International Dimensions of the Sri Lankan Conflict

Caroline Hargreaves, Martin Karlsson,
Surabhi Agrawal, Jonathan Hootnick, Katharine Tengtio

Abbreviations

BBC –   British Broadcasting Corporation
CBS –   Columbia Broadcasting System
CFA –   Ceasefire Agreement
CHAP –   Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CNN –   Cable News Network
CSA –   Civil Society Actor
DSI –   D Sampson Industries
EU –   European Union
FMF –   Foreign Military Financing
FTO –   Foreign Terrorist Organization
GTF –   Global Tamil Forum
HIVOS –   Humanist Institute for Development Cooperation
ICT –   Information and Communications Technologies
IDP –   Internally Displaced Person
IGO –   Inter-governmental Organization
IMET –   International Military Education and Training
IMF –   International Monetary Fund
IPK –   India Peace-Keepers
IPKF –   Indian Peace Keeping Force
ISI –   Inter-service Intelligence Agency(Pakistan)
ITN –   Independent Television Network
JVP –   Sinhalese Peoples Liberation Front
LLRC –   Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission
LTTE –   Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MCA –   Millennium Challenge Account
NAM –   Non-Aligned Movement
NBF –   National Bikkhu Front
NGO –   Non-governmental Organization
NMAT –   National Movement Against Terrorism
NPC –   National Peace Council
SLBC –   Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
SLMM –   Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission
SMS –   Short Message Service
TGTE –   Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam
UN –   United Nations
UNDAF –   United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP –   United Nations Development Program
UNICEF –   United Nations Children's Fund
UNOSAT –   United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Program
USAID –   United States Agency for International Development
WB –   World Bank
WHO –   World Health Organization

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Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

The battleground of the Sri Lanka conflict has remained inside state borders, however the international community has purposefully or inevitably become involved in several ways. Although an island, Sri Lanka has not been isolated by the rest of the world. The aim of this paper is to map the role of various external and international actors that have been involved in the conflict in Sri Lanka. An analysis of such actors will display how each may have perpetuated and/or mitigated the conflict. The study of external interference is important to further our understanding of how each actor's actions may have changed and affected the outcomes of the conflict.

Due to increasing processes of globalization, contemporary conflicts have been significantly influenced by the changing nature of the international community. Thus, most current internal conflicts have an external component. This growing trend, described by Mary Kaldor as "the intensification of global interconnectedness-political, economic, military and cultural", has changed the character of warfare by introducing new non-traditional actors[1] to internal conflicts. These can include external state actors, humanitarian interventions, international reporters, peacekeeping forces, NGO's and IGO's.[1]

After independence the proliferation of civil unrest in Sri Lanka led to a formal declaration of conflict in the 1980's. Since then, external actors have gradually become connected and/or involved with the conflict. Although most of the causes, costs, and impacts of the conflict are essentially domestic, the external actors have contributed to the dynamics of the conflict in varying forms. Thus, the global dimensions are pertinent to the analysis of the conflict.[2] This paper seeks to identify and map out the global dimensions of the conflict, visualized through an actor-oriented approach. The extent to which these actors have influenced, mitigated, or perpetuated the conflict will be discussed. It will be evident that the broader effects of globalization have had cumulative effects on the conflict in Sri Lanka.

1.1. Method

This map will first outline the nation-state actors that have been involved in the conflict, with a special emphasis on regional actors such as India, Pakistan, and China and then including others such as United States and Norway. These states have been chosen based on their geographical and strategical ties to Sri Lanka, and based on their direct interference in the conflict. The second part of this map will outline the non-state actors, specifically the Tamil Diaspora, the United Nations (UN), the Sri Lankan civil society, largely embodied in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGO), and the international media. These actors have been chosen based on their international sway and the considerable amount of influence they each hold in Sri Lanka and within the international community.

Between these two sections it is acknowledged that there is a complex interrelationship between nation-state actors and non-state actors. As a result of globalization, there is a prevalence of humanitarian intervention, aid organizations, and UN agencies in the Sri Lanka conflict, as well as external state actors. At the same time, the country's domestic NGO sector represents the values, aspirations and agendas of various state actors, as well as international NGOs and IGOs. This myriad of transnational connections can blur the distinctive lines between that which is internal and external. Nevertheless, for organization purposes and to promote a succinct understanding, the actors have been organized in reference to current international political borders. A brief historical timeline is provided, highlighting the key moments in which the global actors listed have been involved.

The below conclusions as based on a wide variety of secondary sources such as journals, books, and websites of authors of predominantly Western origin (as well as some Sri Lankan and Indian literature). No fieldwork or direct sources from the conflict have been used.

The focus on the international dimensions will prove useful in order to broaden our understanding of the conflict in a globalized context. The international involvement has contributed to the dynamic of the conflict and by addressing the causes and effects of these actors; we can further comprehend their influence in civil conflicts. This paper aims to completely devote itself to this issue of international dimensions. It is hoped that a new perspective of the conflict can be formed from this collective outline of the key external actors in the conflict.
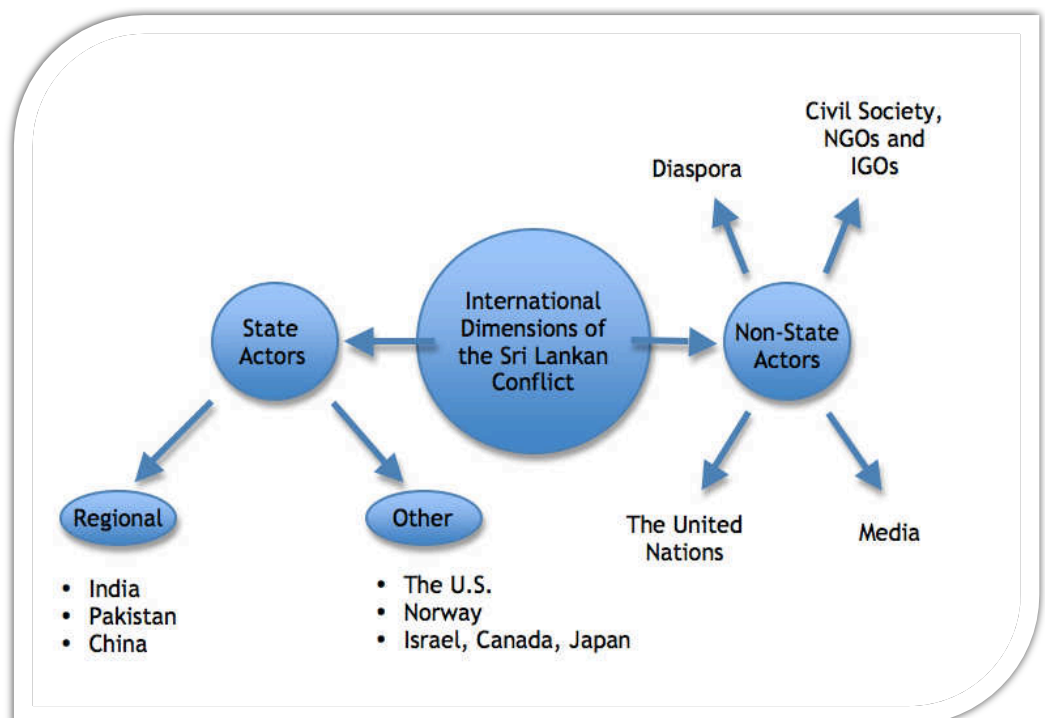

Figure 1 shows the international and national actors involved in below analysis. It is important to note that these are also interconnected to a great extent.

Figure 2 Map of Sri Lanka

2. Conflict Background[1]

The civil war in Sri Lanka has spanned almost three decades. The history of the conflict is long and detailed. Instead of spending too much time over the intricacies of such details, this paper will provide a short summary highlighting the most important dates and events pertinent to theme of the paper.

In 1947 Ceylon (the colonial name of Sri Lanka) was granted independence from Great Britain, largely as a result of the nationalist movement dominated by the Sinhalese people. After receiving independence, the Sinhalese tried to create a Sinhala dominated government, effectively marginalizing others ethnic groups, particularly the Tamils. Overtime, civil unrest began to stir, as the Tamils began to organize themselves into nationalist groups, the most popular one called the Tamil New Tigers, which later changed to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). In 1983 the LTTE ambushed a Sri Lanka Army Patrol, killing 13 soldiers. The army retaliated, attacking those suspected to be part of the LTTE and/or other militant groups. Fighting escalated between the two sides, and civilians caught between the crossfire were killed. This fighting became to be known as the Eelam War I.

India, home to its own Tamil ethnic group, largely concentrated in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India, was concerned about the violence erupting in Sri Lanka. Attempting to resolve the conflict, India formulated the Indo-Sri Lankan Peace Accord and installed Indian Peace-keeping Forces (IPKF) on the island. The mission failed to establish peace, (which will be discussed in further detail in the India section) and by 1990 all of the IPKF had left Sri Lanka.

The following decade had been divided into Eelam War II and Eelam War III. Both wars ended with a ceasefire agreement between the government and the rebels. However, in both cases the agreements were violated leading to further turmoil in the country.

In 2002 Norway intervened as an international moderator and attempted to hold peace talks between the two sides and, formulating a new cease-fire agreement (CFA). Although the cease-fire was considerably more successful than the previous ones, in 2005 violence began to escalate and in 2006 both sides had formally withdrawn from the agreement. Fighting intensified and the number of civilian casualties dramatically increased. In 2009 the Sri Lankan government claimed to have defeated the LTTE after killing the LTTE leader Velipillai Prabhakaran, putting an end to the war.

Although the government has claimed to have defeated the LTTE, a large nationalist Tamil community still exists around the world, and there are continuous accounts reported of human rights violations the government is using to suppress rebels. The conflict remains unresolved, while the situation only outwardly appears to be generally peaceful.

2.1. Timeline

- **1948**- granted independence
- **1970's**- civil unrest, Tamil secessionist movement emerges
- **1972**- Ceylon renamed Sri Lanka
- **1976**- Tamil New Tiger militia changes name to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)
- **1983**- Outbreak into civil war
- **1980's**- several Tamils immigrated abroad (diaspora), many to Canada
- July **1987**- Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord signed
- **1989**-**1990**- IPKF in Sri Lanka
- **1990**- outbreak into Eelam War II
- **1995**- outbreak into Eelam War III
- Feb **2002**- Norway helped broker a ceasefire in a 7 year agreement between the government and the rebels
- Dec 26, **2004**- Tsunami kills over 30,000 citizens, many of whom are in the war ravaged East
- **2006**- both sides pull out from CFA, outbreak into Eelam War IV
- Jan **2009**- Sri Lanka Army takes took control of Tamil capital Kilinochchi
- Feb **2009**- government claimed to have defeated the rebels.[2]

3. Nation State Actors

3.1. Regional Actors

This section will provide an in-depth analysis of India, Pakistan, and China - the three nation-states that are regional players and had important contributions to the Sri Lankan conflict. It is important to note however that the below nation-state actors are not homogenous and operate through a web of globalized connections of political, economic and cultural nature.

3.1.1. India

As a dominant power in South Asia and a neighbour of Sri Lanka, India is a powerful player in regards to the conflict. India's involvement in the Sri Lankan conflict is motivated by a number of factors. First, as Sri Lanka's 'giant neighbour,' India believed that the conflict would not be resolved without its active participation. Due to its geographical location, India has viewed itself as the 'security manager' and closely watched the developments of the conflict in Sri Lanka.[1] Furthermore, there is a linkage in ethnicity between the 55 million Tamils in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu with the Tamil people in north and east Sri Lanka. The two populations of Tamils may be physically separated by the Palk Strait but they share common cultural, linguistic and religious ties.

Involvement and Consequences

"The Indian view is that whatever solution is found has to be within the framework of constitutional arrangements which preserves Sri Lanka's territorial unity and integrity, a logic which India applies to its own violent separatist movements in different parts of the country."[2] India feared that a successful liberation movement in Sri Lanka could inspire radical nationalistic groups in Tamil Nadu and lead to separation or instability within its own boundaries. Thus, India has formulated much of its foreign policy and peace initiatives in Sri Lanka keeping domestic issues and interests in mind.

In the 1970s and 1980s, private entities and state elements, such as India's intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) were believed to be providing funding and training to a number of Sri Lankan Tamil Militant groups, including the LTTE. It is believed that this was done in order to create a division between the Tamil insurgency within Sri Lanka and allow India to maintain control over the conflict.[3]

In 1985, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi agreed to close the guerrilla training camps that were found to be operating in India.

In 1986, reports about massacres in the North against the Tamil population by the Sri Lankan government caused the Indian government to send relief supplies into Jaffa by air after a flotilla carrying food supplies was blocked.[4] The Hindu Tamil population of Sri Lanka received much sympathy from its Hindu counterpart in India, who believed that the Buddhist Sinhalese majority on the island was oppressing the Tamil group.

Finally, in July 1987, the Indo-Lanka Accord was signed between Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President Jayawardene. The Sri Lankan government conceded many of the Tamil demands, allowed for devolution of powers in the Northern and Eastern provinces and provided official status to the Tamil language. In return, India sent the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in order to establish order in the North and East and disarm the Tamil militant groups. By November 1987, there were 20,000 IPKF in north Sri Lanka.[5] While most of the militant groups turned in their weapons to the IPKF, the LTTE refused and the IPKF engaged the LTTE in a series of conflicts for two years. The Sinhalese Peoples Liberation Front (JVP) also resisted the IPKF in the south since these Sri Lankans did not agree with President Jayawardene's collaboration with India or the concessions he had agreed to for the Tamils. Thus, in 1988 – 1989, the IPKF engaged in battles with the Tamil rebels in the north and the Sri Lankan security forces and JVP in the south. With more than 1,000 soldiers dead in these confrontations, the Indian engagement was heavily criticized at home.[6]

In 1989, a new government under President Premadasa took power in Colombo, and asked the Indian troops to withdraw and leave the conflict. The result was a negotiated scheduled departure, an embarrassing act for the world's fourth largest army - and all IPKF troops left by 1990. The behaviour of Premadasa's government had challenged India's hegemonic power in the region. After the withdrawal, India established a 'hands-off policy' in Sri Lanka. However, in 1991, Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated during an elections campaign while in Tamil Nadu

In 2006, the Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee stated that "India fully supports the peace process in Sri Lanka but will not play an active role because it may complicate the situation."[7]

while in Tamil Nadu by a suicide bomber believed to be a member of the LTTE. After the assassination, India labelled the LTTE as a terrorist organization, preventing any official interactions with them. Thereafter, the role of India was limited as an active player in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in Sri Lanka.

India was nevertheless always involved in the process, as it faced waves of Sri Lankan refugees, many settling in the state of Tamil Nadu. Beginning with the first wave in 1983 – 1987, 134,053 Sri Lankan Tamils arrived in India, of which 25,585 returned after the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord. The second wave was after 1989 with the state of Eelam War II when 122,000 Tamils came. Eelam War III in 1995 prompted another 23,356 refugees into India, which stopped with the 2002 ceasefire agreement.[6] Having to meet the needs of an influx of thousands, India was constantly drawn into the Sri Lankan-Tamil conflict.

In the 2000s when other nations, such as Norway, the US, etc (as discussed later) were taking part in promoting peace in Sri Lanka, India chose to keep a minimal profile. In 2006, the Indian Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee stated that "India fully supports the peace process in Sri Lanka but will not play an active role because it may complicate the situation."[7]

Analysis of Issues

Bose has argued that the Indian involvement in the late 1980s was due to the Congress Party aiming to gain popularity and to redirect the focus from the domestic issues and scandals plaguing the party.[8] However, as argued by Muni, India's involvement was

based on a 'sincere' desire to resolve the conflict.[9]

Although after 1991, India kept a minimal profile as an active part in the peace process, it was still an important player due to its regional dominance. Due to the hostile relations that developed between India and the LTTE, many of the Sinhalese believed that India was "interested in keeping Sri Lanka united and preventing the establishment of an independent Tamil Eelam."[10] Throughout the peace process, India has continued to reiterate its belief in the need for a united Sri Lanka. As mentioned earlier, cautious of the separatist movements within its own state, India's policy has always been to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka.

Further, although India chose to separate itself from the peace processes, the international community and the Sri Lankan government both understood that India could undermine the entire process if overlooked.[11] Thus, during the talks leading to the Cease Fire Agreement (CFA), the Norwegian envoy kept India involved by consulting it at all stages. India, although supportive throughout the peace process, maintained its role at verbal communications without any intention to formally engage with the conflict.

It should be noted that India also maintained a very strict position against the LTTE throughout the peace processes, seeking to bring the LTTE leadership to trial in India. Further, as stated by a high-ranking official in the Indian High Commission in 2004, India was willing to conduct business with all groups in Sri Lanka but the LTTE.[12]

Summary
India's decision to limit its involvement after the 1990s, reflects the impact of the death of over 1,000 IPKF troops and the assassination of its Prime Minister by an LTTE member. Keethaponcalan argues that in reality, India never supported the peace processes because the actions of the LTTE would legitimize the group as rightful political actors, a status the Indian government was not willing to provide to the organization.

However, Noyahr has commented that he believes the Indian government actually worked behind the scenes in order to undermine the peace process, although this is based more on speculations than concrete evidence.[13] There has been debate regarding if India's involvement in the 1980s had any positive impact on the conflict or in the peace processes for both countries. The Sri Lankan conflict continued after India's active involvement and the Indian government received criticism at home, especially from its Tamil population. Nevertheless, as a regional power, India was always consulted in the peace process negotiations and had inevitably played an important role in the conflict.

3.1.2. Pakistan

Pakistan's involvement in the Sri Lanka conflict is not clearly historically recorded, and most records are only speculations. However it is clear that Pakistan has played a significant role in the conflict, mainly for regional interests.

While India may have involved itself with the conflict because it holds a large Tamil population in its own country, India also wanted to assert its political might over the South Asian region. Pakistan, a rival of India, most likely became involved with the Sri Lanka conflict as a means to upsetting India and asserting its own power over the region.

Involvement and Consequences
In the late 1990's it had been speculated by the LTTE that Pakistan was involved with the aid and support of the Sri Lankan military offensives. At this time both Sri Lanka and Pakistan denied these accusations, as Pakistan asserted that the conflict was an internal matter that was of no concern for them. However Pakistan has long considered Sri Lanka to be an ally. In 1997 it became an open secret that Sri Lanka military officers were being trained in Pakistan.[14]

Pakistan's policy towards Sri Lanka changed under the rule of President Pervez Musharraf. From 1999- 2008 Pakistan emerged as the second largest (after China) military aid supplier to Sri Lanka.[15] The exact weaponry sold is had not been recorded, however certain deals have been made public, such as the sale of 22 Al-Khalid tanks worth $110 million to Sri Lanka in 2006. The Sri Lankan government had also ordered a list of weapons worth millions more from Pakistan.

August 14, 2006 a suicide bomber went off aiming to kill Colonel Bashir Wali Muhammed, the former senior officer of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the foreign ambassador to Sri Lanka. While Bashir survived, 8 Sri Lankan commanders were killed in the blast. The Sri Lankan government issued a statement claiming that the Pakistani envoy was targeted by the LTTE. Bashir however alleged that India's external Intelligence Agency was behind the blast. India dismissed the allegation as preposterous and absurd.[16] It is more than likely that the LTTE was behind the blast, probably threatened and angered by Pakistani's support for the Sri Lankan government. Bashir's accusations towards India, improbable as they may be, do imply that Pakistan's involvement may have been a result of trying to shake up India.

India was concerned about Pakistan's involvement in the Sri Lanka conflict. In 2006 it was reported that members of the Pakistani Armed Forces had been stationed in Colombo to guide Sri Lankan forces. Numbers of civilian deaths continued to increase on both sides. In a report by the former counter-terrorism chief of India's external intelligence, B. Raman concluded that, "Under the influence of the Pakistani advisors, the Sri Lankan government's counter-insurgency operations are becoming increasingly ruthless."[17]

By 2008 Pakistan had boosted its armed military assistance loans to Sri Lanka to nearly $100 million.[18] There has also been some less-documented speculation that at a time Pakistani's ISI may have provided arms for the LTTE. Kayalapattinam is a village in the Indian Tamil Nadu state that is commonly known as the centre of the ISI and LTTE operations. The US and the UK, aware of this connection, advised Pakistan not to use the LTTE to destabilize India. However it had been reported that in 1993 the LTTE accepted a consignment of arms from Pakistan.[19] The specific details of Pakistan's direct involvement with the LTTE is unclear, although it has been highly speculated that the LTTE did buy arms from Pakistan, as the senior LTTE leader Sathasivam Krishnakumar (aka Kittu) had been seen going in and out of the country buying arms.

> "The specific details of Pakistan's direct involvement with the LTTE is unclear, although it has been highly speculated that the LTTE did buy arms from Pakistan"

Whether these arms were directly bought from the government or from the illegal black market it is unsure. Pakistan does hold the largest illegal arms market in the sub-continent.[20]

Summary

It is impossible to determine whether or not Pakistan may have perpetuated the conflict by providing weapons to the LTTE. However it has been observed that Pakistan's aid and support for the Sri Lankan government has served as clinching factor in the government's victory over the LTTE in 2009.
Any Pakistani involvement in the conflict before 2000 has been difficult to research. It may be likely that any involvement was kept a secret so as not to threaten India. After Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons by the end of the 1990's, Pakistan became more open with their involvement in the conflict. This may also have happened due to China's encouragement towards Pakistan to increase military aid towards Sri Lanka (which will be discussed in the following section). It is difficult to define Pakistan's foreign policy and strategy, as it is particularly in the case of the Sri Lanka conflict, however it is clear that the nation-state supported the Sri Lankan government which contributed to its victory over the LTTE.

3.1.4 China

Since it first began to emerge as a global leader China has consistently provided aid for Sri Lanka. Support for Sri Lanka drastically increased in the last decade of the conflict, support that most likely was the biggest contributing factor to the Sri Lankan government's victory over the LTTE in 2009. China asserted that the conflict in Sri Lanka was an internal affair, but openly supported the government's right to defend itself from internal threats. Supplying Sri Lanka with military aid is argued by some as being part of China's strategy to gain Sri Lanka as an ally and to add it to China's "String of Pearls".

Involvement and Consequences

After the IPKF stepped out of Sri Lanka in 1991 Sri Lanka formed an alliance with China, and as a result several naval craft and aircraft were delivered to the government.[21] Small measures of aid continued throughout the years, but it wasn't until 2007 when Chinese military aid boosted fivefold. This came as a direct result of the US ending direct military aid to Sri Lanka after concluding that its human rights record was deteriorating. China then became Sri Lanka's largest military donor, giving almost $1 billion in aid. Weapons supplied, such as Chinese Jian-7 fighter jets, anti-aircraft guns, JY-11 3D air surveillance radars and others were concluded to have all played a central role in the Sri Lankan military successes against the LTTE. In April 2007 the Sri Lankan government signed a $38 million pact to purchase ammunition from China.

Subsequently in the following year China gave six F-7 jets to Sri Lanka as 'a gift'. In the same years as China was increasing its military aid to Sri Lanka, it also encouraged Pakistan to contribute its own military aid to Sri Lanka. Such military aid blatantly tilted the balance in favor of Sri Lankan government forces. It appears that some of China's domestic policies may have spilled over to Sri Lanka. Lanka Newspapers reported that Chinese aid helped weaken and scare civil society, emboldened by the unstinted Chinese support the government set in motion, the militarization of society, and the employed control of information as an instrument of war.[22]

Indeed in the final months of the war the number of Tamil civilian killings dramatically increased. It has been estimated that more than 7,000 Tamil civilians were killed, however the Sri Lankan government claims that these casualties occurred because the LTTE's leaders were making hostages of their own people using them as human shields as their army advanced on their final stronghold. There may have been many more civilian casualties. A UN humanitarian coordinator in Sri Lanka has suggested that the government numbers do not add up: General Fonseka (who led the Sri Lankan Army) claimed that 22,000 Tigers were killed in the final two years of the war, and yet in 2006 he claimed that the LTTE had only 10,000 cadres.[23] Numbers of casualties however are uncertain, as an unrecorded amount of civilians from both sides have been killed.

Summary

It is certain that China's military aid for the Sri Lankan government helped secure a victory over the LTTE. After the US stopped its own military aid due to human rights abuses, China stepped in, implying that matters of human rights did not concern the country and that rather it supported a government's right to defend itself from internal threats, even at the cost of human lives. China's political clout over the region also encouraged Pakistan to increase military aid for the Sri Lankan government, which combined gave the government the eventual

advantage over the LTTE. China's involvement may likely have been part of their strategic foreign policy to slowly assert dominance over the region, especially over India. It also has been alleged to have been part of its "String of Pearls" strategy, as China is now building a $1 billon port in Hambantota.

However it is important to note that the conflict has not officially been resolved. Although an increase in military aid may temporarily be seen as the end to the fighting, a strong nationalist Tamil community continues to exist around the world.

Regional Actors Summary

Although Sri Lanka may just be a teardrop nation to other regions, for India, Pakistan, and China, it is an important factor to regional security and power balances. All three have played a role in the Sri Lanka conflict as way to assert power over the region. Although India attempted to resolve the conflict through more-or-less peaceful means, from this analysis it appears that China and Pakistan were more successful in 'ending' the conflict by giving more leverage to the Sri Lankan government with military aid.
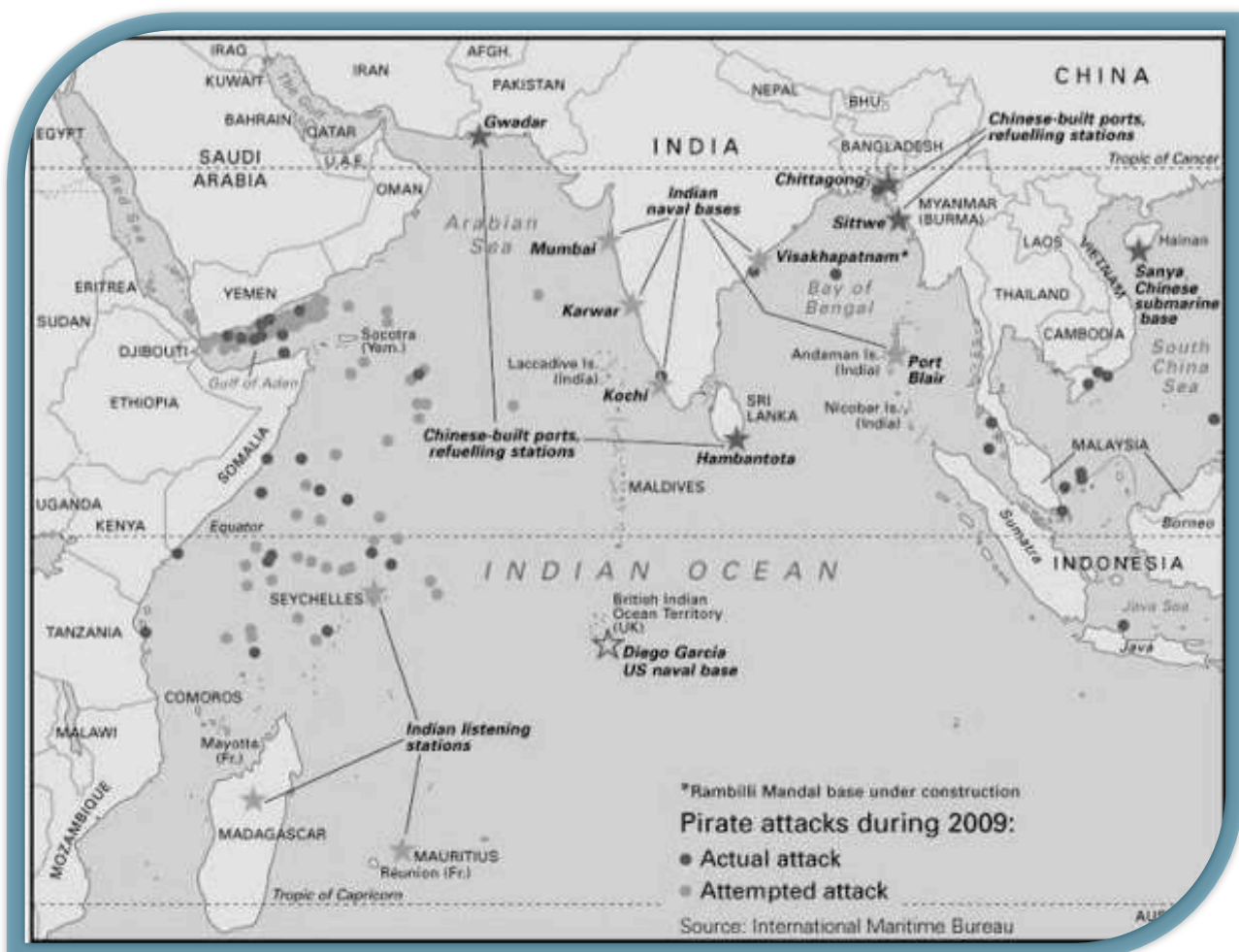

Figure 4: Great Power competition in the Indian Ocean. This map shows the strategic advantages of regional actors such as India, China and Saudi Arabia.

3.2. Key International Actors

The United States and Norway have been two important nation-states outside the region that have been critical in impacting the Sri Lankan conflict. Other nation-states with smaller influence include Israel, Canada, and Japan. These actors and their influences will be discussed in the following section.

3.2.1. The United States

As a dominant actor in world politics, the United States position to the Sri Lankan conflict is also crucial to analyze. Generally, the US has not viewed Sri Lanka as a priority in South Asia, focusing instead on relations with India and Pakistan. Richard Armitage, former Deputy Secretary of State, believed the US had to play a heightened role in the conflict and gave it a position of precedence on the US agenda. As argued by Lunstead, the attention the US has placed on Sri Lanka since late 2001 has been out of proportion to US interests in Sri Lanka.[24] However, Armitage had argued that in 2003, the conflict had reached a point where both sides were willing to reach a solution and international pressure from the US could prove to be vital.[25]

Involvement and consequences

Initially, in 1997, the US designated the LTTE as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO).[26] This limited the US's role in the peace processes since it was not viewed as a 'neutral' player. The US applied pressure to the LTTE, focusing on its use of child soldiers and human rights violations, while at the same time providing the Sri Lankan government with security assistance.[27] The military support to the government of Sri Lanka was provided in order to deter the LTTE from returning to war and to provide the government with the resources needed in case these hostilities resumed. Small US Military units provided training to the government military members and funding to the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs in the country. The Foreign Military Financing (FMF) program, through which the US government provides grants to other countries in order to let them purchase US military equipment, went from zero in 2003 to $2.5 million in 2004. From 2005 – 2009, this amount would range from nearly half million to one million annually.[28] In March 2008, the US donated $220,000 worth of anti-terrorism equipment to the Sri Lankan Police.[29]

The US also provided aid monies to the government for development assistance. The main criterion to receive this assistance was to ensure that the aid did not provide support to the LTTE.

Table 1: Aid funding from 1999-2009 in millions

2000	$7.74	2005	$16.1
2001	$7.59	2006	$7.43
2002	$9.78	2007	$6.56
2003	$10.1	2008	$6.95
2004	$16.98	2009	$4.0

Source: Lunstead 2011, p.58

However, it was difficult to sometimes assist Tamil majority government-controlled areas because many times the aid would pass through LTTE territory, where the group would levy a 'tax,' which provided the LTTE with funds. Table 1 (above) shows the aid funding provided by the US government from 2000-2009. Table 1 also shows that since 2006, the amount of aid received by the Sri Lankan government steadily decreased because the peace process had failed.

Furthermore, the Bush Administration developed a Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) where participant countries were chosen based on how well they score on three broad categories – ruling justly, investing in people, and economic freedom – which was further divided into sixteen categories. Sri Lanka qualified for assistance through this program in May 2004, with a proposal originally totalling $590 million, which decreased to $100 million due to the slow moving discussions, and eventually was cancelled in 2006 because of the security concerns in Sri Lanka at that time.[30]

The US also showed its support for the Wickremasinghe government, which was in power from 2001 to 2004 in both concrete and symbolic ways. During this period, the US increased its assistance in military and development projects, and increased its involvement with the peace processes. Further, Prime Minister Wickremasinghe was invited to the White House twice, in July 2002 and November 2003, to meet with President Bush. These two meetings in such a short time are remarkable, considering the US has minimal strategic interests in Sri Lanka.[31] Apart from interactions with the Sri Lankan government, the US also engaged with other groups, such as the Tamil National Alliance and various Tamil political groups, as well as with Muslim political parties and factions in order to facilitate the peace processes. After the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, USAID oversaw about $135 million in relief and reconstruction aid for Sri Lanka.[32]

Analysis of Issues
Although the LTTE never directly threatened the US, it was designated as a FTO because

the US felt it threatened peace and security in South Asia, an important dimension to US national security. Because of the terrorist categorization, US citizens were barred from providing funds or materials to the LTTE. As will be discussed in the Diaspora section, this had important consequences for the Tamil Diaspora. Although the US did not have any direct contact with the LTTE, it did accept the LTTE as a negotiating partner during the peace talks and sent messages through the Norwegian facilitator. It also communicated to the LTTE that a change in their behaviour and terror tactics could change the US position. However, the US did not invite the LTTE to the May 2003 Washington Conference, a precursor to the Tokyo Conference, and some have argued that the LTTE might have withdrawn from the negotiations because of their exclusion.[33] Furthermore, Lunstead has assessed that US engagement in peacebuilding was hindered by its commitment to use minimal resources, a time lag in deploying the resources due to poor communications from both sides, and a focus on terrorism, which has limited their level of engagement in the conflict.[34] Although the US did not engage with the LTTE, some US Senators criticized their nation's role because they argued the US was supporting the Sri Lankan Government security forces, which have also been responsible for human rights violations. This can help explain the eventual reduction in military assistance and US aid to Sri Lanka post 2006. In addition, US aid to Sri Lanka has been significant in development of the state as well as assisting many groups affected by the conflict (See the Civil Society section for further information).

Summary
Although the US military relationship with Sri Lanka increased substantially from near non-existence, it never reached high levels in absolute terms. The true impact regarding America's minimal levels of engagement has not been assessed. Nevertheless, its involvement in and the pressures it exerted during the peace processes may have played a role in the signing of the ceasefire.

3.2.2. Norway

Norway has a record of peacemaking and was invited by the Sri Lankan government to facilitate the peace process. Norway is widely viewed as a non-threatening, neutral intermediary and thus was acceptable to the main actors in the conflict as a facilitator to the peace processes. Upon taking this role in 1999, Norway stated it would remain committed as long as both sides requested it.

Involvement and Consequences

In 1999, both parties invited the Royal Norwegian Government to the role of a mediator, and Norway extended financial, diplomatic and logistical support in the peace process.[35] From the very beginning, the Norwegian government had declared that it would pursue a bilateral approach with the objective of a long-term ceasefire and direct bilateral negotiations between the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government relied heavily on Norway to steer the peace process.[36] In April 2003 when the LTTE left the negotiations, Norway continued to facilitate between the two sides through Track Two diplomacy. Thus, even though the peace talks stopped, Norway ensured that the peace *process* continued through other means.[37]

As a provision of the CFA, a Norwegian-headed body, the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission (SLMM), established on 22 February 2002, was tasked to monitor the ceasefire and address truce violation inquires from both sides. Although it had a limited mandate, it helped maintain the commitments of the key protagonists through problem-solving and consensual approaches. "It did not have a peacekeeping authority nor any means to enforce compliance with the terms of the CFA."[38] However, from May 2006 onwards, the SLMM faced difficultly in exercising its mandate due to an increase in hostilities from both sides.

After the abrogation of the ceasefire agreement, the SLMM terminated its remaining activities in 2008. During its time working in Sri Lanka, the SLMM was criticized for not being impartial and for appeasing the

parties. However, it was also acknowledged by the international community that the SLMM was vital in maintaining the fragile ceasefire.

As a co-chair along with the European Union, the US, and Japan, Norway joined the 2003 Tokyo Donor Conference, which was attended by 51 countries and 22 international organizations in order to support the peace processes and reconstruction and development activities.[39]

Analysis of Issues

"The entire architecture of the peace process was built around heavy international engagement, including international security guarantees, the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), Norwegian facilitation of Track One negotiations, the co-chair system (the EU, US, Japan, and Norway), international funding, support for Track Two initiatives, and the donor reconstruction package."[40] Norway played a critical part in keeping these various groups working together in order for a cohesive move towards peace processes.

> "The peace process changed from being perceived as internationally driven rather than internationally supported"

Some of the lessons from the Norwegian Peace Process have been: first, negotiations based on a bilateral model and pact between the elites of the main protagonists, with exclusion of key stakeholders, acted as a spoiler. These stakeholders include Muslim groups,[41] the JVP and other Tamil parties, which felt marginalized within this process. Second, the international community

softening its stand on some of the human rights violations, particularly in regards to the LTTE, and focusing only on conflict management undermined its role as a credible mediator. Third, the peace process changed from being perceived as internationally driven rather than internationally supported. Thus, it seemed to some of the main protagonists that the priorities and timeframes of the external actors became more important than that of the domestic actors. Fourth, although track two peacebuilding efforts were complimented as important in maintaining communications, more energy should have been spent to strengthen the interface amongst track one, two and three to lead to greater collaboration.[42]

In retrospect, there is room for debate over the wisdom of Norway acting both as a facilitator of the peace process and establishing the SLMM to monitor the ceasefire. Norway was first in a position to be low profile and pragmatic as it negotiated with the various sides building long-term, trusting relations with key individuals, while the monitoring role commanded it to be more public, "naming and shaming" the violators, thus potentially harming its position as a neutral and trustful mediator. In addition, the Sinhalese population of the

South disagreed about the complete distinction between these two roles and thus, it might have been simpler if Norway did not assume both roles. Norway understood the regional context and, although India had chosen not to act as a mediator in the peace process (see above section on India). Norway kept India informed on all actions throughout the peace process and consulted with the Indian government numerous times. India had feared that accommodating the LTTE in the peace process was a way of legitimizing the group by the international community and it would further empower the separatist ambitions of the LTTE. The external international actors knew that it was important to consult India for long-term regional stability.

Summary

Norway played a key role in the formulation of the Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) and in providing the space for the direct negotiations between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. However, the CFA started facing hurdles in mid-2003, due to the various reasons discussed above, and eventually collapsed in January 2008 after the government decided to pull out.[43] Nevertheless, through track two approaches to peacebuilding and the SLMM, Norway maintained its role in Sri Lanka until 2008.

Protesters outside the Norwegian Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, demanding the expulsion of Norway's diplomats.

3.3. Other Nation-States: Israel, Canada and Japan

Aside from the nation-states mentioned above, other nation-states have been directly and indirectly involved with the Sri Lanka conflict on a smaller scale. It has been reported that the LTTE has bought weapons from China, North Korea, Hong Kong, Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, Eritrea, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.[44]

Other countries have also sold weapons to the Sri Lankan government, such as Israel. Although the exact figures are difficult to research, it is known that Israel has provided a constant flow of weapons for Sri Lanka. Most likely Israel supports the Sri Lankan government because the conflict in Sri Lanka is quite similar to that in Israel and Palestine. It has been speculated that the LTTE and the PLO have close relations and may share information. If such is the case, then Israel and the Sri Lankan government share similar enemies.

Canada, although home to a significant portion of the Tamil Diaspora, has played only a small roll in the Sri Lanka conflict. In 2006, after discovering that much of the Tamil funding in Canada has been an indirect cause of the violence in Sri Lanka, the government banned the LTTE and labelled it as a terrorist organization. It has supported a peaceful resolution to the conflict and has consistently asserted that there will be no military solution to the problem. On average Canada has donated $10 million in developmental aid to Sri Lanka. Although Canada has tried it's best to remain neutral throughout the conflict, it did play a small role in mitigating and perpetuating the conflict.

The result of Canada banning the LTTE is twofold. Designating the LTTE as a terrorist organization, combined with the result of the global enforcement and monitoring of anti-terrorism measures since September 11 are believed to have hurt the LTTE's ability to raise and transfer funds from its diaspora and to maintain links with other terrorist organization.[45] However exact numbers of the drop in funds is impossible to attain. As there are numerous Tamils in Canada, the government has fallen under scrutiny by many of its Tamil citizens. Many Tamils see Canada's move to banning the LTTE as an inefficient way of addressing the conflict and in fact perpetuates it. David Poopalapillai, the National Spokesperson for the Canadian Tamil Congress argued that, "What actually happened was that the LTTE ban brought about by the Canadian government and also by other governments gave a strong boost to the Sri Lankan government to go for a military solution."[46]

As previously mentioned in the Norway section, Japan also played a role in the conflict by organizing the Tokyo Donor Conference in 2003. Organized by the Prime Minister of Japan Junichiro Koizumi, the US, Norway, and the EU were co-chairs of the conference. Held in June, the conference aimed at the development and progress of peace in Sri Lanka, and was attended by representatives from 51 countries

(including notably, China and Pakistan) and 21 international organizations. At the conference a declaration was drafted aimed at "Regaining Sri Lanka" for the whole country, addressing a "Needs Assessment" of the Tamil areas and a "Bridging Document" linking the two together. The convention managed to raise $4.5 billion dollars promised in aid for the four years following, provided that the Sri Lanka government and the LTTE continue to participate and engage in peace talks. At the time, both sides had agreed to a ceasefire in 2002. Japan was the largest donor, pledging $1 billion in aid, making it clear that Japan would have an active role in monitoring and reviewing the progress towards peace and the distribution of aid packages.[47] Japan, having no standing army of its own since World War II, has typically been a proponent of development aid as a form of resolving conflict.

Representatives from the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE were invited to the conference, but the LTTE declined, already unhappy with the progress of the peace talks and determined not to settle for anything less than their original demands for a separate state. Although representatives from the Sri Lankan government did attend, the conference was more or less null and void without the participation of the LTTE. Although records are difficult to find of the outcome of the conference, it appears that most of the money pledged was not sent to Sri Lanka as shortly after both sides broke the ceasefire agreement and violence had begun again. Within the following years, the failure of the conference, the deteriorating human rights record of the Sri Lankan government, the US pullout of military aid in Sri Lanka, and the failure to maintain the ceasefire agreement all led to an end of the majority of Western involvement in the conflict. As already mentioned above, after Western involvement decreased China and Pakistan stepped in providing military aid to the Sri Lankan government.

Summary

Although not directly affected by the conflict in Sri Lanka, the non-regional actors mentioned have played an important role in attempting to end the conflict and developing peace processes. Proponents of peaceful negotiation, these Western countries tried to establish and maintain peace talks between both sides to resolve the conflict. Although Norway managed to establish a ceasefire, five years later the agreement was violated and the country soon escalated into war again. The LTTE as an extremist group consistently refused to negotiate, accepting nothing less than the original demands put forth. Talks did little to chip away at the robust demands of the LTTE, proving that it would take more than the traditional democratic means of resolving conflict to resolve the conflict in Sri Lanka.
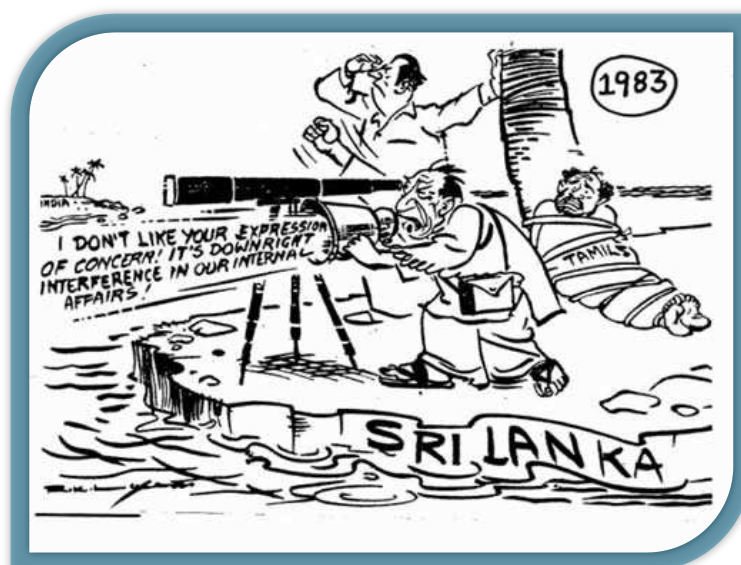
Already in 1983, Sri Lankan cartoonists were greatly engaged in portraying the international dimensions of the conflict. See 'Image References' for source.

4. Non-State Actors

4.1. The Diaspora

Critical to understanding the influence of external forces on the evolution of the Sri Lankan conflict is the role played by the international Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora. Indeed this appreciation has added value in relation to the general analysis of conflict. Investigating the dynamic between diasporas formed due to conflict and their homeland can offer valuable insight for the future as to how they can be mobilized for a positive resolution of conflict, and to avoid their involvement causing a perpetuation of violence.[1] Diasporas can play an important role in this regard, as they offer a source of financing, external lobbying towards host countries and internal influences. This has been witnessed in other conflict zones such as Israel Palestine, Northern Ireland and the Kurdish fight for independence.[2]

Diaspora as a concept is complex.[3] A useful and necessarily wide definition of diaspora is "that segment of people living outside the home land."[4] By conceptualizing diaspora in this way it allows for divergent interpretations of what that homeland is. Diasporas are the result of migration from a home country to a new one, and may be motivated by a host of factors including economic or political needs. It is important to note that it is not necessarily the result of conflict. Furthermore there can be a tendency of painting diasporas as a monolithic bloc however it is important to recognize that they are often multi-faceted. This is visible within the Sri Lankan diaspora, which includes Tamil and Sinhalese ethnicities. Owing to the ethnic divides pertinent to the Sri Lankan conflict this section has chosen to focus solely on the Tamil diaspora, as the Sinhalese diaspora has relatively little input in the political realm.[5] It is however noteworthy to mention that there have been occasions of violence between Tamil and Sinhalese communities abroad, as well as cooperation.[6] Within the Tamil diaspora there are also a variety of opinions that will be elucidated below, indeed awareness of this variation is intrinsic to understanding the potential for the diaspora having a positive effect towards resolution.

As noted previously diasporas are not necessarily the result of conflict. However their political role takes on added effect when these communities have formed as a result of dislocation owing to violence, persecution or the denial of equal rights. The displacement of populations is a visible feature of many conflicts. In cases of long-term conflicts these populations have a tendency to grow and establish communities. Of interest therefore is the role such groupings can have in the perpetuation or mitigation of conflict.[7] Those that have fled will often retain and uphold their sense of injustice, and will use the relative safety of their new environments to campaign for their beliefs. What is apparent is that this can lead to different attitudes prevailing among the internal and the external population.[8] This has the potential to have a negative or positive impact on any future resolution.

Figure 1: Tamil Diaspora Population by Country (2010)

United States: 25,000

Canada: 200,000-300,000

Great Britain: 180,000

The Netherlands 20,000

Norway: 10,000

Sweden: 2,000

Denmark: 7,000

Germany: 60,000

Switzerland: 47,000

France: 40,000 - 50,000

Italy: 15,000

Tamil Nadu, India: 200,000

Australia: 40,000

New Zealand: 3,000

Malaysia: 20,000

Map Source: CIA World Factbook

Data Source: "The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora after the LTTE," *International Crisis Group: Asia Report*, 186 (23 Feb. 2010): 2
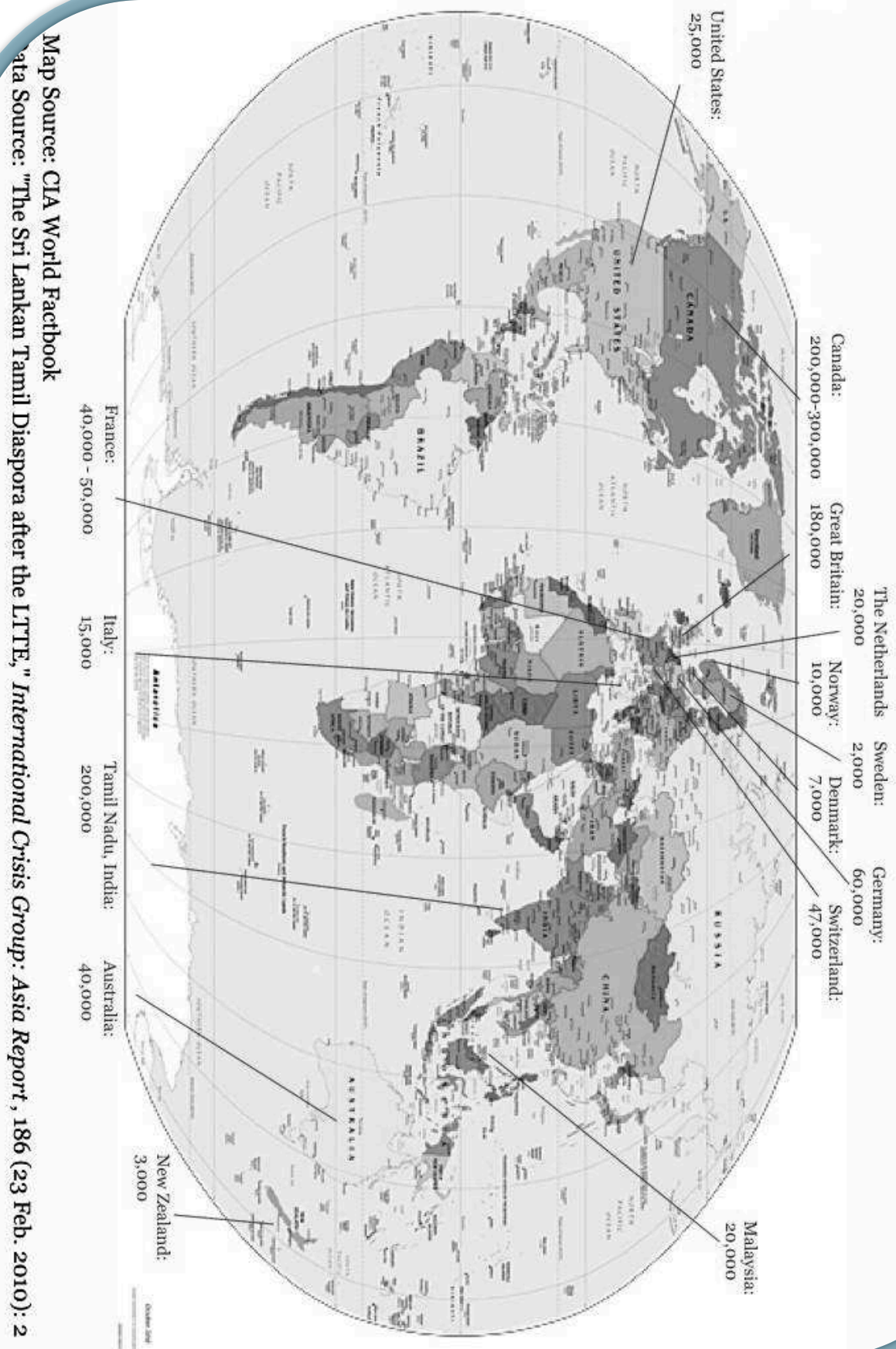
Figure 3: Map showing Tamil Diaspora Population by Country (2010)

Overall this section hopes to highlight the role played by the Tamil diaspora in the Sri Lankan conflict so as to better understand the conflict itself and offer insight for comparative analysis.

A Brief History of Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora

The establishment of the Tamil diaspora is intrinsically linked to the conflict that broke out into open war in 1983. Historically during the colonial period, the Tamil population was the major beneficiary of the western education system established by the British.[9] As a result they were trained in English and "disproportionately represented in higher education and the administration."[10] However following independence politicians representing the majority Sinhalese population engaged in a policy of promoting Sinhalese nationalism, which in turn led to a state of outbidding which saw Tamil's pushed out of government and their culture being suppressed.[11] The tensions and eventual conflict this led to has resulted in a protracted exodus of Tamils from Sri Lanka to escape persecution and violence.

Prior to the conflict two waves of migration have been identified by analysts, the first witnessing a post-independence move by many professional English speaking Tamils to Great Britain. The second came in the 1970s as many sought out economic and education opportunities abroad, which were increasingly being denied at home. The third then came when violence erupted in 1983 with many Tamil's seeking political asylum.[12] The result is that today the diaspora is estimated to contain one quarter of the entire Tamil population numbering it at about one million.[13] Figure 3 (previous page) shows a breakdown of destinations and corresponding population size.

The establishment of the diaspora led to the founding of numerous community groups that have become a key source of funds for aiding the development of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, while also often being linked to militant groups as fund raisers.[14] Advocacy groups have also emerged which seek to alleviate the plight of the Tamils by bringing it to the attention of their host governments.

Tamil Diaspora Involvement in Conflict

The Sri Lankan Conflict entered a new phase in 2009 with the apparent victory of the Sri Lankan government over the LTTE. This transition has had a considerable effect on the actions of the diaspora. During the conflict between 1983 and 2009 the LTTE established a stranglehold on Tamil politics whereby it forcibly became the sole voice of Tamil opposition. Any attempt to subvert its position was met with violence and intimidation both domestically and abroad. For this reason with its virtual defeat in 2009 the diaspora were presented with the opportunity to restructure its advocacy structure with different organizations and groupings vying for power in the vacuum left by the LTTE. For this reason distinguishing diaspora involvement before and after 2009 is an effective manner at looking at its involvement in the past in relation to its recent transformation.

Involvement Pre-2009: Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)

Tamil diaspora communities throughout the world have founded community organizations as well as websites, newspapers, radio and TV stations that have helped maintain their culture and contact with Sri Lanka.[15] However during the years when the LTTE were active they infiltrated these communities to extract financing for their militant operations in Sri Lanka. Numerous front organizations would collect donations from the Tamil community. Many within these communities supported the LTTE voluntarily viewing them as the sole actor with enough power to stand up against the Sri Lankan government.[16] However there were less obliging members of the community who have noted the coercive tactics employed by the LTTE in gathering donations. In all there are estimates that the LTTE were raising approximately US $200 Million a year from the diaspora during the conflict, much of which went to procuring weapons.[17]

The involvement of the LTTE had a dual effect on the diaspora. First their ambition to be the sole representative of the Tamils and the heavy handed tactics they used to ensure this meant that their political agenda
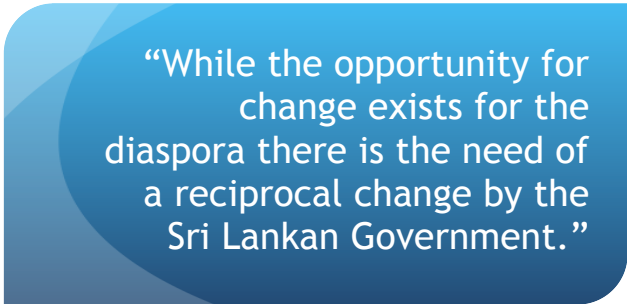
became the de facto non-negotiable policy of the entire community.[18] While it is true that many within the Tamil diaspora supported a separate state, the LTTE approach meant the scope for negotiation was severely limited. It thereby shaped the image of the Tamil diaspora into one of unitary support of the LTTE, while those with reservations were stifled. This in turn led to the second consequence. As a result of pro-LTTE Tamil tactics, from 1997 states started designating the LTTE a terrorist organization.[19] The result was a de-legitimization of the Tamil cause, and a suspicion of the Tamil diaspora's involvement.

The terrorist label coupled with the stepped up offensive by the Sri Lankan government from 2008 led to the LTTE's ability to raise funds abroad being severely hampered.[20] Furthermore there was an increased liability for individuals to be involved with the organization as new terror legislation came into effect globally following the September 11th 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States. Major front organizations such as the World Tamil Movement in Canada were investigated and shut down.

The military defeat of the LTTE in 2009 and the manner in which it was achieved demoralized many within the diaspora, however it also meant a restructuring of political activism was made possible. This process is ongoing but offers further insight into the possible role the diaspora can play in a post-violence Sri Lanka.

Involvement Post-2009: Obstacles to Positive Engagement

The destruction of the LTTE has raised a lot of questions concerning the future involvement of the diaspora. Many have recognized that with the defeat of the LTTE militancy is no longer a viable option for addressing Tamil grievances. As a result new organizations have emerged vying to take up a position as the voice of the Tamil community. In this regard the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) and the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) are two leading organizations seeking to establish themselves.[21] However this competition has caused fragmentation within the politically

> "While the opportunity for change exists for the diaspora there is the need of a reciprocal change by the Sri Lankan Government."

active community, leading to a protracted effort of unifying support. This is all the more pertinent considering the consolidation of power currently being achieved by Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa.

While the opportunity for change exists for the diaspora there is the need of a reciprocal change by the Sri Lankan Government, and any hope that the end of the LTTE would lead to a conciliatory approach by the government has proved unwarranted. The President is consolidating his power and continuing to remove any possible dissension, with the continued "disappearance" of young Tamil men.[22] Arguably this approach is unlikely to facilitate constructive dialogue. From the Tamil point of view, the possibility of ending tensions would be better facilitated by the government granting the Tamil population equal rights and proportionate representation. Failure to address this situation will likely lead to further polarization within the diaspora and the continued call for a separate state, a policy which will in turn cause further tensions between the Tamil and Sinhalese communities and play into the president's nationalist rhetoric.

A further obstacle for negotiation is the issue of human rights. A 2011 UN report on accountability in Sri Lanka has assessed and vindicated the claims of human rights violations perpetrated by both the government and the LTTE.[23] This is a major issue in reconciling Sinhalese and Tamil populations. With regards to any future influence by the Tamil diaspora organizations, there is a belief among host governments that a renunciation of the LTTE's use of violence and human rights violations is a prerequisite for legitimacy.[24]

Furthermore the refusal by the Sri Lankan government to accept responsibility for the human rights violations perpetrated as a result of their heavy-handed tactics in defeating the LTTE furthers the cleft between the government and the Tamil population, stoking the anger of the Tamil diaspora. The establishment of the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Committee has done little to address this issue, as it is lacks the "key international standards of independence and impartiality."[25] The issue of human rights thus both blocks the future legitimacy of Tamil diaspora political organizations while also exacerbating Tamil grievances. Until this issue receives legitimate redress it will remain a major obstacle to positive involvement by the diaspora to improve the situation of the Tamil population in Sri Lanka.

Considering the obstacles that must be overcome there are latent dangers concerning the diaspora. While there is not much belief in the diaspora's ability to reignite a militant uprising in Sri Lanka, their considerable financing abilities mean any uprising could quickly gain external support. The LTTE also left a vast infrastructure of fundraising and weapons procurement, along with considerable financial reserves which could be tapped into should the need arise.[26] However these funds have increasingly been targeted and seized by foreign governments under anti-terror legislation. The capture of the LTTE's number two Selverasa Pathmanathan (a.k.a KP) in August 2009 meant that a large number of LTTE bank accounts were uncovered.[27] Nevertheless the diaspora remains important as it has the potential to both exacerbate tensions and work towards peace, the role it plays will be influenced by, while also influencing, the path relations take.

Indeed development is currently being facilitated by the diaspora, in 2010 Sri Lanka received an estimated US $3.6 Billion in remittances, though this includes funds from the non-Tamil diaspora.[28] There are also significant quantities of untracked funds coming in through informal transfers.[29] As a result the Tamil diaspora remains a major financial contributor to the Tamil community within Sri Lanka. Should diaspora organizations be effective in adopting a reconciliation policy these vast resources have a considerable scope for effecting positive steps towards peace.[30]

Summary

The Tamil diaspora had a great influence on the Sri Lankan conflict as a source of revenue for the LTTE. However their positive influence was hampered by their polarizing goals. With no other political voice being able to gain traction, those who argued for a negotiation were labelled as traitors to the cause.

Essentially the involvement of diaspora will remain a key contributor to stability. It has been noted by analysts that while it is not believed they have the capability of igniting a new insurgency, any action taken domestically can quickly mobilize diaspora funding

The current situation in Sri Lanka is dire with the Tamil population effectively having no viable medium for redressing their substantial grievances. While the diaspora is currently regrouping following the defeat of the LTTE their presence remains and if no forward progress is made they will undoubtedly seek redress. Thus the present period offers an opportunity for change, although the policies of the Sri Lankan government are increasingly undermining this.

4.2. Civil Society, NGOs and IGOs

Although the concept of civil society is largely Western in origin, globalization and increasing interconnectedness mean that it provides a useful categorization in the context of the recently 'ended' conflict in Sri Lanka. Starting with thinkers such as Locke and Montesquieu in the 18th century, notions of civil society have slowly developed to cover a wide range of actors, including local and international NGOs, community groups, outspoken intellectuals and academics, and other prominent (non-official) persons. While it is important to note that civil society is still a widely contested concept, Merkel and Lauth have posited a bare bones definition, in which civil society is seen as "an arena of voluntary, un-coerced collective action around shared interests, purposes, and values."[1] For the purpose of this section, Spurk's definition of civil society will be employed, as it amalgamates the thinking of a number of philosophical predecessors and provides a critical lens through which civil society in Sri Lanka, and its international linkages, can be evaluated.

According to Spurk, a healthy civil society will demonstrate seven characteristics: protection of citizens, monitoring for accountability, advocacy and public communication, socialization, building community, intermediation and facilitation between citizens and the state, and service delivery.[2] In light of his definition, there are several points in the Sri Lankan context worth expanding upon. First, the activities of civil society actors (CSAs) often overlap with those of non-civil society actors (government, businesses, media, etc.); in reality the distinction between civil society and the media, government, and business communities is often difficult to define, as people, and in some cases institutions, often overlap. However, the unique combination of activities – particularly socialization, protection of citizens, building community, and intermediation between the state and citizenry – of civil society make it an essential categorization, especially against a backdrop of conflict. Second, there exist actors in civil society that exhibit 'uncivil' behavior – in the Sri Lankan context, Orjuela has identified internal and external nationalist movements as belonging to this 'uncivil'[3] category – yet still

should be placed under the umbrella of civil society, even if they challenge Western liberal concepts of what civil society 'should' be.

The Context: Civil Society's Operating Environment in Sri Lanka

In order for a civil society to carry out its seven primary functions, the local government must be willing to provide a legal framework which permits freedom of speech and freedom of the press. In Sri Lanka, these two ingredients have been limited, to varying degrees, since 1983. As a result of government suppression and interference, civil society actors – primarily in the form of NGOs – have largely been prevented from protecting citizens, monitoring for accountability, advocating causes counter to the dominant political interests, and developing inter-communal social capital. Organizations and individuals that challenge this status quo face scrutiny, harassment, and persecution from the government. In spite of the situation, NGOs and community-based organizations – which include funeral assistance societies, youth organizations, religious groups, rural development organizations, and both national and international NGOs – in Sri Lanka have proliferated since the mid to late 1990s and are now estimated to number well into the thousands.[4][5]

Although civil society in Sri Lanka covers a range of activities and agendas and involves diverse sectors of Sri Lankan society, those, which address the issue of local ethnic conflict, tend to fall into two primary categories. First, there are those that pursue a cosmopolitan peace agenda, and second, there are those who espouse an exclusionary nationalist agenda (Tamil or Sinhala). Since the mid-1980s, and even more so following the Tsunami in 2004, the former are backed by actors from the international community, including the UN, the World Bank, the IMF, state aid agencies, and others.[6] Alternatively, the latter tend to function under the influence or control of local political or government bodies. It is important to note here that with the defeat of the LTTE, Tamil nationalist civil society actors no longer function in the same manner as they did before 2009, since the end of the Tamil Tigers means they no longer have any protection from government suppression.

The international connections of peace CSAs and the governmental connections of nationalist CSAs both have significant implications for the relationship between the three 'levels' of society (as defined by John Paul Lederach – elite, mid-level, and grassroots) vis-à-vis civil society. Firstly, international aid money has transformed cosmopolitan peace advocacy from a voluntary endeavour to a career-based one. Critics suggest that the professionalization of peace advocacy has made it difficult for NGOs to generate mass membership, as those who work for them expect to be paid.[1] Furthermore, because many peace organizations are built from the top down – with the top, in the form of funding, being outside of Sri Lanka – they are not accountable to the grassroots demographic which, among other demographics, they hope to influence. Civil society actors which push a nationalist agenda are similarly organized from the top down, but instead of taking cues from international organizations, they act as a mouthpiece for the Sinhalese nationalist aspirations of the government (and before 2009, also for the Tamil nationalist aspirations of the LTTE), and thus fit neatly in a meso-level between state and individual. Finally, some have noted that the hierarchical nature of Sri Lankan society is replicated within the structure of most peace/conflict CSAs, so that they are generally more akin to professional advocacy or service organizations as opposed to bottom-up embodiments of popular sentiments.[7]

Since the defeat of the LTTE, peace/conflict CSAs have operated in an increasingly difficult environment created largely by President Rajapaksa's efforts to consolidate his government's authoritarian rule. Recently (in early 2011), in the wake of a UN inquiry into human rights violations during the closing stages of the war against the LTTE, the government cracked down hard on journalists and in particular, on critical Western-funded NGOs (one of which, the

National Peace Council, will be discussed below) which they believe initiated the inquiry. The possibility that this crackdown will result in decreased willingness to criticize the government is significant and merits continued attention.[8]

Civil Society Actors: A Few Examples

Peace Oriented Civil Society Actors

In spite of a significant number of peace-oriented NGOs, many observers have characterized them as focused on creating a discourse and professional opportunity for elites rather than a mass movement.[9] A related critique claims that international actors, in particular Norway, attribute too much importance to civil society actors. The impotence of peace NGOs, the critique goes, is demonstrated in their inability to influence the government and also by their notable absence in negotiations between the LTTE and government. Instead, peace-CSAs feebly lobby international actors to put pressure on the government of Sri Lanka.[10] [11] A lack of significant links with Tamil and Sinhalese communities abroad to foster an external grassroots peace lobby represents yet another failure.[12] However, it would be remiss to not also acknowledge the constructive activities of peace CSAs, such as supplying information to Norway during negotiations and maintaining links with leaders in the government, religious community, and opposition groups.

The following examples represent some of the goals and methods of the peace movement in Sri Lanka:

National Peace Council

Founded in 1995, the National Peace Council (NPC) aims to create a "peaceful, prosperous Sri Lanka in which the freedom, human rights and democratic rights of all communities are respected".[13] Through peace education workshops, media releases, and other forms of activism, NPC aims to realize its vision of a Sri Lanka in which ethnic conflict is settled and overcome through non-violent means. The organization's approach is informed by Lederach's conception of sustainable reconciliation whereby dialogue is promoted at the grassroots, middle and elite levels of society. Workshops bring together religious leaders, politicians, and community leaders from diverse backgrounds, while media published in English, Sinhala and Tamil provide an alternative discourse to the nationalist ones which tend to dominate discussions of ethnic issues in Sri Lanka. It would be impossible, and counterproductive, to judge the success of an organization like NPC at present.

The relationships that the organization seeks to form take significant time to develop, and determining their causality is all but impossible. However, the lack of a mass peace movement in Sri Lanka suggests that the NPC and like-minded organizations have yet to make the grassroots impact which they aspire to. A possible cause for this lack of grassroots impact could be a result of the groups need to please its foreign financial backers. Indeed, all of NPC's income comes entirely from external sources, including the Canadian International Development Agency, the (American) Academy for Educational Development, the (British) Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, the European Union, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, the Royal Norwegian Embassy, and the Swedish International Development Agency.

Janakariliya

Janakaraliya (meaning 'Theater of the People') is a mobile Sri Lankan theater group started in 2003 which attempts to foster coexistence amongst the country's various ethnic groups, albeit indirectly. The group's cast is composed of Sinhala and Tamil actors who, though they do not discuss ethnic conflict directly, demonstrate to their audiences that it is possible for Tamils and Sinhalese to work together – in fact, Janakariliya attempts to problematize the very concept of ethnic identity by having its actors speak in their non-native languages during performances. In the discussion that follows each performance, the background of each actor is revealed, often to the surprise of the audience.

Additionally, the group's plays address issues directly related to ethnic conflict (although not ethnicity or the conflict itself) such as

the exclusion of civil voices in the government, and "foolish decisions taken by rulers." The discussions that follow each play are directed largely by the audience, but the group also conducts theater workshops which incorporate "education and personal development [including conflict resolution skills] of the underprivileged rural communities" in Sri Lanka.

Janakariliya's indirect approach to peace advocacy has allowed it access to a larger section of the island nation's demographics than it would otherwise have: before 2009, the group had performed all over the country for audiences ranging from school children, to rural communities, to government soldiers, and even the LTTE. Despite its obvious impact on the individual level, the difficulty Sri Lankan CSAs have in influencing macro-level events is evidenced by one tragic even in which a school in which Janakaraliya members had stayed and conducted workshops – on the same tour that led to an endorsement by LTTE spies and their commander – was thereafter destroyed by artillery fire. Ultimately, such events embody the uphill struggle that CSAs which target grassroots demographic groups face: ultimately, civil society cannot function in a political environment characterized by government hostility. Funding and support for the group is provided by the (Dutch) HIVOS Institute, USAID, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, and local companies such as DSI and Link Natural Products. Ticket sales provide roughly 25% of the groups income (with the aim that it will rise to 55%).[14]

Nationalist Organizations
Orjuela quoted one Sri Lankan interviewee as saying "in Sri Lanka, we do not have civil society, only uncivil society."[15] While that quote does not do justice to the large number of CSAs that work for peace in Sri Lanka, it does demonstrate the high level of opposition to those actors. Indeed, Sinhala nationalist movements (since the fall of the LTTE, Tamil ones no longer exist openly) are structured in opposition to the peace movement, so that they engage in "a competition for public space, attention of political leaders and the opinion of ordinary

people, and for shaping the discourses on the ethnic issue".[16]

Groups such as the National Movement Against Terrorism (NMAT) and the National Bikkhu Front (NBF) criticize peace-oriented NGOs and other CSA actors on three main grounds: their elite nature and foreign funding sources, their non-adherence to Sinhala Buddhist nationalist ideology, and that their presence and message (which usually accepts claims for greater Tamil autonomy) challenges the sovereignty, unity and even the very survival of the state. Often functioning with the backing of the state, groups such as NMAT and NBF accuse peace organizations of support for Tamil terrorism, and thus try to discredit their messages. On a number of occasions, nationalist organizations have disrupted peace rallies in order to demonstrate their disapproval for ideology that contradicts exclusionary Sinhalese nationalist claims.[1] Such uncivil activities add yet another hurdle to the pluralist message that peace-oriented CSAs attempt to promote.

Impact
As part of the 'liberal peace,' the international community has stressed the importance of civil society actors in peacebuilding efforts in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. Ironically, some of the same organizations which fostered an economic climate conducive to conflict in the late 1970s and early 1980s – IMF and WB policies which caused unemployment and scarcity of vital resources helped lead to the election of the UNP in 1978, which then re-wrote the constitution in a more authoritarian form – are among the leading financial backers of peace and development-oriented CSAs over the last decade.[17] [18] Even still, CSAs have made important contributions to peace processes in Sri Lanka and elsewhere around the world. Orjuela has elaborated on the fact that Sri Lankan CSAs have played an important role in providing an alternative discourse to the war-mongering of the Sri Lankan government and, before their defeat, of the LTTE as well.

Furthermore, CSAs played an important role in assisting Norwegian efforts at mediation

the middle of the last decade. Organizations such as Janakaraliya have also demonstrated the ability of individuals to connect across ethnic boundaries, and may have even improved the inter-ethnic attitudes of the individuals whose lives the group touched. Success in reconciliation is a long process however, and it is particularly difficult to measure.

When assessing the impact civil society actors have had on the conflict in Sri Lanka, the most obvious fact is that in promoting a negotiated end to the war, civil society failed. Amongst other short-comings, many observers believe this fact reflects the limited – and on the part of the international community, exaggerated – importance of civil society actors in peacebuilding in Sri Lanka. Jonathan Goodhand is one amongst a number of critics who claim that civil society actors have only a small role to play in peacebuilding and receive undo attention.[19]

Contrary to international expectations, some civil society actors even promote the ideologies that underpin conflict. Of course this is not unique to Sri Lanka; among other examples, internationally fostered civil society behaved in a similarly 'uncivil' manner in Rwanda before the 1994 genocide. Yet the international linkages of civil society actors in Sri Lanka to states, inter-state organizations, private organizations and charities all attest to the importance still ascribed to civil society's role in peacebuilding, and in some instances, countering peacebuilding. This international connection gives rise to a number of problematic issues. First, the outward-looking nature of peace NGOs and other CSAs in Sri Lanka has contributed to their failure to build up and engage with a broader grassroots following.

One can see differences in the level of community engagement demonstrated by an organization like NPC (which is 100% foreign funded), and an organization like Janakaraliya, which is at least partially funded by local sources: dependence on local support breeds higher levels of grassroots interaction. On a related note, there is a conflation of CSAs and NGOs which are run by English speaking elites, generally located in Colombo.[20] This author is guilty of reinforcing that conflation, but lacking an ability to understand any of the local languages, such a short-coming is unavoidable here. As civil society actors include anyone acting voluntarily outside the market, family and state, it must be acknowledged that civil society includes more than the NGOs described above.[21] Those which are the focus of this conflict map are simply the most accessible from the available literature. Having acknowledged this limited scope of analysis however, the international nature of the most prominent peace-oriented CSAs creates cleavages between those associated with them and their targeted constituencies. While some criticisms come from an ethno-centric perspective, others do not.

One critic, rightly or wrongly, remarks "NGO persons are not the people, they are away from the people. They think they are the special caste, we should categorize them as an NGO caste. They think, "we know English. We travel in foreign countries. And we know every new idea and every new information. The people don't know anything, they are like buffaloes. So we should teach them, they should follow us." Like that NGOs think. I think that is a totally wrong idea."[22]

Peace-oriented civil society actors have fallen short in other areas of impact as well. The ways that CSAs might typically push for peace is through pressure on their government. As previously noted however, this is not possible in Sri Lanka where the government hardly tolerates any dissent. Sri Lankan CSAs have largely failed in building a mass peace constituency, and thus have no significant following on whose behalf they might mediate interaction with the government.[23] CSAs that promote nationalist causes can exacerbate conflict, while those that promote peace often lack broad legitimacy.[24] [25]

Summary
Taken as a whole then, the impact of peace-oriented civil society in mitigating conflict in Sri Lanka is largely limited to peace advocacy, while nationalist civil society helps in maintaining the status quo. The military

defeat of the LTTE by government forces in 2009 demonstrated the limited impact that civil society actors can have under an authoritarian regime, yet the crackdown of the Rajapaksa regime on advocates of peace only emphasizes the importance of offering an alternative discourse in societies divided by conflict and ruled by authoritarian regimes. Although failing in their original effort to bring about a negotiated settlement to Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict, the shrinking space in which civil society actors operate makes their existence all the more important – powerless as they may be, CSAs still have an important role to play in illuminating the withering of democratic rights that threatens to leave the country's lingering ethnic cleavages unresolved, and perhaps more significantly, offering an alternative and pluralistic vision of the future.

During the 2010 Presidential Elections concerned citizens raised questions as to which organizations- local or international would best perform the task of monitoring the elections.

4.3. The United Nations

Although Sri Lanka does not have a great influence within the United Nations system and politics, its ties with the institution is worth mentioning as an expression of a global dimension. In 1952 Sri Lanka became one of the first nations in the world to have UN development assistance, and three years later, in 1955, Sri Lanka was admitted as a member state of the UN. The UN claims to have a healthy and wide ranging partnership with the government, civil society, the NGO community, bilateral donors and financial institutions, with the overall purpose of addressing Sri Lanka's development challenges.[1] The UN country team is composed of 16 different agencies, which provide annual assistance from organs such as the UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank and the WHO. Each agency has its own project in the country. UNDP for example have ongoing transition recovery programs, sustainable energy productions, strengthens national capacities for information collection and promotes equal access to justice.

In 2008 The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) was established: an agreement between the UN and the Government of Sri Lanka for development activities from 2008-2012. It focuses on poverty reduction, improved government and democracy, the consolidation of peace and equal opportunities for women and men.[2] In 2009, the UN and the government of Sri Lanka launched a USD 50 million appeal to meet the desperate humanitarian needs of the civilians fleeing the fighting in the north between the army and the Tamil separatists. The funding came from the USD 155 million Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP), which seeks to mitigate the effect of the conflict on people. The UN and the international community condemned the LTTE, accusing them of using civilians as humanitarian shields, as well as the government, accused of executing unarmed Tamil prisoners of war and of shelling hospitals, schools and civilian areas. Both Ban Ki-Moon and Mahinda Rajapakse were never for investigations, and the Sri Lankan state appointed their own "Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission" (LLRC). In the words of Perera Kusal, both leaders could then "wash their hands of mounting international pressure for an independent investigation on war crimes and crimes against humanity accusations, international organisations now seem to feel, having enough evidence piling up for investigations."[3] However, after Ban Ki Moon's visit to Sri Lanka shortly after the end of the conflict, a three-member UN panel was set up, which the government labeled as "an unwarranted and unnecessary interference with a sovereign nation."[4]

Further, in June 2010, a UN Panel of Experts was appointed to advise the Secretary General on accountability issues relating to violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The group's official mandate was to examine "the modalities, applicable international standards and comparative experience with regards to the accountability process."[5] The Sri Lankan government was deeply against any inquiry into what was termed both 'genocide' and 'war crimes' by the international community and press. As stated by the Foreign Minister: "These issues can be dealt with by Sri Lanka that already has full fledged local mechanisms like the judiciary, commissions of inquiry to undertake such inquiries."[6]

Further, the situation in Sri Lanka is not on the agenda of either the Security Council or the General Assembly or its subsidiary body, the Human Rights Council. Therefore, this proposed measure can only be construed as an "intrusive unilateral initiative" by the UN Secretary General."[7] International organizations however are determined to advocate the investigations. As reported by Amnesty International shortly after the announcement of the panel: "By publicizing the panel of expert's report, and moving toward an independent, international accountability mechanism, the UN would send a strong message that international law is relevant, and would reinforce trends of accountability for human rights violations globally."[8] The UN chose not to publish the report, but it has been released through citizen journalism website *Groundviews* [9]

The internal document was later handed over to Ban Ki-Moon, and a copy was sent to Sri Lankan diplomats in New York. Part of the highly confidential report was then leaked to the media. Excerpts included descriptions of the conditions during the war and post-war violence and injustice faced by IDPs and civilians. Part four focused on the significant discrepancies between the United Nations and the government on estimating the number of civilians trapped in Vanni during the final stages of the war, which, if true, can have serious consequences for the charges of war crimes facing the Sri Lankan state. Using UNOSAT Quickbird and Worldview satellite images, the UN Country Team estimated that 267,618 civilians were present in the LTTE controlled area, which was bombed by the government. The government claimed this number to be between 75,000 and 100,000. These numbers were never presented to the Sri Lankan public. The consequences of this leak can harm the relationship between the UN and Sri Lanka, as the country is now under much pressure to provide justice to its people and be accountable for violent processes.

The relationship between Sri Lanka and the UN also has wider geo-political dimensions. So far, the Rajapaksa government has pushed back measures taken by the UN Security Council and the Human Rights Council with strong support from India, China and members of NAM. Russia has also been opposed to the UN investigative panel.

China was one of the UN member states that were opposed to Western powers adding Sri Lanka to the Security Council agenda. On the other hand, as stated by Sri Lanka's Permanent Representative to the UN, Dr. Palitha Kohona, "China has approved of three Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on Iran, a country with much stronger political, economic and military relationships with China than Sri Lanka."[10] This illustrates that most of the 'super powers' have not made specific requests or inquiries into Sri Lankan politics or the country's relations with the UN, which leaves the pressure on Ban Ki-Moon to decide on the appropriate responses from the institutions.

It might therefore seem that the bereaved Sri Lankans cannot expect the international community, led by the UN, to take responsibility.

Summary

The relationship between the United Nations and Sri Lanka can give us an insight into the international outreach of less developed countries and nations undergoing transitional justice and peace processes. Sri Lankan state has resisted any inquiry into the war, which has broader implications for questions of international humanitarian law and the responsibility to protect. Further, the changing politics and dynamics linking the UN with other international actors and organizations, as well as the Sri Lankan Diaspora will have a great impact on the future of the conflict. As evidenced above, is important to bear in mind that the U.N. is made up of disparate powers with different interest. Sri Lanka now has an opportunity to work out an amicable answer to its internal polarizations, and whether the 'forces' of the UN will take an active part in this will be a question. Therefore, the next couple of years will be critical for the Sri Lankan government, irrespective of the pressure coming from Western powers.

4.4. The Media

Today, all world events are covered and often broadcasted live by the global news media. Multinational media companies are proliferating messages through a plethora of channels, many of them unaffected by state boundaries and national policies. The role of media actors and structures in the formation of opinion and social networks is constantly changing, and has increased the way in which media technologies are utilized in conflict, and its ability to shape and refine opinions of people and their governments. Lessons from countries like Rwanda, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cambodia have underscored the importance of assigning global media the status of an independent actor in conflict.

Any resolution facing the problems of the people in Sri Lanka can only be secured on the basis of a thoroughly produced international perspective. From providing the first definitions of social groups, being a messenger and initiator, as well as a judge of the outcomes of war, the international media can function as a mediator as well as a destructive force in all stages of a conflict. Thus, the arbitrary and superficial qualities of much media in the phases of conflict raise the issue of how the international community interferes on a cultural level with e.g. selective information, choice of coverage and reliance on particular sources can affect the relative peace process.

This section will emphasize how mass mediated communication at a world level plays an increasingly important role in shaping the Sri Lankan peace process where economic, cultural and political relationships both affects the immediate conflict environment and the relative transition into peace. This section features a preliminary analysis of the international media environment and its interaction with the Sri Lankan national media during the final stages of the war.

The analysis will shed light on some issues facing the quality of international coverage of conflict and the frameworks in which they operate.

In the light of the below theory, which emphasizes structure, content and coverage of the media as key indicators for its response to conflict, we have used AlertNet's Global Press Tracker and Google's search function to locate and analyze the international and national media coverage. Although the conflict has been active for over fifty years, we have chosen to focus on the headlines and content leading up to the last military offensive in May 2009 and the coverage of the conflict in the recent post-war stages. This will better illustrate the increasing global nature of the conflict, as actors from all over the world have become key players in the debates on Sri Lanka's future.

Global Mass Mediated Conflict

Media is defined in Howard's terms as "the several mediums or channels used in an organized fashion to communicate information to groups of people, as a service to the public, where newspapers and magazines, radio and television and the Internet are the main channels."[1] Healthy media ecology includes a diversity of independent media outlets capable of enabling well-informed citizen decision-making.[2] However, the media has a tendency to focus on violence and conflict, and to further "sensationalize violent events can distort the public's perceptions of the situation".[3] Shinar notices that those who interpret the positive spirit of the media according to the transformation model and consider the cultural environment and the realistic chances of reducing tension and violence have lower levels of expectation, which enable them to perceive the conflict less radically, and react to violence more rationally.[4] Conflict thus has both destructive and constructive elements to its process, and the media can contribute to both parts equally.

Whereas the media is ideally meant to investigate and question events and policy as neutral as possible, it can also be selective in its coverage, content and messages, and thus 'frame' incidents in a particular way and shape the grand narrative and history of the conflict. El-Nahawy and Powers explain that "narratives guiding the public's understanding of events are increasingly and more easily contested, thus the 'battle' to control the flow of information has become more intense, particularly in the stages of conflict."[5] Media outlets will also take different political positions according to sources of funding or ownership, which can result in the creation of collective identities and antagonism between different cultures.

The dynamics of global channels of communication have changed considerably in the last decade due to a combination of technological breakthroughs and popular demand. Journalism and news broadcasting have a great impact on relations in the international society, which can be increasingly characterized by blurring state borders and citizen participation in politics. As noted by McAnany, the media appear as important and sometimes central forces in both the economic and socio-cultural theories of globalization.[6] The Internet has become an alternative to the highly concentrated television and entertainment industry, which is driven by 'invisible' markets and power structures, located in multinational media corporations. Shah notes that:

"the growth of global mass media firms has been fuelled by a parallel move toward deregulation and privatization of mass media organizations. This is most clearly evident in the broadcasting sector, which in many countries of the world had been maintained as non-profit, public service, state supported entities. As the forces of capitalism and entrepreneurship have emerged as the dominant model of organization, the state has receded as a regulator of the market place. This development has allowed the global media giants to enter into partnerships with dozens of national mass media firms around the world to produce, provide and/or disseminate news and entertainment to domestic markets. Advances in satellite broadcasting have secured the presence of the giant mass media firms in the cultural and information market place of every region of the world."[7]

These flows of information reflect the structural characteristics of globalization in terms of volume of information, its access and direction and its content. The global media thus have a severe effect on national audiences, people and contexts, which are either embraced in or left out of the global news flows.

Global news can also play a role as an agenda-setting agent. As noted in a recent publication by International Media Support: "the power of the media coverage has proved stronger than the will of governments. As international competition between increasingly globalized news corporations grew more incense, the international media begun to hunt in packs, seeking the next exclusive."[8] All media accounts influence the context and it is impossible to take a 'neutral' stance. Howard argues that all news media presents a degree of bias reflecting their indigenous language, values, beliefs and prejudices, enforcing stereotypes and simplification processes.[9] He also notes the importance of analyzing the political environment on media behaviour, even within mature democracies, as the growing commercialism of media outlets has a tendency to spiral towards a violence-enhancing media culture.[10]

The global dimensions of media reflect a growing symbiosis between national and global information, where state power is diminishing in terms of control and regulation of information traversing national borders. Any coverage of the Sri Lankan conflict will therefore not only affect relationships between the conflicting parties, power holders in the society and the general opinion, but also the international society and the countries in charge of policy responses. Analyzing the structure of the media systems will therefore allow us to understand to what extent the media is susceptible to abuse or manipulation from actors in the conflict.

> "The global dimensions of media reflect a growing symbiosis between national and global information, where state power is diminishing in terms of control and regulation of information traversing national borders."

Further, monitoring the content and coverage is vital for understanding the nature of the policy debates and the cultural dynamics of the conflict.[11] News media have a tendency to cover only the dominant national discourses and leave out content that is of less interest to the majority of the population. Content will here be analyzed in terms of messages and coverage.

The Role of the Media in the Sri Lankan Conflict

"Achieving excellence in the total practice of media by facilitating to usher in a people-friendly, development oriented, free and responsible media culture"[12] – Mission-statement of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Mass Media and Information

The most influential media structures in Sri Lanka are primarily the printed and electronic press, radio and television. Of the 23 most important newspapers, ten are dailies, four in Sinhala, and three each in Tamil and English.[13] Electronic media such as blogging and participation in online forums is also becoming increasingly popular.

Hattotuwa broadly divides the media in Sri Lanka into two categories – either under State or private ownership and control. The State owns the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. (Lake House), which has the broadest outreach in terms of distribution networks and advertising. Radio and television were a government monopoly until the mid-1980s. Since then, several privately-owned television and radio stations have been established. The state continues to control the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (radio), the Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation (television) and ITN radio and television network.[14] As further outlined by Hattotuwa, the transmission capacities of the private stations are much more limited than that of the state-owned radio and television. Thus, State radio and television remain the electronic media that reach the largest number of consumers, especially in the far-flung areas of the island.[15] The state however, has been accused in several instances for propaganda and selective control of content and coverage, especially during critical incidences of the conflict.

Hence, the information flowing in and out of Sri Lanka during the conflict had to be filtered through national, state-owned news agencies, as humanitarian workers and journalists were denied entry in the final

stages of the war. According to the Reporters Without Borders Index, the press freedom in Sri Lanka became the worst in any democratic country under the Rajapaksa administration, ranked on 165th of 175 countries on the list.[16] Linda Brady argues that despite enjoying nearly two centuries of news media, Sri Lanka has been slow to adopt western liberalist concepts of free media, and the print medium which has been the dominant format of news has remained largely in the hands of a select few- essentially three major newspaper groups related to each other either by blood or marriage.[17] Public opinion on the peace process has shown a preference for reconciliation and mutual concessions, but is diminished by stronger voices in the society.

On the other hand, Sri Lanka has had a very rapid growth in information and communications' technologies (ICTs),[18] which have enabled passionate citizens to proliferate their messages in the virtual realms. A good example of this is the citizen journalism site *Groundviews,[19]* which publishes alternative perspectives on the Sri Lankan conflict from a wide variety of sources. The website was also the first Sri Lankan publication to take advantage of mobile technologies and iPhone applications to further include citizens in online political debates.

Further, despite access to a wide range of local and global networks, Sri Lankan citizens cannot be said to enjoy a media-supportive infrastructure, in terms of a system of legislation, courts and tribunals that complement, defend and discipline a reliable media. The courts do not protect journalists from intimidation, and are used in a negative manner. An example is the 'Prevention of Terrorists Act' of 1978, which has been used to single out journalists as threats to national security. Last year, the Centre for Law and Democracy expressed their concern in a letter to the president, Mahinda Rajapaksa of a report published on Lanka News Web, stating that state intelligence units has been compiling a list of names of journalists and NGO activists allocating ratings to them according to their work, in order to prevent government criticism.[20] Thus, several restrictions on the media are still in place after the war, as an effort to preserve rule of law and government authority, but it has

become a source of divisiveness and a precursor of conflict.

International-level coverage has been part of the Sri Lankan conflict from its very origin, but at first it was local-international: predominantly between Sri Lanka and India. With increased globalization and technological advancements, the coverage spilled out into the larger world. In the weeks leading up to the final battles of the conflict, it can be argued that international media coverage had the effect of exacerbating the conflict rather than encouraging reconciliation. This is here seen as the result of a two-fold process- the conscious political strategy of the Sri Lankan government and the tendency of international media to focus on violence and war. At noted by Rajesh Venugopal,

"The internationalisation of the conflict in this manner has made global perceptions and images of the war a potentially serious factor in affecting its outcome. Consequently, both sides have come to pay closer attention to managing the external media coverage of the war, and have even accused each other of playing to the international media gallery."[21]

The dynamics between national and international media structures in Sri Lanka do not facilitate a 'process of dialogue with reasonable power-sharing outcomes or contribute to a healthy citizen-government relationship', which is a key determinant for positive media development.[22] Although these structures do not encourage direct violence outcomes, they enable an environment for long-term structural polarization. Hence, there exists a clear relationship between national and international news coverage, which messages are picked up on and how much coverage each case will get in the global news.

National Media Content

The content of the national media contains a strong focus on past conflicts and ethnic animosity. Articles based on myths, stereotypes and identities of Sinhala and Tamil origin were common during the last stages of the conflict. This could have provided an immediate rationale for violent action and made it easier for the government to justify the exclusion of minorities and pre-emptive action seen it the final military

offensive. The shift towards consistently negative reporting created the impression that the country's situation was worsening considerably and provided a justification for decisive action.

A report issued by Article 19 Global Campaign for Freedom of Expression outlines the ethnic bias and stereotyping which pervaded media and popular culture during both times of war and peace.[23] Firstly, the content was not representative of minorities in Sri Lanka such as Muslims, Burghers, Malay- and Veddah people. Secondly, headlines such as *"Attempt to steal chain of soldier: Muslim suspect in custody"*, *"Tamil woman in custody for pick-pocketing Rs. 40,000"* and *"Muslim erects barbed-wire fence around plot of land given by English Governor"* in national news contributed to the labelling of separate groups.[24]

Further, there were major differences between Sinhala and Tamil language media.[1] In the printed press, which serves as the primary channel of information for a greater percentage of the population, the content does again project the 'ethnic' inevitability of the conflict. The printed media also has a tendency to reflect and reinforce elite consensus, driven by commercial and political imperatives. Although printed articles do not make their way into international newsrooms, this adds to the social narratives of the conflict and the projection of these worldviews into international context. Despite the content in the electronic media being more balanced and resourceful it is largely still in English and also limited to urban centres. Readers of the electronic press, the international community and Diaspora, are unable to notice the growth of Sinhala nationalism, which is in turn facilitating the construction of a reality through reproducing stories from the power-circles of Colombo.

These processes become particularly visible through the resurfacing of a war-torn country's democratic aspirations. Soon after the end of the war in May 2009, Mahinda Rajapaksa decided to run for re-elections due to the wave of popularity that had followed the 'victory'. National coverage of the presidential elections in January 2010 turned the national press into a spectacle of

defamation, hate-speech, propaganda and campaigning, thus fuelling the ethnic debates. Headlines strengthening concepts of stereotypes, framing and binaries were frequent. This illustrates how the content has had a broad impact on inter-ethnic relations, social and political mobilization, political elite negotiations, public institutions, and mass or elite political behaviour, and is not at all a safeguard for democratic governance. Countless articles argue media bias in favour of the Sinhalese or the Tamils, yet few address the media bias towards the conflict itself. This prevents the general population from making well-informed choices in national elections.

Global Media Content

The main themes and messages in the global media streams have been number of killings and attacks, military strength, the violence of the Tamil resistance and the 'terrorist group' LTTE. There were also countless articles and video productions on how the Sri Lankan state had denied aid agencies and international reporters entry to the war zones in the North of the country where most of the fighting took place. This worked to prevent journalists from attaining first hand experiences of the conflict, and more broadly to have them rely on Sri Lankan pronouncements and press releases.

These messages spread like fire in dry grass to global newsrooms, whose explanations of the Sri Lankan conflict in the mass media tended to rest on primordial understandings of ethnicity. It reflected the ethnic tensions and the legacy of the civil war between the two principal communities on the island. In most headlines there was a clear polarization between Tamil and Sinhala, where the Tamil population often were described under the same rationale as the LTTE. This has lead to a fragmentisation of the collective identity of what it means to be Sri Lankan, and the governments have many times been accused of encouraging 'scientific nationalism' 1 through the media. The International Federation of Journalists reports that on February 01, 2009, foreign minister Gotabaya Rajapakse accused three international news organisations – CNN, Al-Jazeera and the BBC of partisan reporting on the situation regarding civilian casualties and suffering in

areas of conflict between government forces and Tamil separatist insurgents.[25] In most state-owned media, government officials are usually praised as saviours of the nation and constructed as mythical warriors of past Sinhala glory, whilst Tamils are portrayed as rebels, 'Tamil-tigers' and anarchists. These perspectives have also permeated international news coverage.

The fighting between the government and the LTTE was seen as an 'ethnic' matter of little consequence to the outside world. However, when the state successfully labelled the LTTE a terrorist organization, following the 9/11 'war on terrorism', there was an immediate increase in international coverage of the conflict. By using this rhetoric, the Sri Lankan state deflected media attention towards war crimes allegedly committed by the LTTE. Arundathi Roy writes "From the little information that is filtering through it looks as though the Sri Lankan government is using the propaganda of the 'war on terror' as a fig leaf to dismantle any semblance of democracy in the country, and commit unspeakable crimes against the Tamil people."[26] After the 2010 elections, the international media congratulated Rajapaksa with the victory and few questioned the legitimacy of the electoral system. Articles on the success and prospects for democracy on the island were numerous, even though international observers criticised the accuracy of the results.

The news also left out messages of integral importance attaining a more complete picture of the conflict. An example is the lack of printed information on how the conflict impacted internally displaced peoples (IDPs), who are still facing great hardships. The International Federation of Journalists notes how, in general, "the attention devoted to this issue varied along a continuum, with the Tamil press being the most concerned, the English press a little less and the Sinhala press least of all."[27] Although the IDP case was represented by various independent online media,[28] the issue of IDPs did not make it into the international news picture until Sri Lanka was the victim of heavy rain and floods in 2009. Another example is the lack of mentions of the state's participation in war crimes and genocide, although this has been surfacing in the news more recently, due to great pressure

and lobbying from other holds. Further, although it is commonly known that several countries are engaging in arms trade, this has also gone unnoticed in the mainstream news. However, although Sri Lankan government censorship may have prevented journalists from getting a complete picture of the incidents in the final stages of the war, technological developments such as satellite technology challenged the government monopoly on information and sparked an international uproar over the perceived human rights violations.

The global description of the Sri Lankan conflict was furthering outdated narratives, domestically and internationally through a complex network of foreign and electronic correspondence. The international media fail to include the complex dynamics of external influence of the media, the broader political-economic picture, and the international influence on the conflict in Sri Lanka, and journalists often find themselves quoting a limited range of "primary" sources over and over again. The Sri Lankan citizenry rarely gets the in-depth foreign news coverage and variety in opinion and analysis that it deserves, which will only serve to promote primordialist understandings of the conflict.

Media Coverage

The main coverage of the conflict was made through channels such as BBC Asia, BBC Sinhala, BBC Tamil, The Daily Mirror, The Daily News, TamilNet, SinhalaNet, The Weekend Standard, The Lanka, and SLBC, in the form of television, radio, print and Internet. However, even though the conflict had been active for the over fifty years, it was not until the final months and weeks that it received its much needed global attention in media such as BBC World and CNN, global channels which have a greater chance of promoting international awareness. Although the coverage increased during the height of the conflict, a greater percentage of the headlines evolved around the 'terrorist' rhetoric.

By labelling the LTTE as terrorists, succeeding the 'war on terror' of the U.S., the Sri Lankan government could justify their military strategies and decisions.

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General said: "There has been a deafening global silence in response to Sri Lanka's actions, especially from its most influential friends. The international community cannot be selective in its approach to upholding the rule of law and respect for human rights."[29] It is still a matter of great concern that the U.N. did not interfere when the mass killing of civilians took place, but it can be argued that this is due to the lack of real-time coverage and legitimate evidence at the time.

When the war ended however, Sri Lanka experienced a boost of global attention. The country's economic resurgence was widely reported in the news. With access to cleared battlefields, reporters got the opportunity to interview a wide range of actors who could all describe the atrocities that had taken place. Although the number of articles written was relatively low, the content portrayed great concern for the future of the minorities on the island. Again, the 'popular' conflicts dominated global news and there were few solutions-oriented pieces on prospects for reconciliation and resolution. Realizing that they had been victims of state propaganda, several international news agencies featured titles such as "Behind Colombo's P.R. Battle Against the Tamil Tigers"[30] and "Why the Media Silence on Sri Lanka's Decent Into Dictatorship?"[31] In a comparative study of global media coverage of Israel-Palestine compared to other 'forgotten conflicts', Noah Bernstein highlights the clear bias of international reporting. Whereas the Israeli/Palestine conflict daily averaged 148 headlines per day during the peak of the hostilities; Sri Lanka received on average 29 per day.[32] Considering the civilian death toll makes this even more disturbing: between January and May of 2009, 20,000 Sri Lankan civilians were killed, twenty times the number in the Israeli-Palestine case.

Further, in the two weeks following both conflicts, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict received 75 per day and Sri Lanka/LTTE, 19 per day, falling off the media map almost entirely.[33] There is also a disappointing difference between articles featured in e.g. CNN, CBS, BBC etc., and more specialized news agencies such as AlertNet and Groundviews. In the period between December

2008 and April 2011, headlines from popular global news included 'Sri Lanka jails ex-Tamil Tiger for 1999 suicide blast'[34] and 'Sri Lanka accidental blast kills 25-military'[35,] whereas the latter produced pieces such as 'Concern mounts over treatment of Tamils uprooted by Sri Lanka war'[36] and 'UNICEF stands by spokesman expelled by Sri Lanka'.[37] Citizen journalism and 'conscious' initiatives have better chance of accurately covering international conflict.

In light of the above observations, foreign and national coverage of the conflict can be said to have exacerbated the existing ethnic tensions during the peak of the conflict, displaying a bias towards their respective readership, whether Sinhalese or Tamil and failing to provide an objective overview of the conflicting parties. In 2008, the International Mission noted three interlinked trends in conflict coverage: "a lack of press access and independent information in the conflict zones; a wave of assaults and intimidation of journalists specialised in defence; and self-censorship by the media on the realities of the war."[38] The organization further noted how coverage *should* have reflected a combination of LTTE and Government sources, and independent news reports from foreign and local journalists, accompanied by new technologies such as satellite images and drone footage.[39] This would ensure objectivity and counter the media censorship. In 2010, the same group reported that the media is still "actively dissuaded from pursuing a process of social dialogue that could potentially explore alternatives to the strategy of war."[40]

New Channels of Communication: The Promise of Justice?

The suppression of opinions in the printed press has lead to the creation of several online channels, where citizens express their concerns about the present system and the future of a reconciled Sri Lanka. This 'citizen journalism' has proved to be an effective awareness-raising technique that compensates for a lack of access and material.

Sanjana Hattotuwa outlines the potential of new media and citizen journalism (e.g.

YouTube, blogs, SMS and mobile sites) in what he calls "a state riven by violent conflict, corruption, nepotism and the significant breakdown of democratic governance and human rights."[41] There now thousands of blogs in English, Sinhala and Tamil, with vibrant debate linked to human rights and reconciliation, which are capturing the minds of the younger audiences with access to computers. Understanding the ideology of journalists is essential to understanding the media and political systems, and in the case of Sri Lanka, most of the people writing about the war have strong personal ties to the issues presented. This makes it difficult for local and global citizens to portray a clear and objective view of the conflict and produce solutions-oriented pieces from all angles of the conflict. Further, after Wikileaks 'dump' of US diplomatic cables into the public domain,[42] substantial supplementary documentation for war crimes has been added to the discourse.

Hence, it is evident that solutions-oriented journalism and coverage of the conflict will not stem from global networks, but from local and international NGOs, citizen journalism websites, transparency initiatives, members of the Diaspora and independent activists. These groups aim to convey the Sri Lankan civil society's reaction to the progress and outcome of the peace process and to shed light on the atrocities committed during the war. Global media networks should therefore aim to proliferate these and give a voice to the marginalized, and focus less on violence and brutalities.

Summary

The role of the global media represents a constantly developing form of 'soft power, which can influence public opinion and promote change without infringing on state sovereignty.[43] Internet and ICTs have already introduced a global dimension of the conflict, which means that a relative peace in Sri Lanka will not be limited to and determined by domestic voices and institutions. Hattotuwa notes that implications of poor coverage and content can influence the peace process by laying the groundwork for the political atmosphere, influencing the strategy and behaviour of the stakeholders, influencing the nature of debate about a peace process and strengthen or weaken the public legitimacy of
nature of debate about a peace process and strengthen or weaken the public legitimacy of the stakeholders.[44] The malevolent relationships between the international and national media cultures will have the effect of exacerbating differences between the already fragile divide instead of promoting shared spaces for solutions-oriented cooperation. The global media environment's preoccupation with ethnicity, cultural identity and the war has taken away attention from larger issues associated with contemporary globalization, such as geo-politics, economic development and foreign policy. However, an increasingly global information society, based predominantly on citizen journalism, carries the best prospects for positive developments of the conflict. Further on, there is not enough playing-room for those who advertise a free and fair press, media initiatives, multi-angled accounts and concepts of peace journalism, and by suppressing these voices, the government is digging is own grave and violent conflict is likely to return.

The national content will most likely continue to be shaped to the greatest extent by the government, Sinhala academics, elites and military personnel as it was during the war, but will receive ever-increasing opposition from electronic sources from a wider set of perspectives. Sanjana Hattotuwa writes: "Events that will shape and inform the dialogue and debate on reconciliation in Sri Lanka will increasingly stem from areas and peoples whose concerns and fears will have hitherto been ignored in the mainstream media."[45] Consequently, how the global society depicts the conflict will continue to have grave implications for humanitarian aid given to post-war Sri Lanka, the detriment of refugees and IDPs both nationally and internationally. The role of the media in post-war Sri Lanka will therefore be a strong determinant in the future of the nation's progress towards a sustainable peace.

5. Conclusion

The goal of this map has been to outline the roles, significance, and consequences of numerous external actors in the Sri Lankan conflict. In so doing it has sought to demonstrate the degree to which different actors have mitigated and/or perpetuated the conflict. What is clear is the considerable impact of external and international forces in what traditionally would be viewed as an internal conflict.

In today's globalized society where communication technology is rapidly advancing, nations have worldwide investments, and international organizations carry heavy influence; internal conflicts have a high propensity to become internationalized. As has been demonstrated, this internationalization has greatly affected the Sri Lankan conflict. Consequently, state and non-state international actors can play an important role in resolving conflict; yet also potentially pose a threat as a perpetuating force. It is hoped that the information provided in this map will aid readers for a variety of pursuits related to further understanding and pursuing sustainable efforts to find a functioning resolution.

For the general understanding of conflict and its resolution, the insights provided in this map can offer an aid for future policy initiatives. As has been outlined, nation-states, with the intentions of creating peace, have often had counter-productive effects. These results may be linked to a variety of factors including the underlying difference of interests among state actors with regards to achieving a peace favorable to their own ambitions. Similarly, among non-state actors this paper has shown a clear trend of actions that have exacerbated the conflict. Examples of such actions range from groups funding the LTTE and the selective coverage of events in the international media. This map has demonstrated the need for actors to recognize the responsibility they have and the influence they exert, sometimes unintentionally, in conflict zones. For actors to engage in a positive and beneficial manner such awareness is crucial.

Although this map provides invaluable insights regarding international actors, it is equally important to acknowledge its limitations. The map has been informed by a variety of secondary sources such as books, journal articles, and news sources. Although the authors have consulted a wide array of secondary sources to effectively compensate for a lack of primary sources, we nevertheless recognize the inherent limitations of this approach.

This map chose to focus on a selection of state and non-state actors as it provided a concise manner of presenting the influence of external forces. The specific reasoning for each actor has been presented within their respective sections. However, it should be noted that there remains other important actors that fell outside the scope of this project. The role of the World Bank and the IMF has only been discussed in a limited fashion. Understanding the economic aspect is another major attribute of the Sri Lankan conflict and warrants further investigation. Other major international actors such as the European Union have also played an important role. Bearing this in mind the authors hope that this map will be used as a reference point for such further investigation

Finally, it is critical to reflect on the current developments within Sri Lanka. While the Sri Lankan government claimed victory over the LTTE in 2009, this has not put an end to the conflict. The Tamil population has not been offered a viable compromise which can lead to sustained peace. Instead the Rajapaksa government has only played lip service to the process of reconciliation through schemes such as the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission, all the while consolidating its own grasp on power. Considering Sri Lanka's geo-political importance to emerging powers such as China, the likelihood is that the Rajapaksa government will have little incentive to engage in a more conciliatory approach. This state of affairs means Sri Lanka retains the potential for volatility.

Endnotes

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