lanka, and a majority of them were against the LTTE.¹⁹⁸ They did not accept the LTTE's assassinations of peer Tamil groups and prominent Tamil figures who expressed anti-LTTE sentiments. The killing of the EPRLF leader Padmananda and 15 others in Madras in 1990 convinced the Indian people of the LTTE's self-serving attitudes. This socio-

¹⁹⁷ V Jayanath, "Eelam Issue Takes the Backstage," *The Hindu*, April 18, 2006, <http://www.hindu.com/2006/04/18/stories/2006041803271200>.

¹⁹⁸ M.R.N. Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, Prabakaran, Sri Lanka (Colombo: Vijitha Yapa, 2003), 281.

political situation worked to part major Tamil Nadu political parties from the Sri Lankan issue in a significant way.

The new AIADMK government under Jayalalitha understood the aspirations of the Tamil Nadu people very well. She had a strident anti-LTTE stance and led the demand to ban the LTTE in India, but she was equally vocal and concerned about the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka.¹⁹⁹ She expressed her pro-Tamil credentials by highlighting the grievances of the Tamil Nadu fishermen, the killing of innocent Tamils in bombardments of the Sri Lanka Air Force, and the deprivation of Tamil rights. This was perfectly aligned with the policy of the central government. Furthermore, her policy was also in sync with the aspirations of Tamil Nadu people. But since the central government did not have any intense domestic pressure from Tamil Nadu to intervene in the Sri Lankan case—as it had in the 1980s—India could maintain its hands-off policy without any difficulties.

2. Sustained Nationalist Support

Even though support of political parties in Tamil Nadu for the Sri Lankan issue waxed and waned in accordance with their political considerations, the support of Tamil nationalists towards the LTTE remained solid. Individuals like Nedumaran supported the LTTE, helping it survive in critical times. When the LTTE was banned, his enthusiasm for the LTTE did not dim—he publicly supported it without any consideration for the new anti-terrorist laws. Aware of this unchanging support, the LTTE kept in close contact with Tamil nationalist groups, and maintained ties with them that were stronger than those they had with the major political parties.

Besides Nedumaran, chief of PDK Kolathur Mani and chief of DK K. Weeramani also helped the LTTE maintain its logistic network in Tamil Nadu, even while the IPKF was fighting in Sri Lanka. It is reported that hundreds of LTTE members were trained in Kolathur Mani's farm near Salem.²⁰⁰ These politicians organized hunger strikes and protests for de-proscription of the LTTE, and worked to make the LTTE acceptable to

¹⁹⁹ Ramachandran, "India and the LTTE," 198.

²⁰⁰ Sudra Ramachandran, "India and the LTTE: For Better, For Worse," 195.

Tamil Nadu people. In a situation where there was no freedom to move freely in Tamil Nadu, the support given by nationalists groups was very important for the sustenance of the LTTE.

Even though these nationalist movements in Tamil Nadu were not strong enough to change the anti-LTTE attitude of the Tamil Nadu people, or change the stance of political parties towards the LTTE, they were able to force the Indian central government to maintain a “soft approach” towards Tamil Militants in Sri Lanka. It was this domestic pressure that compelled India to maintain a hands-off policy, and not support the government of Sri Lanka in crushing the LTTE militarily. The Indian government knew that the fire under the ashes in Tamil Nadu could ignite at any time if India leaned closer to the government of Sri Lanka. The neutrality of the Tamil Nadu people with regard to the Sri Lankan issue was very important if India was to maintain a stable domestic situation.

C. DEBACLE OF THE SRI LANKA ARMY IN 2000 AND INDIA’S NON-INTERVENTION

In April 2000, Tamil militants captured the Elephant pass area, the land connection of Jaffna peninsula to the mainland, outmaneuvering two divisions of the Sri Lankan army. As a result 35,000–40,000 Sri Lankan soldiers were trapped in the Jaffna peninsula, which had one harbor and an airfield.²⁰¹ The airfield was inside the artillery fire range of the Tamil militants. As a result, air transportation to the peninsula had to be severely restricted. The only possible replenishment was via the Kankasanthuray harbor, but port facilities were inadequate to handle the sudden and unexpected shipments that resulted from the closure of Palaly airport. In addition, the sea shipping lane from Colombo to Kankasanthuray was interrupted by LTTE sea tigers, which was under their control. Even though the situation was disastrous, the government of Sri Lanka could not let the peninsula be captured by the LTTE, as the area was tactically important for further military operations. Under this situation, the advancement of Tamil militants towards the

²⁰¹ Janaki Bahadur Kremmer, “Tamil Conflict at India’s Doorstep Guerrillas in Sri Lanka Battle to Take Jaffna, Just Across the Water from India’s Tamil Nadu State,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 16, 2000, <http://search.proquest.com/libproxy.nps.edu/docview/405643671?accountid=12702>.

North had to be stopped at any cost to save the lives of thousands of Sri Lankan government soldiers.

Considering the situation, the Sri Lankan government asked for military assistance from India to save the soldiers, since India had been in a position to intervene from the beginning. Then-president Chandrika Kumaranathunga earnestly requested that visiting Indian air force chief A. Y. Tepnis convince the Indian government to intervene in the critical situation.²⁰² Even Sinhalese nationalist groups who opposed Indian involvement in the 1980s pleaded for India to somehow rescue Sinhalese soldiers from military disaster. However, none of these requests were strong enough to change India's standing hands-off policy towards the Sri Lankan issue. A B Vajpayee's government refused to assist militarily, or even provide assistance to evacuate soldiers.²⁰³ He could not upset the three Tamil parties in his 25-party coalition. He said, "If Jaffna falls to the LTTE, it will not be for the first time. However, he later advised the Indian Navy to ready ships to evacuate the beleaguered soldiers from Jaffna peninsula.

This was not what the Sri Lankan government expected, since India had always been firm in its position about the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. Throughout history, not a single Indian ruler expressed his or her support for dividing Sri Lanka under any circumstances—but Vajpayee's decision ran contrary to this legacy. Assistance in evacuating the soldiers meant support for LTTE control of Jaffna peninsula. This situation distanced Sri Lanka from India, and paved the way for Sri Lanka to get military assistance from other countries, a situation which was strategically disadvantageous for India.

1. Strategic Concerns and Non-intervention

Countries that have hegemonic aspirations legitimize their position by providing various kinds of assistance, including economic and military assistance, to other countries in the region. They provide this aid—often at an enormous cost—to stabilize their

²⁰² Neil De Votta, "Is India Over-extended? When Domestic Disorder Precludes Regional Intervention," *Contemporary South Asia* 12, no.3 (2003): 365.

²⁰³ Pamela Constable, "India Wary of Big Role in Sri Lanka Civil Conflict," *Daily News*, December 4, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/libproxy.nps.edu/docview/408627130?accountid=12702>.

dominant role in the region and to subordinate other countries while achieving interests in both a national and international context.²⁰⁴ Sometimes, hegemony leads to an alignment of the hegemonic country with issues of weaker countries—issues which are not in hegemonic country's overall interest—in order to convince weaker countries of the dominance of the hegemonic country. This process motivates weak states in the region to establish inter-state relations with the hegemonic country to secure their sustenance, since the hegemonic power is able to ensure the security of the weaker.²⁰⁵ Therefore, problems of a weaker state which cannot be solved with available resources often provide an opportunity for a stronger state to spread its hegemonic stance. How did this phenomenon apply to India?

Since its independence, India had taken measures to avoid non-regional power intervention in affairs of the South Asian region. This attitude of India shifted to a hegemonic stance in the 1970s, which grew during the rule of the first explicitly pragmatic prime minister, Indira Gandhi. She articulated this in her “Indira Doctrine” to establish the regional aspirations of India. As Bhaban Sen Gupta wrote, “India will not tolerate external intervention in a conflict situation in any south Asian country, if the intervention has any implicit or explicit anti-Indian implications. No south Asian government should therefore ask for external assistance with an anti-Indian bias from any country.”²⁰⁶ According to Neil Devotta, “India will neither intervene in the domestic affairs of any state in the region unless requested to do so, nor tolerate such intervention by an outside power.” Obviously, India was fully committed to being the dominant regional power and regional security manager in South Asia until the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. India did not allow any non-regional country to intervene to solve problems in the region. As Aniruddha Gupta wrote, “Indian intervention and its foreign policy towards its neighbors were, in many ways, a strategy designed to create a regional

²⁰⁴ Earl Conteh Morgan, “International Intervention: Conflict, Economic Dislocation, and the Hegemonic Role of Dominant Actors,” *The Journal of Peace Studies* 6, no.2 (2001), http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol6_2/Conteh-Morgan.htm.

²⁰⁵ Edward Hallet Carr, “Realism and Idealism,” in *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, ed. Richard K. Betts (New York: Pearson, 2008), 73.

²⁰⁶ P V J Jayasekara, “Indo-Sri Lanka Relations: The Security Dimensions,” in *Security Dilemma of a Small State*, ed. P. V. J. Jayasekara (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1992), 500.

order in which the ranks of south Asian nations are determined by the nature of their relations with India.”²⁰⁷ As far as India’s aspirations in the South Asian region were concerned, the situation that arose in 2000 was a splendid chance for India to show its position in the region to both regional and international countries. However, India did not take this opportunity.

Non-intervention to assist Sri Lankan forces in 2000 derailed India’s long- rooted policy of avoiding non-regional power involvement in the South Asian region. Because India did not offer support, the government of Sri Lanka moved significantly towards India’s arch rival Pakistan and Western countries. This situation paved the way for Pakistan to strengthen its relations with Sri Lanka significantly. It was Pakistan that provided multi-barrel rocket launchers to the Sri Lankan army to counter Tamil troops advancing towards the Jaffna peninsula.²⁰⁸ It is reported that Pakistan had its fighter aircraft on standby to bomb Tamil militant targets if the situation went beyond control of the Sri Lanka army. Meanwhile, China and Israel provided weapons promptly, and the U.S. dispatched parts of its fifth fleet stationed in Panama to signal its solidarity towards Sri Lanka.

In fact, Sri Lanka’s inclination towards other countries clearly jeopardized the strategic concerns of India. Still, India did not intervene to settle the problem, even though this non-action was strategically disadvantageous. In addition, India did not attempt to block Sri Lankan relations with other countries. This was obviously contrary to the “Indira doctrine.” This situation provides evidence that strategic concerns were not the driving factor for India’s non-intervention in the Sri Lankan issue in 2000. It appears that there was another—more significant—factor that shaped India’s decision about intervention during this incident.

²⁰⁷ Anirudda Gupta, “A Brahmanic Framework of Power in South Asia,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 25, no.4 (April 1990):712.

²⁰⁸ “Pakistan’s Crucial Role in the Death of Tamil Tigers,” *Lanka e News*, May 30, 2009, <http://www.lankaenews.com/English/news.php?id=7772>.

2. Weak Domestic Concerns: The Reason the Reason of India's Unsupportive Behavior

India's decision for intervention or non-intervention in Sri Lanka was shaped by domestic concerns. India's interventionist attitude in the 1980s, which was discussed in the third chapter, was shaped by the domestic concerns of India. The hands-off policy that was practiced after the IPKF debacle and the assassination of Rajiv, which was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, was also shaped by domestic concerns. India's policy towards the Sri Lankan issue in 2000 is a good example that exemplifies how not only the interventionist attitude, but also the non-interventionist attitude, was shaped by domestic concerns.

The main domestic concern behind the Indian government's non-intervention decision in 2000 was the dilemma of the reaction by Tamil Nadu. Neil Devotta writes that "the pressure imposed on the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) governing coalition headed by the Bharathiya Janatha Party (BJP) by some of its southern allies was bound to make the Indian government cautious."²⁰⁹ By that time, there was no serious pressure on the central government from the people of Tamil Nadu, as many of them had rejected the LTTE's policies. However, these people were very much concerned about the innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka. They preferred to live with this difficult political situation instead of risking a military solution, and the terrible fallout that has for innocent civilians.

Given these circumstances, supporting Sri Lanka with military equipment was not advisable for the Indian government, since that might cause the then-silent Tamil Nadu people to raise their voices to pressure the central government as they had in the 1980s. Furthermore, such assistance could legitimize the anti-Sri Lankan slogans of the MDMK, PMK, and DK, which were not strong enough at that time to put any considerable pressure on the central government to de-proscribe the LTTE and assist the Tamil movement in Sri Lanka. If India assisted the Sri Lankan forces, the MDMK, PMK, and DK could then highlight how India had assisted Sri Lankan forces in the killing of

²⁰⁹ Neil Devotta, "Is India Over-extended? When domestic Disorder Precludes Regional Intervention," *Contemporary South Asia* 12, no. 3 (2003):372.

innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka. As DMK leader Karunanidhi stated, “India should not lend itself to the massacre of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The Indian army should not be instrumental in the killing of Tamils and India military equipment should not be used for it. This is my strong stand-point.”²¹⁰

In 2000, the unpredictable situation in Tamil Nadu influenced decision making at a higher level in the Indian central government than it had in the 1980s. This was because the NDA government was comprised of 24 parties and had no idea about the policy that they should embrace towards Sri Lanka. Neil Devotta writes of this situation, “the lack of such consensus has not precluded Indian leaders from acting in a decisive, even harm-fisted fashion whenever they held India’s security interests were being compromised.”²¹¹ It was primarily this domestic concern that shaped India’s non-interventionist behavior in 2000.

In addition to the political dilemma in Tamil Nadu, the overextension of the Indian military also contributed to India’s non-interventionist policy in Sri Lanka in 2000. Escalation of the Kashmir problem in the 1990s was the main cause of military overextension. By that time, over 500,000 Indian troops were stationed in Kashmir,²¹² and the India military had lost 3520 lives in Kashmir from 1988 to 2000. This imposed a severe strain on the Indian military. By the end of the 1990s, about three dozen military groups were operating in Kashmir, and that created an enormous pressure on the Indian military. In 1999, this situation came to a climax with the initiation of the Cargill war. This escalating situation in Kashmir, no doubt, created a huge pressure on the central government, allowing little room for it to consider intervention in the military debacle in Sri Lanka.

In addition to the Kashmir problem, insurgencies in Assam, Nagaland, Tripura, and Manipur in northeast India further contributed to the overextension of the Indian military. Even though fighting in these areas did not capture the same attention as

²¹⁰ T. S. Subramaniam, “Against Assistance,” *Frontline* 7, no.10 (May 2000):13.

²¹¹ Devotta, “Is India over-extended,” 372.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 374.

Kashmir, more than 1700 Indian soldiers died in these insurgencies in 1988 and 2000.²¹³ Similarly, continuation of the war in Siachen Glacier also taxed the Indian army. Naxalite violence in Madhya Pradesh, and caste conflicts in states such as Bihar, further deteriorated the situation. By 1997, the Indian army had a shortage of 13000 junior and middle rank officers to counter various terrorist problems on various fronts.²¹⁴ This overextended military situation restricted the government's capability to flex its muscles to intervene in the Sri Lankan issue.

When all these matters are considered, India's non-intervention in 2000 clearly demonstrates that India's decision to intervene in Sri Lanka was shaped by domestic concerns. Even though major Tamil Nadu political groups accepted the Indian government's hands-off policy towards the LTTE, the central government hesitated to make decisions against the LTTE. Rulers did not want to agitate Tamil Nadu and create internal instability in India to address a problem in another country. Therefore, it is obvious that India's domestic concerns were the driving factor behind the policy of Indian non-intervention in Sri Lanka.

D. INDIA'S NON-INTERVENTION DURING THE FINAL WAR IN SRI LANKA

In April 2003, the LTTE announced that it would unilaterally withdraw from the peace talks brokered by Norway, because the LTTE had been excluded from the donor conference, which took place in the United States. However, the ceasefire continued for another three years. In July 2006, the ceasefire collapsed at the ground level with the closure of the "Mavil Aru" sluice gate in the Trincomalee district by the LTTE.²¹⁵ Because of the closure, thousands of acres of paddy fields could not be cultivated due to a shortage of water. This paved the way for newly-elected president Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksha to fulfill his election promise to eradicate terrorism from Sri Lanka and create

²¹³ Ibid., 375.

²¹⁴ Pravin Sawhney, "New Challenges and Trying Times Lie Ahead for Force," in Neil Devotta, "Is India over-extended? When domestic Disorder Precludes Regional Intervention," *Contemporary South Asia* 12, no.3 (September, 2003): 375.

²¹⁵ H.L.D. Mahindapala, "Is Blood a Substitute for Water in Mavil Aru," *Asian Tribune*, August 7, 2006, <http://www.asiantribune.com/index.php?q=node/1433>.

a peaceful country where all communities live in harmony. It also allowed him to follow up on his commitment to make the LTTE irrelevant in any political negotiations, in terms of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.²¹⁶ The unprecedented military offensive that started with the “Marvil Aru” issue continued for three years, and the LTTE was eventually militarily defeated on July 18, 2009.

India’s attitude towards the military offensive in 2006 was drastically different from its attitude in 1987. In 1987, India directly intervened to stop a military operation launched to capture the Jaffna peninsula. However, when the Sri Lankan government launched a much stronger military offensive to liberate the whole area under the control of the LTTE in 2006, India did not force the government of Sri Lanka to stop its offensive. Surprisingly, after government forces were successful in defeating the LTTE militarily, India covertly supported ongoing offensives by the government of Sri Lanka.²¹⁷ The weakened domestic concerns in Indian society for the Sri Lankan issue, which were the result of socio-political changes, shaped India’s non-interventionist policy in Sri Lanka during the period of the Sri Lankan government’s offensive against the LTTE.

1. Responses of Tamil Nadu

The final war in Sri Lanka created a situation that was in many respects similar to the “Operation Liberation” period in 1987; however, in 2006 the response of Tamil Nadu was much more complex. As far as the main political parties were concerned, former Chief Minister and AIADMK leader Jayalalitha was anti-LTTE and continued to restrain LTTE activities in Tamil Nadu.²¹⁸ Meanwhile, Chief Minister Karunanidhi was

²¹⁶ Jayadewa Uyangoda, “New Configurations and Constraints,” *Frontline* 26, no.4 (February 2009): 12, <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl India's importance in the region and paved the way for Norway led western countries2604/stories/20090227260402200.htm>.

²¹⁷ Arun Kumar, “Indian Government Offers Full Support for Sri Lanka War,” World Socialist website, last modified February 21, 2000, <http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2004/02/insl-f21.html>.

²¹⁸ “Congress, AIADMK Flag Pro-LTTE Secessionist Moves In Tamil Nadu,” *Thaindian News*, October 22, 2008, http://thaindian.com/news_portal/politics/congress-aiadmk-flag-pro-ltte-secessionist/moves-in-tamil-nadu_100110497.html.

pragmatic in his policies towards the LTTE.²¹⁹ PMK leader S Ramadoss, who had party shares at the center, was also ambivalent. DK leader K Weeramani kept quiet and refused to issue any statement regarding the situation in Sri Lanka. In fact, the sentiments almost all of the major political parties in Tamil Nadu cooled significantly with regard to the LTTE during the final war period in Sri Lanka. Most of them embraced a centrist policy. The unpopularity of the LTTE among the people in Tamil Nadu after the assassination of Rajiv prompted political leaders to step back from the Sri Lankan issue.

Even though the Tamil community in Tamil Nadu was less sympathetic towards the LTTE, they were highly concerned about the plight of innocent Tamils in Sri Lanka. They put pressure upon the central government to pass measures to safeguard the lives of innocent Tamils.

Meanwhile, political leaders like Vaiko, Thol Thirumavalavan, and Pazha. Nedumaran of the MDMK publicly supported the LTTE irrespective of the legal restrictions and lobbied hard for the protection of Tamils in Sri Lanka.²²⁰ Unlike other political leaders, the main objective of these politicians was to protect the LTTE from ongoing military offensives, even though they pretended that their main focus was the innocent Tamils. Following in the footsteps of these politicians, nationalist Tamil groups—which included substantial sectors of civil society—protested to force the Indian government to pressure Sri Lanka into a ceasefire. They conducted state-wide demonstrations, fasts, and hunger strikes to demonstrate their opposition to the policy of the Indian central government on the issue of Sri Lanka, but their pressure was not strong enough to change the attitude of the Indian government towards Sri Lanka. Worldwide anti-terrorist sentiments after the 9/11 incident also worked to encourage the Indian government to turn a blind eye to nationalist Tamil Nadu agitations.

²¹⁹ “Karunanidhi Clarifies-LTTE is Terrorist Group,” *Thaindia News*, April 20, 2009, http://thaindian.com/news_portal/politics/karunanidhi/clarifies-ltte-is-terrorist-group-lead_100182178.html.

²²⁰ Amali Wedegedara and Sumanasiri Liyanage, “Emerging Dilemmas and Trends,” in *Perspectives on India-Sri Lanka Relations* ed, Sumanasiri Liyanage, P. Sahadewan and Anisha Kinra (Colombo: Manak, 2011), 301.

2. Factors that Weakened Tamil Nadu Pressure

Pressure created by the Tamil community in India against the offensive launched by the government of Sri Lanka was not strong enough to compel India to intervene in the Sri Lankan issue for several reasons. Mainly, socio-political changes had occurred both in India and Sri Lanka. As far as the Indian domestic situation was concerned, legal constraints weakened Tamil Nadu pressure on the center. According to the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Act, any public gathering with the intention of supporting terrorist activities was an illegal act. In addition, as the LTTE was a proscribed organization in India, any act that seemed to be supportive of the LTTE also became an illegal act. Therefore, the nationalistic Tamil Nadu people could not openly support the LTTE as they had in the 1980s. The only thing they could do was pressure the central government to force Sri Lanka to stick to political negotiations in the name of the grievances of innocent civilians. When the Indian government promised to ensure the security of innocent civilians, nationalistic Indian Tamils did not have any remaining excuse to create problems for the center.

a. Changes Occurred in India

The instability of the Tamil Nadu politicians and the new complexities of the Sri Lanka issue worked to divide and weaken the power of Tamil Nadu. For example, while the political posture of the AIADMK was anti-LTTE, parties like the DMK and DK were pragmatic and ambivalent in terms of the Sri Lankan issue. Meanwhile, nationalistic parties remained pro-LTTE. This division among major political parties in Tamil Nadu reduced its power on the center. In the 1980s, when all of these groups worked together, their power was strong enough to effectively pressure the central government.

Even though nationalistic Tamil political parties put pressure on the center in favor of the LTTE, in 2006 the Congress party led the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition at the center to disregard such pressures. The ruling coalition had 335 members in a 552-member parliament and could easily survive even if the DMK pulled

out.²²¹ When a coalition is composed of numerous political parties, the national party leading the coalition has many options in pursuing its policies. Therefore, the power of one party in dictating the policies of the coalition is drastically reduced. For instance, when the Communist parties in the UPA coalition were against the Indo-U.S. nuclear agreement, the Congress party cut them from the coalition and enticed the *Samajwadi* party to join the coalition, maintaining a majority in the parliament.

It is true that the Tamil constituency at the center had a power that other coalition partners did not. The DMK was the third-largest party in the UPA coalition. Using its majority as an advantage, in the latter part of the final war in Sri Lanka some DMK parliamentarians warned the UPA that they would resign and undermine the UPA unless India did not intervene in the Sri Lanka issue. However, the UPA did not take such threats seriously because “while the party played a vital role in propping up the UPA, the Congress in Tamil Nadu played a major role propping up the minority DMK government in the state legislature.”²²² As a result, the pressure created by Tamil Nadu politicians was not strong enough to shape Indian policy towards Sri Lanka.

In addition to division among politicians, new divisions among the people in Tamil Nadu also weakened Tamil Nadu’s power at the center. Unlike the 1980s, many Tamils were anti-LTTE, while some were pro-LTTE.²²³ Some recommended intervention in the Sri Lankan issue, and some strongly opposed intervening because of the bitter memories of the IPKF in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, some accepted LTTE as the sole representative of the Sri Lankan Tamils, and some separated the LTTE and the Tamil community. The Tamil Nadu people did not accept the demands of the LTTE as synonymous with demands of Tamils.²²⁴ Because of these inter-state divisions among the people, none of the groups were strong enough to influence the center.

²²¹ , C. A. Chandraprema, *Gota’s War: The Crushing of Tamil Tiger Terrorism in Sri Lanka* (Colombo: Piyasiri Printing, 2012), 477.

²²² Sumit Ganguly, *India’s Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010), 48.

²²³ Asoka Bandarage, *The Separatist Conflict in Sri Lanka: Terrorism, Ethnicity, and Political Economy* (London: Routledge, 2009), 154.

²²⁴ P. Sahadewan, “India’s Foreign Policy,” 204.

b. Changes Occurred in Sri Lanka

Changes that occurred in Sri Lanka also weakened the support of Tamil Nadu for the LTTE. When Karuna, the LTTE leader in the Eastern theater, detached himself from the LTTE in 2004, the military capability of the LTTE was reduced.²²⁵ This incident disappointed pro-LTTE Tamils in India. Similarly, when members of the Karuna and Prabakaran groups began to kill each other, pro-LTTE sentiments in Tamil Nadu were further reduced. Forcible conscription into the LTTE, to overcome the shortage of manpower after the detachment of the Karuna group, was not accepted by some Indian Tamils and this incident also strengthened anti-LTTE attitudes. Ultimately, many pro-LTTE people in Tamil Nadu stepped back from the LTTE for all of these reasons.

LTTE activities during the final war in Sri Lanka also distanced Indian Tamils from the LTTE organization. One prominent example was the LTTE restriction on innocent Tamils migrating to India as refugees. The organization kept them in Sri Lanka as human shields, putting innocent Tamils in dire situations. Thousands of Tamils were trapped inside a small area and suffered from unsanitary conditions and starvation. However, the LTTE did not consider their grievances, further alienating the Tamil Nadu people.

Ultimately, socio-political changes occurred both in India and Sri Lanka that drastically reduced Tamil Nadu pressure on the center in favor of the LTTE. This situation paved the way for India to continue with its hands-off policy towards Sri Lanka. As with the 1980s, it was the same Congress government that embraced a strong interventionist attitude. During that period, the Indian government changed its policy in Sri Lanka to satisfy the Tamil Nadu community. However, when Tamil Nadu pressure was weakened in 2006, the Indian government was no longer in a position where they had to intervene in Sri Lanka. This situation clearly indicates that Indian domestic concerns drove India's intervention policy in Sri Lanka.

²²⁵ D.B.S. Jeyaraj, "Karuna Loyal to Praba but Against Pottu and Selvan," *The Sunday Leader*, March 7, 2004, <http://www.thesundayleader.lk/archive/20040307/issues-more.htm>.

3. Strategic Concerns and Non-intervention

Even though a hands-off policy was advantageous for India domestically, the same policy created unfavorable conditions for India strategically. The main disadvantage was the establishment of non-regional connections by the Sri Lankan government to obtain military supplies for the war. Some of these connections directly jeopardized the security of India, but domestic concerns were more important for India than strategic ones. Therefore, India did not intervene in the Sri Lankan issue.

Indian government did not intervene because of two domestic objectives. First, India did not want to give a life to the LTTE in a situation in which there was no coordinated and effective domestic pressure to intervene. By that time, India had clearly understood the threat of the LTTE to internal stability in India in the future. If India decided to intervene, that decision needed to be compulsorily in support of the Tamils. That was the expectation of the people in Tamil Nadu. However, such intervention could eventually strengthen the LTTE. Therefore, India forgot its strategic disadvantages and did not intervene. Second, India did not want to agitate Tamil Nadu by intervening in support of the government of Sri Lanka. There was a pressure not to intervene in support of the Government of Sri Lanka. In such a situation, the best strategy that India had to embrace was the non-intervention, even though it was strategically disadvantageous.

India's non-interventionist attitude during the final period of war in Sri Lanka negatively affected the strategic concerns of India in many ways. As India did not provide the military assistance that it required, the government of Sri Lanka leaned towards Pakistan, China, and Israel. This alliance with non-regional powers provided them a disproportionate leverage in the South-Asian region. China's power projection in the region was prominent.²²⁶ It gave one billion dollars in 2008 to build three highways in Sri Lanka and it was the main contributor to the new port in Hambantota. In the same manner, China constructed ports in Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Burma as a part of its naval strategy to protect an energy supply lane between the South China Sea and the Persian Gulf.

²²⁶ Pratyush, "India and Sri Lanka's Civil War," *The Diplomat*, December 29, 2012, <http://thediplomat.com/indian-decade/2012/12/29/india-and-sri-lankas-civil-war>.

Similarly, India's refusal to facilitate peace talks degraded India's importance in the region and paved the way for Norway to lead Western countries into South Asian affairs. This situation proved that India was a failed security manager in the region. It negatively affected India's request to have a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council. In fact, these non-regional connections of Sri Lanka sidelined India from the Sri Lankan issue.

There were considerable strategic concerns that might have pressured India to intervene in Sri Lanka during the final war period; however, India did not intervene, indicating that strategic concerns did not play a major role in shaping India's decision on intervention in Sri Lanka.

4. Complexities of Domestic Aspirations of India and Its Affects to Non-intervention

Even though the Tamil Nadu community was divided into many factions over the LTTE issue, it was in harmony over its concern for innocent Tamils trapped in the war zone. Being the dominant power in the region and having 60 million Tamils inside its borders, India was ethically obliged to safeguard innocent Tamils. Success in this regard helped India legitimize its qualifications to become a permanent member in the UN Security Council. In addition, involvement in a humanitarian mission enhanced the hegemonic stance of India in the South-Asian region.

At the same time, India wanted to eliminate the LTTE issue from Sri Lanka, for many reasons, but India was not in a position to support the government of Sri Lanka because of concerns with its own Tamil Nadu community. The major reason India wanted to crack down on the LTTE was its growing military capabilities and successes in battles.²²⁷ At that time, the LTTE controlled much of the sea area between India and Sri Lanka. Many Indian fishermen were harassed by LTTE sea tigers. Further, control of this sea area by non-state actors negatively affected the "Setu Samudram" channel project of India. No ships liked sailing in the troubled waters. Meanwhile, India considered the

²²⁷ V. Surianarayan, "Sea Tigers: Threat to Indian Security," *The Hindu*, July 28, 2004, <http://www.hinduonnet.com/2004/07/28/stories/2004072802311000.htm>.

growing air power of the LTTE as a great threat for it after Indian security captured a LTTE member with maps of nuclear power plants and economic centers in South India.²²⁸

In addition to its military capabilities, the successes of the LTTE in Sri Lanka were considered a threat by India. By that time, the LTTE controlled one-third of the country with full-fledged military forces, a policing system, and an administrative system. It was a separate state with all the basic necessities, even though it did not have legal recognition as such. Under these circumstances, the LTTE would not be satisfied with anything short of Eelam. This situation in Sri Lanka was viewed by Indian rulers as dangerous. It would also very likely spillover into India in the future. Therefore, India wanted to crackdown on the LTTE. The ongoing war in Sri Lanka was a golden opportunity to fulfill that aspiration.

5. Non-intervention and Achievement of Aspirations

When the war in 2006 started in Sri Lanka, India systematically distracted its Tamil Nadu population from the LTTE organization. India convinced the Tamil Nadu populace that the LTTE was not the true representative of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. Activities like the killing of Karuna faction members, forced conscription of child soldiers, and the assassination of veteran Tamil leaders like Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Laxman Kadiragarmer convinced the Tamil Nadu people of the true nature of the LTTE.

Because of these realities, India could openly support the government of Sri Lanka in crushing the LTTE, but instead, India preferred a negotiated political settlement.²²⁹ India emphasized the protection of the rights of all communities in the country under a united and undivided Sri Lanka, but this idea was presented in an extremely moderate tone. On October 6, 2008, Indian National Security Advisor M K Narayan summoned the Sri Lankan deputy high commissioner to communicate India's concern over the safety of Tamils in the war zone. Later, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee stated that India would do all in its power to improve the humanitarian

²²⁸ Anjali Sharma, "That Familiar Southside Pain," *The pioneer*, October 25, 2008.

²²⁹ Chandraprema, *Gota's War*, 429.

situation in Sri Lanka. Meanwhile, a high-ranking Indian delegation frequently visited Sri Lanka to monitor the situation of Tamils in Sri Lanka. The main focus was to explore a solution that would satisfy the Tamil Nadu people.

Actually, there was no requirement to intervene, as India had in 1980s, to achieve the demands of the Tamil Nadu people. The Sri Lankan government promised to ensure the safety and well-being of the Tamil community in the war zone. On January 29, 2009, at the request of Mukherjee, the government of Sri Lanka declared a safe zone for civilians and a 48-hour period for them to settle in the area.²³⁰ After establishing the safe zone, the President of Sri Lanka invited Karunanidhi and Jayalalitha to tour it. Meanwhile, the government maintained a food supply from Colombo to Kankasanthurai, the only port in the Jaffna peninsula, despite heavy opposition by the LTTE sea tigers. Sri Lanka further promised not to use heavy artillery in order to minimize co-lateral damage. All these activities were monitored by a high-level board appointed by India.²³¹

At the beginning of the war, India did not believe that Sri Lankan forces would win the war in Sri Lanka militarily, since the LTTE—at that time—was a strong force that could overrun army camps, killing thousands of soldiers in a day. For instance, on July 18, 1996, the LTTE killed 1200 soldiers and acquired U.S. \$70 million worth of military equipment from the Mulativu army base.²³² When the war progressed with clear victories for government forces, India clandestinely altered its policy regarding the Sri Lankan war. It viewed the progressive situation as a golden opportunity for India to avoid this problem in the future.²³³ As C. A. Chandraprema correctly pointed out, “the idea that there was no military solution to the conflict, which had been the center piece of earlier

²³⁰ Ibid., 476.

²³¹ Krishna Pokharel, “Sri Lanka: Managing India Helped Win War,” *The Wallstreet Journal, India*, January 31, 2013, <http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2011/06/01/sri-lanka-managing-india-helped-win-war>.

²³² Swamy, *Inside an Elusive Mind*, 258–259.

²³³ Sandra Destradi, “India and Sri Lanka’s Civil War: The Failure of Regional Conflict Management in South Asia,” German Institute of Global and Area Studies, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1730156 (accessed January 3, 2013).

Indian statements on Sri Lanka, had been dropped. From this time until the end of the war, the Indians never again said that there was no military solution to the conflict.”²³⁴

India followed a hands-off policy to fulfill its second aspiration. Since pro-LTTE Tamil Nadu pressure inside India was weak, the Indian government could easily continue with its policy. While India was careful not to provide offensive weapons to Sri Lankan government forces, it also did not restrict Sri Lanka from obtaining offensive weapons from other countries. Even though India did not provide the Sri Lankan government with offensive weapons—in an effort to avoid possible domestic instigations—India managed to give it some military equipment, which was defensive in nature. It included five transport helicopters, two air-surveillance RADARs, and an off-shore patrol vessel without military fittings.²³⁵ India achieved two objectives by providing equipments of defensive nature to Sri Lanka. First, India convinced Sri Lanka that India also ready to support Sri Lanka like China and Pakistan. By that India wanted to break the monopoly of China’s military supplies. Demonstrating that aspiration, then India’s National Security Advisor, M.K. Narayanan said, “We strongly believe that whatever requirements the Sri Lankan government have, they should come to us and we will give them what we think necessary. We do not favor them going to China or Pakistan or any other country.”²³⁶ Second, while appeasing the government of Sri Lanka, India wanted to show Tamil Nadu that defensive equipment did not jeopardize the security of innocent Tamils. The aim was to minimize Tamil Nadu’s opposition..

E. INDIAN POLICY AFTER TERMINATION OF ETHNIC WAR IN SRI LANKA

The ethnic issue in Sri Lanka had been affecting India’s domestic stability at various levels for some time, so termination of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka was very important for the maintenance of domestic stability in India. A peaceful situation in Sri Lanka would place the Tamil Nadu populace in a position where they no longer had any

²³⁴ Chandraprema, *Gota’s War*, 431.

²³⁵ Nitin A. Gokhale, *Sri Lanka: From War to Peace* (New Delhi:Har-Anland’2009),121.

²³⁶ “India and Sri Lanka After the LTTE,” International Crisis Group, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/asia/south-asia/sri-lanka/206-india-and-sri-lanka-after-the-ltte.aspx> (accessed March 1 2013).

reason to pressure the central government. Therefore, India endeavored to maintain the territorial integrity and political stability of post-war Sri Lanka at all costs. This objective was clearly exemplified by India's backing of a martial U.N. Security Council resolution calling for an international investigation into alleged abuses during the final war in Sri Lanka.²³⁷ India did not want international organizations to again agitate the resolved situation.

Along with the international inquiry, politicians in Tamil Nadu also urged the Indian central government to take actions against alleged human rights abuses during the final war in Sri Lanka. However, the Indian government took no action against the government of Sri Lanka. Indian support for the U.N. resolution and responsiveness to the voice of the Tamil Nadu populace would have signified acceptance by India of the possibility of violations in Sri Lanka. It might serve to indicate that India had failed in protecting innocent Tamil lives in Sri Lanka.²³⁸ It could instigate Tamil nationalists in Tamil Nadu to blame the central government. Further, it might have negatively affected India's desire to become a permanent member in the U.N. Security Council. Therefore, by opposing the resolution, India could argue to Tamil Nadu that the central government was confident that there had not been human rights abuses during the final war period. In this domestic setting, India was compelled to vote against the Security Council Resolution.

Even though the Security Council did not pass the resolution, the U.N. Secretary General appointed a panel of experts to investigate whether human rights abuse had taken place in Sri Lanka. The draft report was given to the government of Sri Lanka to get its response prior to publication. The government vehemently opposed not only the contents of the report but also the legitimacy of the panel to publicize such a document. This incident was given widespread media publicity in both India and Sri Lanka

²³⁷ Sivanendran, "Indian Policy and Sri Lanka Civil War: A Time for Re-evaluation," *The Guardian*, May 8, 2011, <http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2011/05/indian-policy-and-sri-lanka-civil-war.html>.

²³⁸ D.B.S. Jeyaraj, "The Intermstic Tamil Issue in Indo-Lanka Relations," *dbsjetaraj.com*, <http://dbsjeyaraj.com/dbsj/archives/1454> (accessed January 27, 2013).

This situation agitated Tamil Nadu again. New Chief Minister M. Jayalalitha, who was an opponent of the LTTE during the final war in Sri Lanka, demanded an international inquiry against Sri Lanka and insisted on slapping trade sanctions on Sri Lanka.²³⁹ Further, she promised the people of Tamil Nadu that she would pressure the central government to revise its Sri Lankan policy and bring the guilty to justice. She acted in favor of the Tamils in Sri Lanka because she had won the Tamil Nadu election using alleged human rights violations as a trump card.

This situation led the Indian government to lose credibility, and its relations with Tamil Nadu coalition partners became an irritant.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, this situation convinced the Indian central government to pay less attention to the grievances of Tamils in Sri Lanka. This situation paved the way for Indian nationalistic factions to gain momentum and spread nationalism throughout Tamil Nadu. This growing domestic situation did not allow the Indian government to maintain its persistent stance with regard to the Sri Lankan issue in the international forum. India had to change its policy decisions based on domestic concerns.

India displayed a considerable policy shift in 2012. On March 12, India voted for a U.S.-sponsored resolution against Sri Lanka in the 19th session of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva. While Asian countries like China, Pakistan, Maldives, Bangladesh, and Indonesia voted in favor of Sri Lanka, surprisingly, India used its vote against Sri Lanka to pass the resolution.²⁴¹ India, which had vehemently opposed a state-centric resolution in 2009, changed its course 180 degrees in just three years. Even though India had not wanted to destabilize the situation in Sri Lanka by casting its vote for a resolution against Sri Lanka, India was compelled to do so because of growing domestic pressure in the country. Even though the main factor behind Tamil Nadu's

²³⁹ R. Hariharan, "Subterranean to India-Sri Lanka Relations," Hariharan's Intelligence Blog, <http://www.colhariharan.org/2012/04/subterranean-threats-to-india-sri-lanka.html> (accessed December 30, 2012).

²⁴⁰ R. Hariharan, "Impact of UNHRC Resolution on India-Sri Lanka Relations," C3S paper no.964, March 27, 2012, <http://www.c3sindia.org/srilanka/2833>.

²⁴¹ "India votes for Resolution Against Sri Lanka," *The Hindu*, March 22, 2012, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/article3150059.ece>.

pressure on the center—the LTTE—no longer existed, the Indian government still changed its policy decisions with regard to Sri Lanka based on the desires of India's Tamil Nadu populace. In other words, domestic concerns are the factor that have consistently shaped—and continue to shape—India's decisions about Sri Lanka, even after the ethnic conflict there ended.

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V. CONCLUSION

This thesis has attempted to shed light upon how domestic concerns, strategic concerns, and a combination of both domestic and strategic concerns come into play when strong countries intervene in weaker countries by looking at the specific case of Indian intervention in Sri Lanka—based upon the hypothesis that Indian strategic interests remained fairly constant and domestic interest varied, resulting in an alternating pattern of intervention decisions. Presently, there is no civil war in Sri Lanka, but various separatist Tamil groups in many countries in the world, including India, still struggling for a separate state for Tamils in Sri Lanka. India's decision in this regard will be the decisive factor as in the past. Therefore, understanding the motives that drove India's intervention decisions is essential to support formulation of a national and foreign policy in Sri Lanka to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with India for years to come.

During the period between contemporary independence to the initiation of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan rulers made many decisions that directly affected the strategic concerns of India. These incidents jeopardized India's security in the region and established strategic reasons for Indians to intervene in Sri Lanka—but India did not intervene. It always tried to maintain a cordial relationship with Sri Lanka. This clearly evidences that strategic concerns were not the driving factor behind India's decision for intervention during this period.

Similar to strategic concerns, some of the political decisions of Sri Lankan rulers had an impact on Tamil Nadu, and to a certain extent raised domestic concerns in India to intervene in Sri Lanka. However, these incidents did not have an impact that was strong enough to prompt an intervention by India. Even though these incidents raised Indian domestic concerns to a certain extent, other internal and external threats to the central government during this period overextended the military and left minimal room for the Indian government to intervene.

In sum, it is clear that it was the non-availability of strong domestic concerns that moved them to act otherwise which was behind India's non-intervention during the

period between contemporary independence and the initiation of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Even though there were strategic reasons to intervene, India did not—which indicates that strategic concerns were not the driving factor shaping India's intervention during this period.

Existing situation behind the relationship between India and Sri Lanka is very much similar to the period between contemporary independence to initiation of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka's keeps close relations with countries that have problems with India and make the setting for India to intervene on strategic reasons, and there is no strong domestic pressure to the Indian central government to intervene in Sri Lanka as the LTTE problem in Sri Lanka is over. As a result, India keeps a cordial relationship as in the 1960s and 1970s. That means non-availability of strong domestic concerns to intervene is a concrete factor that shapes India's decision of non-intervention in the past, in the present, and for sure in the future.

Moving away from their cordial relationship, India embraced an interventionist attitude in the 1980s, and this attitude remained consistent for nearly a decade. During this period, intervention in Sri Lanka was strategically disadvantageous for India, due to the nature of regional power politics of India; however, strong pressure from Tamil Nadu compelled India to intervene in Sri Lanka. During this period, maintaining unity in the highly complex society of India in order to maintain a stable domestic situation was the highest priority of the government.

In the 1980s, Tamil Nadu was the main source of Indian domestic pressure for intervention in Sri Lanka. With the anti-Tamil riots in 1983, India was compelled to take actions against Sri Lanka since the people in Tamil Nadu strongly pressured the central government to intervene. The Indian central government could not ignore the pressure from Tamil Nadu, since it was very important economically and politically. In this light, Tamil Nadu became the prominent domestic concern of India that drove its intervention in Sri Lanka. It was this domestic pressure that compelled India to intervene in Sri Lanka in 1983.

Even though there was considerable pressure from Tamil Nadu, the Indian government—led by Indira Gandhi—tried to settle the issue peacefully by launching a two-pronged policy to remove the domestic pressure while winning the hearts and minds of Sri Lankans. This policy decision of the Indian government clearly indicates that India embraced its interventionist attitude in 1983 purely as a result of the pressure from Tamil Nadu. If India had strategic interest to intervene, it might not have attempted to solve the problem through the process of negotiation.

After her assassination, the Indo-Lanka relationship entered a less interventionist and more cordial phase under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi. If India had a strategic concern to intervene in Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi's policy would not have changed with the transition in leadership. As the pressure behind the intervention came from domestic concerns, Rajiv could deviate from his mother's policy. However, this non-interventionist phase ended after the Sri Lankan government's operation to liberate Jaffna peninsula from the LTTE in 1987. Due to strong Tamil Nadu pressure, he had to intervene to stop the ongoing offensive against the LTTE.

Even though the government of Sri Lanka decided to stop the operation, India's interventionist attitude did not wane. India needed to find a solution for the conflict in Sri Lanka to minimize pressure on the central government from Tamil Nadu in the future. It was under this circumstance that the Indo-Lanka peace accord was signed mainly to address Indian domestic concerns. By sending troops, India signaled to Tamil Nadu that the central government was concerned about the security of innocent Tamils. The ultimate aim was to end Tamil Nadu pressure on the central government. In sum, it is obvious that India under Rajiv—who had once maintained a non-interventionist policy—shifted to an interventionist attitude in 1987 because of domestic concerns.

India's interventionist behavior in the 1980s provides a good explanation about India's domestic constraints in which the central government has to take decisions. Situational decisions of Sri Lankan governments which are sensitive to Tamil Nadu people compelled the Indian government to intervene in Sri Lanka. Therefore, the government of Sri Lanka should take all possible measures to minimize the pressure on

the Indian central government in the future by maintaining the existing calm situation with regard to the Tamil problem.

Even though the domestic concerns of India had a positive impact on its decision to intervene in Sri Lanka,, when it came to the 2000s, the domestic concerns of India discouraged a decision for intervention. As a result, India transformed its interventionist attitude, which was prominent in the 1980s, to hands-off policy in the 2000s. Setbacks of the IPKF and the assassination of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by the LTTE were the main reasons that India stuck to a non-interventionist and hands-off policy in the 2000s. In addition, the growing domestic nationalistic politics, political uncertainty in India, and socio-political changes of political leaders and the people in Tamil Nadu pressured India to step back from the issue in Sri Lanka. When all the causes for the maintenance of India's hands-off policy towards Sri Lanka are analyzed, it is evident that the domestic concerns of India were the driving factor that shaped this decision.

India's decision to not intervene to save the lives of Sri Lankan soldiers who trapped in the Jaffna peninsula in 2000 was a significant incident, and it indicated two significant things. First, it provided evidence that strategic concerns were not the reason for India's non-intervention decision.. At that time, intervention was strategically advantageous for India because it could have served to minimize non-regional power intervention into the issue. However, India did not intervene. Therefore, India's non-intervention is clear evidence that strategic concerns were not the driving factor shaping India's decision for intervention or non-intervention.

Second, this incident evidences that domestic concerns were the main factor behind India's non-intervention decision. At that time, there were nationalistic groups in Tamil Nadu who sustained support for Tamil militants. In such a domestic situation, support for Sri Lankan government forces was not advisable, since the situation in Tamil Nadu was highly unpredictable. India's non-intervention in 2000 clearly demonstrates how India's intervention decisions were shaped by domestic concerns.

India's behavior during the final war in Sri Lanka between 2006 and 2009 was drastically different from its behavior in 1987. In 1987, India directly intervened to stop

military offensive against the LTTE, but in 2006, India did not intervene and allowed Sri Lanka to defeat the LTTE. India's non-intervention jeopardized its security in the region—but India stuck to its non-intervention policy, ignoring many strategic concerns. It demonstrates how strategic concerns did not affect India's non-intervention during the final war in Sri Lanka.

When the relationship between domestic concerns and intervention is considered, it is clear that the weakness of domestic concerns in support of intervention was the main reason of non-intervention during the final war in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, it evidences how the Indian decision for Intervention in Sri Lanka changed in accord with the strength of domestic concerns. For all of these reasons, the Indian government did not have any reason to intervene in Sri Lanka—which clearly illustrates the strength of the domestic concerns that were the driving factor behind India's intervention.

Meanwhile, some domestic concerns discouraged India to intervene in Sri Lanka—in an attempt to achieve other domestic interests. Therefore, India earnestly sought an end to the problem in Sri Lanka. Maintaining a hands-off policy, and avoiding support for any party, was the best strategy that India could embrace at the time.

India's motivation for intervention was obvious even after the war in Sri Lanka. Just after the war, India marshaled a U.N. Resolution against Sri Lanka.. India did not want Tamil Nadu to arise up again based on the belief that India supported the violation of innocent Tamils by the government of Sri Lanka. However, when pressure built up in Tamil Nadu after the U.N. Secretary General's panel report, India changed its mind and supported the U.S.-sponsored resolution against Sri Lanka. Similarly, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi also had to change his cordial relations with Sri Lanka due to a growing pressure from Tamil Nadu in 1980s. It means that even though the main factor behind Tamil Nadu pressure upon the central government—the LTTE—no longer exists, the Indian government still changes policy decisions with regard to Sri Lanka based on the aspirations of Tamil Nadu people. In other words, domestic concerns are the factor which continues to shape India's decisions with regard to Sri Lanka, even after the war.

As far as the future is concerned, India's decisions about intervention will be constrained by domestic factors, especially the influence of Tamil Nadu. This factor will continue to limit the maneuverability of India's intervention policy in Sri Lanka. Even though the problem in Sri Lanka has effectively ended, the problem still remains for India—since the aftermath of the war still haunts Tamil Nadu. Therefore, India will act earnestly to appease Tamil Nadu by assisting Sri Lanka with its rehabilitation and resettlement process. India already took the initiative in this process by recently promising to build 50,000 houses for displaced Tamils in the eastern and northern parts of Sri Lanka. Further, India provided financial assistance for infrastructure development in the predominant Tamil areas. In addition, Indian government encouraged both the government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the prominent Tamil political party, to engage in talks to settle the problematic issues.

While attempting to win the hearts and minds of the people in Tamil Nadu, India will work to establish good relations between Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. Recently, India formed a ferry service between Rameshwaram and Colombo to improve passage between the two communities. Responding promptly, the government of Sri Lanka started the Kachchativu feast, which had been halted because of the war. It is a feast that both Sri Lankan and Indian Tamils celebrate once a year. Similarly, India's economic investments in Sri Lanka will be a decisive factor in the future. India will work to establish strong economic relations with Sri Lanka to contain China's hegemonic spread in the South Asian region. India will attempt to replace China as the source of Sri Lankan economic and security interests.

Even though the situation after the elimination of the LTTE is favorable for Indo-Lanka relations, the issue with regard to fishing issue in the Palk Bay has not been properly addressed yet. Still fishermen from Tamil Nadu move in to Sri Lankan waters for fishing and the Sri Lanka navy arrest them regularly. This is the most debatable topic among the Tamil Nadu politicians. They complain about the central government's failure to protect fishermen of Tamil Nadu. This issue will be a problematic one in the future if both governments do not address the problem promptly.

In addition to fishing issue, there will be new situations where India will have to consider intervention—as it has over a history of 2500 years; however, unlike in the past, future policy makers will have to consider many factors. First, India should not over-estimate its power and under-estimate the determination of opponents. Second, India should not be ambiguous about how they approach intervention under the constraints of resources and political will. Third, as Sri Lanka is not currently under any obligation to remain close to India, India should not take for granted the possibility that Sri Lanka might lean towards non-regional powers. Fourth, if India intervenes over issues related to Tamil grievances, the Indian government should be ready to address the grievances of many communities within India. Finally, the Indian government should convince Tamil Nadu about the limitations and constraints of India's ability to effectively intervene in a sovereign country.

This research carried out an historical analysis about concerns related to Indian intervention, but how will the findings be applicable in the future? Will the Tamil Nadu factor continue to be a decisive one in future situations where there are no Sinhala-Tamil conflicts in Sri Lanka? Will India ignore Tamil Nadu pressure as it did in the 1960s and 1970s—or will it embrace an interventionist attitude as in the 1980s? In fact, will the people in Tamil Nadu concern themselves with the well-being of Tamils in Sri Lanka as they did during the war period in Sri Lanka? Will the Indian government allow Sri Lanka create any situation which affects the domestic stability of India in the future? These are all questions that must be addressed by scholars in the future.

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