

**SMALL STATES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS : A  
CASE STUDY OF SRI LANKA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

**SMALL STATES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS : A  
CASE STUDY OF SRI LANKA'S FOREIGN POLICY**

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Scholars - both western and non-western - until recently perceived international relations in terms of the interactions among the major powers, such as the USA, the USSR, China, the powerful West European countries, and the conspicuous regional and subsystemic actors like India, Israel, Iran, Egypt and Japan. It is only on rare occasions that they focussed attention on the role of smaller actors in world politics, independently of the big powers. Again such analyses were mainly confined to ambiguous, non-functional collectivism like the Third World, Afro-Asian states, or 'underdeveloped and developing countries'. It is seldom that fullfledged individual studies of the foreign policy of small states like Sri Lanka merited consideration.

The indifference of scholars towards the small states arose mainly out of their conventional understanding of international politics based on the realist conception of 'power' and also due to their western biases and prejudices. However, the aftermath of the Second World War was the proliferation of small states, and assertion of their independent foreign policy postures in line with their national security imperatives and socio-cultural heritage, thereby challenging the prevalent popular assumption about the exaggerated role of 'power' in international relations.

The conspicuity of small states in the enlarged international community, provoked many scholars to divorce their indifference from the small states, as well as to reformulate their views on the nature of international politics. Over the past decade or more, several scholars, the notable ones being Fox, Vital, Keohane, Reid and Barston, have endeavoured to stress the growing importance of small states in the contemporary international system, as well as to conceptualize the term "small states". However, their attempt has not been very promising, leaving a lot of room for improvement to enable the term 'small states' to attain a place in the conceptual schemes or typologies of foreign policy behaviour of states.

This study is a humble attempt to formulate a tentative definition of 'small states', after critically evaluating the available literature on the subject. A small state is one which "lacks in all components of power ('wealth', 'organisation', 'status', and 'will') with its smallness being recognised by members of its own sub-system and that of others, as well as by its own decision makers".

As it is difficult to cover the entire expanse of small states in world politics, an analysis of Sri Lanka's foreign policy (1948-76) as a case study of the

role of small states in international politics has been undertaken.

An island, in the Indian Ocean separated from India, by a narrow strip of water, the Palk Strait, Sri Lanka is very much within the Indo-centric sphere of influence. In 1948, the island-state attained independence, after a short peaceful struggle against British colonialism, which was more a sequel to India's independence. The early leadership of the island continued to steer Sri Lanka's foreign relations in the same pattern set by Britain.

But in course of time changes in both domestic and external permutation and combination of politico-economic forces resulted in the island's assertion in international relations. This becomes evident from Sri Lanka's role in the regional as well as global interactions, particularly since 1956. Dynamism and active participation in international politics is reflected in the initiatives taken by Sri Lanka in the non-aligned conferences, its mediatory role in the cold war disputes and regional conflicts, its contribution to the development of the idea of Indian Ocean as a 'zone of peace' and its stand on the creation of a 'New Economic Order.'

Apart from highlighting the characteristics of Sri Lanka's 'smallness', an attempt has been made to

identify its foreign policy objectives and determinants within a linkage framework. Subsequently a delineation of the process of foreign policy making and the role of important elite groups in the foreign policy affairs have been discussed. On the basis of the perceptions entertained by the major foreign policy-making elites with regard to internal as well as external ~~willia~~, the foreign policy interaction of the island has been discussed. In the conclusion, Sri Lanka's foreign policy has been appraised as a case study of a small state's interaction in international politics in the light of the propositions stated at the outset.

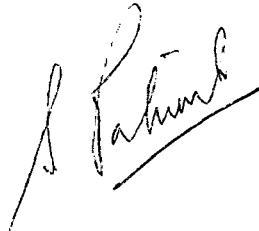
In the completion of the work, I am indebted to many. First and foremost, I owe a profound debt of gratitude to my Advisor, Dr. (Mrs.) Urmila Phadnis, who with patience and determination critically read my drafts, and constantly provoked me to come with new ideas and present them clearly. Besides, she allowed me to liberally draw upon her numerous writings and vast personal collection of material on Sri Lanka. Finally her affection, despite my indulgent nature, has been a greater contribution in my academic pursuit, more than she ever realizes. I am also grateful to Professor Bimal Prasad, for being concerned about my academic as well as personal problems and going all out of his way to help me. I wish to thank

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Last, but not the least, I owe a lot, that words fail to explain, to someone whose name I am reluctant to share with others. All ~~that~~ I wish to say is that he is humane, benevolent and intelligent to be a man much above, the most that I have so far come across.



Sivananda Patnaik

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CHAPTER I

## CHAPTER I

### SMALL STATES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS : AN APPRAISAL OF THE CONTEXTUAL AND CONCEPTUAL DIMENSIONS

Till recently, it had been more or less customary among scholars of international politics to give precedence to the analysis of big states' foreign policies and to be relatively indifferent to the external behaviour of the small states. Such an emphasis on the foreign policies of the bigger states seemed to be the result of past experiences, where only these states had been preponderant in shaping the international system and small states merely acted or reacted as their appendages. Consequently, ideas like the powerful states exerting their influence on the small states and moulding their foreign policies as well as the international system, attained academic credence. However, such a 'powerful state oriented approach' seems now to have outlived its purpose to a considerable extent as is indicative from the fact that many scholars are taking keen interest in the behaviour of small states in the international system.<sup>1</sup>

Extension of the focus of international politics to the small states has had its own logical attributes in the

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1 Niels Amstrup, "The Perennial Problem of Small States : A Survey of Research Efforts", Cooperation and Conflict vol. 12, no. 13, 1976, pp. 163-5.

changing contexts of international system which enabled some of the small states to overcome their previous passivity. Once active, these states effectively exploited the various contradictions in international power structure to further their interests. In the process of pursuing their own interest, attempts were made to create a more conducive external environment too. As such, the small states' role became more constructive and prominent in the system than before.<sup>2</sup>

However, the relatively active foreign policy of small states baffled theorists having doubts on the ability of small states to survive and being able to pursue an effective development programme.<sup>3</sup> Many in the academic world, assuming a conventional outlook of power and international politics suggested that the creation of confederations of various small states in the world would ensure their security and stability.<sup>4</sup> But even without radical qualitative changes in the existing

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2 Annette Baker Fox, "The Small States in the International System - 1919-1969", International Journal, vol. 24, 1968-69, p. 754.

3 Karl W. Deutsch, et al., Political Communities and the North Atlantic Area: International Organisation in the Light of Historical Experiences (Princeton, 1957), p. 5.

4 Ibid., pp. 5-6. According to Deutsch, if the integration took the form of amalgamated security communities the resulting fewer and larger political entities would lessen the chances of instability in the system.

system, small states not only survived but increasingly proliferated as the consequence of the process of decolonization. They began to matter by their sheer numerical superiority.<sup>5</sup> Today about half of the states in the world are 'small' by any standard and understanding of their problems and goals are imperative for any theorization in the field of international politics.<sup>6</sup>

## II

### Small States and the Balance of Power System

The subdued role of the small states prior to the World War II was because of the nature of the then prevalent international power structure. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, international politics was mainly Eurocentric in nature. The international power was distributed among a few European states who had wide ranging interests all over the globe. They exercised effective political and economic control over their colonies in Asia, Latin America and Africa. The power-relations among these powerful colonial countries created a sort of delicate equilibrium with the beneficiaries interested in the status quo.<sup>7</sup> Such a balance,

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5 George L. Reid, "The Impact of Very Small Size on the International Behaviour of Minor States", Sage Professional Papers International Studies Series (Beverly Hills), vol. 2, 1974, p. 5.

6 Ibid., p. 6.

7 A.J.P. Taylor, The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1948-1918 (Oxford, 1954), pp. xix, xx and 284.

however, had set-backs only when a less powerful state like Germany augmented her strength and ventured on a defiant foreign policy.<sup>8</sup> Such occasions were, indeed, few.

Under such a balance-of-power system, the small states had very limited role to play. Any stand of theirs not compatible with the Big Power's policies might have led to fissures in the balance-of-power system, thereby inviting war and violence.<sup>9</sup> Instability of the above nature was by itself hazardous to their own existence. Hence, being governed by the strategic and security considerations of the period, small states either became appendages to one of the big powers or declared themselves 'neutrals',<sup>10</sup> furthering in the process the balance-of-power system.

#### Small States in a Bipolar System

Following World War II multifaceted changes occurred in the international system transforming the earlier balance-of-power system into a bipolar system. In place of the former colonial powers, the United States and the Soviet Union rose to ascendancy in international politics. Soon

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8 Charles O. Lerche, Jr., Principles of International Politics (New York, 1966), p. 123.

9 Robert L. Rothstein, Alliances and Small Powers (New York, 1963), p. 215.

10 Studies on the "neutral states" have been attempted mainly by scholars from small European nations e.g., Olav Riste, The Neutral Ally (Oslo, 1966); Steven Koblik, Sweden - The Neutral Victor (Stockholm, 1973).

after, the cold war ensued between the two powers in the context of which the newly emergent small states pursued diverse strategies like alignment and non-alignment<sup>11</sup> to further their national interests in a bipolar system.

#### Small States in a Multi-Polar System

Over the past decade, the bipolar system has given way to the multiple power centres of various magnitudes. The transformation of bipolarity to multi-polarity eventuated because of the detente among the two conflicting great powers. This was partly because of each other's atomic capabilities and partly due to the pressure from their allies to be more independent. While France and other NATO members asserted themselves vis-a-vis the United States, China broke away from the Soviet Union. Such a dispersal of power has acquired an increasing legitimacy, with the regional sub-systems assuming greater autonomy and the dominant state of the region turning out to be the power centre therein.

Between the various power centres, the interaction is highly complex. While they are inter-dependent and often implicitly acknowledge their respective spheres of influence, nevertheless there is competition among them within the broader framework of co-operation and conflict.

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11 Reid, n. 5, pp. 6-7, and Rothstein, n. 9.



Within this complex framework of multipolar politics, small states are quite significant. Adjusting themselves to the new situation they need to exploit the differences between the various power centres to their advantage. However, the manipulative politics is not the sole prerogative of the small states. Even among the various power centres, manipulation and adjustments processes are operating within a conflict co-operation syndrome.

In sum thus, whether in a balance-of-power system or in a bipolar one leading to the multi-polarity of the power centres, the small and weak states are faced with a perennial dilemma: for them dependence upon the powerful states is inevitable and independence from them is imperative. And it is within such paradoxes of dependence, independence and inter-dependence that they need to manage their foreign policy and external relations expeditiously. A complex set of 'contextual' and 'textual'<sup>12</sup> factors determine the strategies and tactics of the ruling elites of the small states whether it be as 'objects' in an alliance system or otherwise.<sup>13</sup>

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12 For details see, George Liska, Alliances and the Third World (Baltimore, 1968), and Donald F. Nuechterlein, "Small States in Alliances: Iceland, Thailand, and Australia", Orbis, vol. 13, no. 2, 1969, pp. 600-24.

13 Ibid.

## III

A perusal of literature on small states underlines the difficulties in identifying the criteria for their 'smallness'.<sup>14</sup> In this context, while some have viewed them as a separate analytic category and have attempted to identify the major attribute for smallness, others have attempted to rank them in the typologies of states in a global context.

Small States in the State Typologies

Having power-hierarchy as the major criterion in his four-fold framework, Robert Keohane's ascribes the lowest place to the 'small' states. According to him, at the apex are the "system determining states" (great powers) who through their foreign policy interactions play a critical role in shaping the nature of the international system. In the second category are the "system influencing states" (secondary powers) which cannot expect individually to alter a system but may nevertheless be able to 'significantly influence' its nature through unilateral as well as multilateral actions. In the third category are the "system affecting states" (middle powers) which, acting alone, cannot hope to affect the system but can exert significant pressure on the system

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14 It is because of the failure to evolve a definition that Peter R. Baehr remarks that this concept should be abandoned. At the same time, however, he admits that it is too well entrenched to be done away with in international politics. Peter R. Baehr, "Small States: A Tool for Analysis?" World Politics, vol. 27, no. 3, 1974-75, p. 466.

by working through small groups or international or regional organisations. In the last category are the "systems ineffectual states" which neither individually nor collectively can influence the system or inter-state behaviour therein.<sup>15</sup>

So far as identification is concerned, in the first category, states like the United States and the Soviet Union figure. In the second category are states like China, Japan, West Germany, United Kingdom, India and others of the type. In the third category are states like Canada and Sweden, Brazil and Australia. The last category includes those who must adjust their foreign policies to the external setting "with little hope of rearranging it".<sup>16</sup>

Keohane has not spelt out the precise nature of the 'critical' role or 'significant' influence of these states. Nor is it easy to agree with him on the perennality of the 'ineffectualness' of the last category in the international system, which is characterised by interpolation of varied interests. Further, some of the 'system ineffectual' states may create international instability, because of their fragile economic and political conditions; consequently, influence the other states or they might provide grounds for

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15 Robert O. Keohane, "Lilliputians' Dilemma : Small States in International Politics", International Organisation, vol. 23, no. 3, 1969, pp. 1291-1310.

16 Ralph Pettman, Small Power Politics and International Relations in Southeast Asia (London, 1975), p. 10.

the penetration or intervention of competing powers leading to mutual adjustment or confrontation having global bearings.

While Keohane views the 'great', 'secondary', 'middle' and 'small' powers as discrete categories, Johan Galtung emphasises on the nature of interaction in his ranking of states in a global framework. Depicting the world as "consisting of states ranked according to a number of dimensions such as size (here in a purely geographical sense I assume) wealth, military power, degree of development etc.", he maintains that such ranking has a tendency to be 'concordant'.<sup>17</sup> Thus, in a world divided into 'top dogs', 'middle level' and 'under dogs' in descending order of capability, Galtung builds his paradigm of international stratification, wherein he opines that the world is pinned at the top and prised at the bottom, and the interaction patterns in this paradigm is that 'underdogs' depend on the top dogs, while the top dogs interdepend among each other.<sup>18</sup>

In a later contribution, Galtung substitutes "size" for rank concordance, equating 'top dogs' and 'underdogs' in terms of 'large' and 'small'. He concludes that "international politics...is big power politics and that initiative is concentrated on the big and taken away from the small" because

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<sup>17</sup> Johan Galtung, "East-West Interaction Patterns", Journal of Peace Research, vol. 3, no. 3, 1966, pp. 146-77.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

"if you think it over, it's only the USA and the USSR that really count, the other countries are of little or no importance."<sup>19</sup>

Although Galtung's observation on international system as a highly stratified one, provides valuable insight in<sup>to</sup> the structural and functional complexes of the state's interactions, his propositions need further elucidation and modification particularly his dismal and pessimistic view regarding the role of small states. The leaders of small states, being well aware of the structural differences that exist between them and the big states, through shrewd diplomatic and foreign policy manoeuvres "minimise the restrictions upon their freedom of actions and maximise the benefits they may derive".<sup>20</sup> Besides, the interaction patterns in the contemporary international system is intensely complex. A small state might depend upon one state for security, while on another for economic aid. In this context, Singer has aptly remarked; "Galtung's model sees the power system as essentially static - that is, he assumes implicitly that 'underdogs' in a particular sub-system will remain in that sub-system - I see the relationships are constantly changing."<sup>21</sup>

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19 Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism", Journal of Peace Research, vol. 8, no. 2, 1971, pp. 81-117.

20 Pettman, n. 16, p. 9.

21 Marshall R. Singer, Weak States in a World of Power (New York, 1972), p. 57.

Hence multi-dimensionality of state behaviour cannot be properly explained by such a paradigm, and problem of identifying a small state still remains open.

### Small States as an Analytic Category

Unlike Keohane and Galtung, some scholars have attempted to define small state as a separate analytic category on the basis of various quantitative and qualitative variables. Depending upon the common perception of the scholars, they can be broadly divided into four groups. However, there is an obvious overlapping in the grouping which is arbitrary to an extent.

The first group of scholars take a highly negative attitude towards the definitional issue either on the grounds that it is irrelevant or that it is impossible to solve. The proceedings of the seminar on Small Territories under the auspices of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in 1962-64, edited by Burton Benedict concluded that "it proved impossible for the seminar to decide what smallness means with any precision, it is a comparative and not an absolute idea. Whatever scales of magnitude are employed seemed arbitrary and it is difficult to pick out on them where smallness begins and ends."<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Annette Baker Fox, the pioneer of

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<sup>22</sup> Burton Benedict, Problems of Smaller Territories (London, 1967), p. 29.

contemporary small states studies viewed 'small states' as a relational concept.<sup>23</sup>

Though David Vital adhered to the Fox-Benedict school to some extent, he attempted to define small states by taking population and level of economic development as the two major variables. According to him, states with developed economies and population not exceeding 15 millions and states with underdeveloped economies with population of 20 millions could be termed as small states.<sup>24</sup>

In his subsequent work, Vital found the above-mentioned criteria inadequate and underlined the small state as one "which in long terms, in itself and as a satellite or client or close ally - i.e. as a non-autonomous participant in international politics - can constitute no more than a dispensable and non-decisive increment to primary states' total array of political and military resources, regardless of whatever short term, contingent weight as an auxiliary (or obstacle) to the primary power it may have in certain circumstances".<sup>25</sup>

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23 Annette B. Fox, The Power of Small States Diplomacy in World War II (Chicago, 1959), p. 6; see also Fox's article "Small State Diplomacy", in Stephen D. Kertesz, et al., ed., Diplomacy in a Changing World (Notre Dame, 1956), pp. 339-64.

24 David Vital, The Inequality of States : A Study of the Smaller Power in International Relations (Oxford, 1967), p. 8.

25 David Vital, The Survival of Small States : Studies in Small Power/Great Power Conflict (London, 1971), p. 9.

Vital thus seems to perceive mainly two categories of states in international politics - the primary powers and small states. He fails to differentiate the small states vis-a-vis middle powers. Consequently, in his classification, countries like the UK, Japan, France and Australia will as much qualify for small power status as Sri Lanka, Nepal and Maldives! Besides his definition, apart from being ahistorical, appears to underline the ineffectivity of smaller states, which defies a rational understanding of the complex nuances of real 'politik' in the regional and global contexts.

Unlike Vital's modified definition of small states which emphasise more on capabilities in relative terms, the second group of scholars like Reid, Azar, Barston and Rapoport attempt to define small states in quantitative terms. According to Reid, the major determinant of small state definition is size;<sup>26</sup> for Azar it is the GNP,<sup>27</sup> and a combination of both forms the core of Barston's definition of small state. According to him, small states should have population ranging between 10-15 million and GNP equivalent to one billion US dollars.<sup>28</sup>

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26 Reid, n. 5, p. 20.

27 Edward W. Azar, Probe for Peace : Small State Hostilities (Minneapolis, 1973), p. 29.

28 Ronald P. Barston, ed., The Other Powers : Studies in the Foreign Policies of Small States (London, 1973), pp. 7-8.



To the GNP and population, Rapaport adds size of the state as the third variable in determining its smallness.<sup>29</sup>

Such quantitative definitions are highly mechanistic in categorising states. To illustrate, Norway with its 4 million population will qualify for small state status, while GNP-wise it will not be a small state. Same will be the case with countries like Sweden and Kuwait with population less than a million and more than \$ 10 billion and \$ 32 billion GNP respectively. On the other hand, countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, will not qualify for small state category if population is considered to be the criteria. Yet, all these states are by no means either greater or middle powers. Further, these definitions ignore the economic-technological capability dimensions of the state.

This lacunae has been taken note of by some of the scholars forming the third category who maintain that small state and big power relationship cannot be explained exclusively by quantitative variables; various other parameters like international power structure, geographical locations and domestic political system of the state should also be considered. Bjøl suggests that the small states should be defined firstly through their relative disparity in capability and secondly through their national interests. In this context, he also

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29 See for details in Jacques Rapaport, Ernest Muteba and Joseph J. Theratill, Small States and Territories : Status and Problems (New York, 1971).

stresses on the geopolitics of the state.<sup>30</sup> However, he neither attempts to elucidate the term 'capability' nor does he specify their interests and constraints therein.

Such constraints have been partially spelt out by Rothstein who defines small states as "one which recognises that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capability, must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutional processes and developments; the small powers' general inability must be recognised by other states involved in the system".<sup>31</sup> While Rothstein's perceptual dimension of small states is well-taken, his stress on small state's dependence upon others for security terms is antiquated. Today, hardly any state, irrespective of its capability, can insure its own security.

The fourth group consists of a lone scholar - Raimo Vayrynen - who has attempted to integrate various approaches to the problem of definition. He suggests a classificatory scheme containing five different dimensions of small states; (1) Low rank/status either as measured by hard data or by perceptual data; (2) High degree of external penetration; (3) Specific type of behaviour; (4) Specific interest of small states compared with other states; and (5) Specific role

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30 Erling Ejol, "The Small States in International Politics", in August Schou and Arne Olav Brundtland, ed., Small States in International Relations (Stockholm, 1971), pp. 29-30.

31 Rothstein, n. 9, pp. 23-30.

conception of the decision makers of the small states.<sup>32</sup>

Vayrynen does not find the five dimensions as being of equal importance and is inclined to "regard rank and role as basic definitional elements and considers the interest approach as very promising, but to a large extent unexplored".<sup>33</sup> However, the crucial question is: whether discrepancy among states is reflected in all other fronts? Though Vayrynen is highly optimistic in this regard, in actuality the correlation of rank and role performance may not always be positive. A small state like Sri Lanka on very many occasions has stood to great heights by playing crucial roles not expected of her, while could be ranked middle states like Australia have an inward-looking foreign policy, and manifest a low profile in international politics.

#### IV

The difficulties underlying the definitional issue of small states thus seem to be far too many; so much so, that even as late as 1974 Baehr concluded that whatever be the criterion, small states formed too broad a category for purposes of analysis and that it was virtually futile to

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32 Raimo Vayrynen, "On the Definition and Measurement of Small Power Status", Co-operation and Conflict, vol. 2, no. 1, 1971, pp. 91-102.

33 Singer, n. 21, pp. 59-63.

conceptualise the category of small states.<sup>34</sup> Writing in 1975, Pettman concluded in similar vein: "Enough has been said, however to illustrate the difficulties involved in defining key concepts like...the idea of state 'smallness' itself."<sup>35</sup> The discussion on the differentiation between 'small and weak', between mini, micro and small states further amplify the difficulties involved in evolving an acceptable definition.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless this problem should not deter scholars from working on small states, for it can be argued that the concept of small state is as vague and ambiguous in international politics as many other concepts e.g. 'power', 'balance of power', 'national interest', and 'capability'.<sup>37</sup> As such, it seems certain that the discipline of international politics has to go on living with the vague but at the same time very persistent notion of small states.

Notwithstanding these definitional problems, certain general observations can still be made and a workable definition can be provided for. To begin with, such a definition needs to take note of the relational aspect of the small states as

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34 Baehr, n. 14, p. 4.

35 Pettman, n. 16, pp. 13-14.

36 For details see Benedict, n. 22; Reid, n. 5; and Jacques Rapaport, n. 29.

37 For details see James N. Rosenau, "Pre-theories and Theories of Foreign Policies", in R. Barry Farrell, ed., Approaches to Comparative and International Politics (Evanston, 1966), pp. 27-92.

well as its textual and contextual dimensions. If the former emphasizes on the ranking of states, the latter underlines its power and capabilities in the domestic and external environments. For example, as regards size and material resources, Japan is a small state, but if textual and contextual factors like domestic industrial base and her influence on world economy is taken note of, she would not fall in the category of small states.

In this respect, Singer has been successful to a considerable degree in putting forth a 'tentative' definition. Using power as the core concept of his definition, he has used it in an unconventional manner. Thus unlike Morgenthau or the neo-realists, he does not view it merely as a source of 'coercion' but also as a source of 'attraction'. To him the major components of power are "wealth" (material and human), "organisation" (formal and informal), "status" (ascribed and acquired) and "will" (conscious and unconscious), and the small states are deficient in all these components.<sup>38</sup>

However Singer's relational classification suffers apparently from the problem of equating 'small states' with

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38 Singer, n. 21, pp. 54-63. In this book he deals with only three components, "wealth", "organisation" and "status". In a later article he adds the "will" dimension. See his article "Foreign Policies of Small Developing Countries", in J. Rosenau, *et al.*, ed., World Politics: An Introduction (New York, 1976), pp. 263-98.

'underdeveloped countries'. This shortcoming needs to be overcome by supplementing it with the perceptual attribute of Rothstein which would in turn sharpen the workable definition.

In sum, viewing the smallness of a state in relational terms, it can be defined as one which lacks in all components of power (wealth, organisation, status and will), with its smallness being recognised by members of its own sub-system and that of others, as well as by its own decision makers.

Many of the small states are rich in one resource or the other. But their needs for other items, particularly basic commodities, is acute. While basic needs production is below consumption level, many of them are faced with the problem of high demographic ratios. As such, they are faced with the task of mobilization of human and material resources. Further, they have weak organisational network which incapacitates from being self-sufficient economies, capable of generating their own capital for purposes of state and nation-building. So far as the national 'will' of small states is concerned, the socio-economic cleavages and contradictions pose severe challenges to their political systems.

More than often, such challenge mitigation tends to lead to external dependence of sorts. This dependence usually curtails their freedom of actions and choices. Such

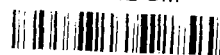
independence diminution brings in its wake the fear of being incorporated or turned into satellites of the powerful states.<sup>39</sup> It is in the context of such a vicious circle that the politics and strategies of alliances, neutrality and non-alignment gets to be looked into.

In the backdrop of such contextual and conceptual appraisal of small states, an analysis of Sri Lanka's foreign policy will be attempted in this dissertation. Indisputably, a small state, like Sri Lanka has a population of 14 million and with a GNP of \$ 1378 million in comparison to India's GNP of \$ 81,230 million, and specializes in the export of three primary commodities viz. tea, coconut and rubber. For all essential commodities and particularly rice, her staple diet, she has to depend upon external sources. Adverse economic conditions operating in the international system have incurred for Sri Lanka heavy balance of payment problems.

"Organisationally" Sri Lanka has a parliamentary system of government with parties of diverse ideological outlook; but the two dominant parties - the United National Party (UNP) and Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) - who have been alternately in power since its independence in 1948, are liberal democratic in outlook. Hence, unlike the socialist states, the island cannot properly mobilize its wealth (human and

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39 For details see V.V. Sveitch, Small Nation Survival: Political Defence in Unequal Conflict (New York, 1969), pp. 25-26.



material) in the 'desired' direction unimpeded by adverse influences. From the point of view of 'will' the island is torn between the Sinhalese and the Tamil sub-nationalisms. The Tamils who are next in strength to the Sinhalese in a pluralist society, cherish subnationalist sentiments. "Status-wise" Sri Lanka is pitted against its giant neighbour - India - which is also a nonaligned state and has acquired enormous status and influence among many countries, including the Afro-Asian nonaligned states. Besides, it has ascribed status, because of historical reasons. Finally, the Sri Lankan leadership perceive the island to be a small state, which is acknowledged by India and members of the international community who matter in the regional politics.

In this dissertation an analytic study of Sri Lanka's foreign policy has been made to verify certain propositions which may also be of relevance for studies of foreign policy behaviour of the small states in general. These are as follows;



- (1) The smaller the state is in terms of power - wealth, organization, status and will - the greater are the constraints on its national autonomy.
- (2) The greater are the constraints on its national autonomy, the higher may be its dependence on the external environment for support. Such dependence may circumscribe its active participation in international politics.

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(3) Generally speaking, participation of small states tends to operate at two levels - the global and the regional spheres.

(a) On the global plane, the small states manifest a marked desire to refrain from actions which would necessarily antagonise great powers, yet they are greatly concerned with international peace and stability. To achieve this, they try to influence the big powers through internationally accepted norms and usually act in groups, in multilateral bodies or organisations.

(b) In the regional context, the small states attempt to assert greater autonomy vis-a-vis powerful regional powers through a balance of power strategy; they may become (i) an ally or client state of powerful state, thereby borrowing power for themselves, or (ii) may effectively exploit their geographical, historical, or economic attributes to catapult themselves to a relatively advantageous position by taking advantage of international or regional power configurations.

(4) Dependence of small states is more acute in the economic sphere, but generally there is an urge to diversify such a dependence. Effectiveness of this policy depends as much upon domestic factors as the international. If the state is within the competitive zone of a number of

powerful states, they may have more options for such a diversification.

The strategies and modalities of such diversification are closely related to and in fact dependent upon the determinants and objectives of the foreign policy of a small state like Sri Lanka. And it is an appraisal of these to which we turn now.

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CHAPTER II

## CHAPTER II

### FOREIGN POLICY OF SRI LANKA : OBJECTIVES AND DETERMINANTS

The prime objectives<sup>1</sup> of small states are to secure for themselves stability, security and status in the international system. In view of the constraints in the domestic, regional and international settings, they have far less options and choices than say, the middle or the great powers. Consequently, unlike the states with greater power potential, the manoeuvrability of the smaller states is relatively speaking, much less in the international system.<sup>2</sup>

This, however, does not mean that the foreign policy of small states is inevitably and necessarily reactive to the environment. AS a matter of fact, within the narrow limits set by the forces of environment, the small states need to pursue their foreign policy objectives with a great deal of adroitness and evolve strategies which turn their

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1 Objectives have been defined as "the particular limited, fairly stable, conscious and deliberate ends or targets sought by policy at a given moment". See for details David O. Wilkinson, Comparative Foreign Relations : Framework and Methods (Belmont, 1969), pp. 17-18; and William Welch, "The Possibility of an International Discipline of International Affairs", International Studies Quarterly, vol. 15, no. 3, 1972, pp. 296-7.

2 William Wallace, Foreign Policy and Political Process (London, 1971), pp. 21-22.

smallness to their advantage.<sup>3</sup>

Another noteworthy point in this context is that notwithstanding the significance of such three-fold foreign policy objectives, one or more of them may get precedence over others at a given time. Again, which objective gains primacy at a particular time depends upon the conditional factors. In the cold war years, for instance, security seemed to be the prime preoccupation of most of the small states, while during the detente era emphasis appears to have shifted to stability and status.<sup>4</sup>

Like all small states, Sri Lanka has also these basic objectives implicit in her foreign policy interactions and as with other states, the objectives and strategies of Sri Lanka's foreign policy too rest upon the various determinants in its environmental setting.

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3 In the context of foreign policy strategy Lowell writes; "In international politics, over one hundred nation states each pursues interests that conflict with those of other nation states in a game where rules are largely unwritten and informal, evolving mainly through the wishes of the stronger players. In a broad sense, a foreign policy strategy is a plan for advancing one's own national interests (as one defines those interests) while preventing other players from impinging on them." John P. Lowell, Foreign Policy in Perspective : Strategy, Adaptation, Decision Making (New York, 1970), pp. 65-66. Also see K.J. Holsti, International Politics : A Framework for Analysis (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 107-35; and A.P. Rana, The Imperatives of Nonalignment (Meerut, 1976), p. 4. Rana remarks: "...strategy is the result of objectives pursued in a particular way because of certain determinants...."

4 George Liska, Alliances and the Third World (Baltimore, 1968), pp. 23-42.

The foreign policy determinants of Sri Lanka fall into two categories. In the first category are those which are fairly stable and much less susceptible to abrupt changes, e.g., geographical, economic, and socio-cultural determinants. In the second category are the less stable determinants which are subject to variations and fluctuations, like nationalism, nature of political regime and to a considerable degree, the international setting. And it is more often the variation in the less stable factors that has provided the necessary conditions for major shifts in its foreign policy.<sup>5</sup>

## I

Stable FactorsGeographical Setting

Sri Lanka is a small tropical island of about 25,000 square miles separated from the Indian sub-continent by a narrow defile of water - the Palk Strait. Her location in the Indian Ocean is of great strategic and commercial importance. Besides, she holds the key to India's naval defence. Consequently, many powerful states, pursuing mutually hostile objectives, have attempted to woo her. The prevalence of these mutually competitive interests has placed Sri Lanka in a very delicate position. If her strategic location places

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5 For details of such categorisation see S.D. Muni, Foreign Policy of Nepal (New Delhi, 1975), p. 37.

her in a pre-eminent position, its smallness adds to its vulnerability in this context.<sup>6</sup>

As an island situated almost in the centre of the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is a focus of importance for sea trade and naval calculations. The island occupies the cross-road of important sea lanes of the world. Its national harbours provide excellent haven in the vast expanse of water from Madagascar to Singapore. No commercial power would like Sri Lanka to be in the fold of its adversaries. The United States or Britain will not appreciate Sri Lanka to be in the Soviet bloc. Nor the Soviet Union in the early days would have appreciated Sri Lanka's direct entry to the American alliance system. Besides, Sri Lanka's great regional neighbour has her own interests in the security and stability of the island as it is on the rim of her territorial borders in the South.<sup>7</sup>

Further, Sri Lanka's strategic placement in the Indian Ocean, where natural shelter for nuclear submarines are easily available at Trincomalee harbour and the sea grazing the southern tips of the island, provides vantage

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6 W. Howard Wiggins, Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation (New Jersey, 1960), p. 377.

7 S.U. Kodikara, Indo-Ceylon Relations Since Independence (Colombo, 1965), pp. 24-25; Jrmila Phadnis, "India: A Critical Variable in Ceylon Politics", Niti, July-September 1971, p. 2; Ramachandra Rao, India and Ceylon (Bombay, 1964), and K.M. Panikkar, India and Indian Ocean (London, 1951).

point to nuclear submarines to aim at Moscow and Peking. Such convergence against two powerful states of common ideological commitment (though at logger heads at present) may appear a blessing to their adversaries,<sup>8</sup> but again makes Sri Lanka susceptible to external pressures and pulls.

Thus, due to the geographical settings, a sort of dialectic relationship exists between Sri Lanka and the rest of the powerful states. She is important to India and all other powerful states and at the same time she also has a vulnerable position in strategic terms.

#### Economic Setting

The economic structure of Sri Lanka has exacerbated this vulnerability. The mono-culture economy of Sri Lanka as developed under the British rule was beset with various contradictions which soon surfaced posing enormous problems for the small state. One hundred and fifty years of British rule had radically transformed the autarchic and autonomous productive units into a mono-culture economy with the introduction of tea and rubber plantations - the crops initially *were* exported in the main to the metropolitan country. The surplus capital generated out of the exports was invested for further extension of the plantations. However, by the end of the

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8 A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, "Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy - Continuity and Change", The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, vol. 4, New Series, nos. 1-2, 1974, p. 54.



second decade of this century, there was not much unused land left to call in more capital investments. In this situation, surplus capital was diverted to other areas of the world, but a part was recycled in various forms to Sri Lanka, for inevitable reasons.

Along the side of the plantation sector existed the subsistence sector.<sup>9</sup> The subsistence sector being too small, much of the basic commodities for sustenance were imported by the British from neighbouring colonies - India and Burma. It was more expedient for Britain to import rice from India and Burma, than cultivating it in the cash crop growing areas.<sup>10</sup>

In such a mono-culture economy, democratization in administration did occur through which many of the colonial elites had begun to participate in the management of the state. These colonial elites, being brought in welfare tradition, initiated various social welfare measures in the island. Such measures which were possible because of the profit generated by tea and rubber export, had long term bearing on the economy as such. These elites introduced free medical facilities, provided for free and compulsory education in the vernacular

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9 For details on Sri Lanka's economic developments and transformation refer, H.N.S. Karunatilake, Economic Development in Ceylon (New York, 1971); Donald R. Snodgrass, Ceylon: An Export Economy in Transition (Illinois, 1966); and Fred Halliday, "The Ceylonese Insurrection", in Robin Blackburn, ed., Explosion in the Sub-Continent (London, 1975), pp. 152-83.

10 Wriggins, n. 6, pp. 52-53.

languages in 1945 and introduced various other social services on the patterns of advanced European states.

The repercussion of these measures has been felt in the post-independence era. Thus, the population of the island increased at a phenomenal rate from 6.6 millions in 1946 to 12.7 millions in 1971.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the number of persons dependent upon the economy has increased and so has unemployment in view of shortage of capital and the colonial nature of its economy.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in 1946-56, unemployed labour force was about 54,000, while in 1963-71 it has been more than doubled but with one significant difference. Unlike the other countries of South Asian states, this unemployed labour force consists of the educated youth who in view of the traditional contexts of the educational system has been mainly interested in white collar jobs which provide security, and is much less interested in the agricultural entrepreneurial roles partly because it does not provide the security of the white collar jobs and partly because it is much less developed.<sup>13</sup>

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11 Department of Census and Statistics, Statistical Pocket of the Republic of Sri Lanka (Colombo, 1973).

12 See for a lucid discussion, Joan Robinson, "Economic Possibilities of Ceylon", Papers by visiting Economists (Colombo Planning Secretariat, 1959), and S. Selvaratnam, "Impact of Population Growth on Employment and Training in Sri Lanka", Report of National Management Seminar on Population and Family Planning (Colombo, 1972).

13 D.D. de Souza, "Education: An Era of Reforms", Asian Survey, vol. 13, no. 12, 1973, pp. 1169-70.

apart from the cost of subsidies entailed in the welfarist measures of Sri Lanka, its small subsistence sector has not been in a position to cope with the needs of the increasing population. Consequently, imports of essential commodities have gradually increased draining the foreign exchange earnings.<sup>14</sup> Besides, while the prices of basic raw materials have often been fluctuating in an adverse direction, because of competition from new producers, the import prices of foodstuffs and other commodities have been escalating.<sup>15</sup> All this has resulted in an imbalance of trade and payments and has left little leeway for economic development.

Under such conditions, Sri Lanka has attempted to find ways and means for greater self-sufficiency in essential commodities as well as to get external capital to generate economic growth and employment, and to supplement funds necessary for imports. However, more than often, aid and loans have not led to an impetus powerful enough for economic growth and development, partly because of the nature of aid in many cases and partly because of the domestic political as well as social and cultural pressures and pulls as a result

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14 Buddhadasa Hewavitharana, "The Management of External and Internal Finances in Sri Lanka: Problems and Policies", Asian Survey, vol. 13, no. 12, December 1973, pp. 1137-54.

15 Buddhadasa Hewavitharana, "Economic Compulsions and Foreign Policy: A Case Study of Ceylon", in S.P. Varma and K.P. Misra, ed., Foreign Policies in South Asia (New Delhi, 1969), p. 108.

to which the structural imbalances in its colonial economy have continued to persist in many ways.

### Socio-Cultural Setting

A plural society, Sri Lanka is a mosaic of self-aware communities distinguished from one another on the basis of religion, language and traditions. The majority community of the island is that of the Sinhalese who trace their ancestry to the Aryans of the North India and are supposed to have come from Bengal. They speak Sinhala, and are, by and large, Buddhists. Concentrated as they are, in the south and centre of the island, they are further sub-divided into 'low country' Sinhalese and Kandyan Sinhalese. Many of the Kandyan Sinhalese are subsistence peasants cultivating rice in small plots in the Central province, being relatively 'untouched by transformation accompanying colonization'. These people have a neo-feudal society.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, as the low country Sinhalese mainly residing in Ceylon littoral were exposed to the colonial economic patterns, changes occurred in their society, taking some sort of a 'hybrid' form. Many poor peasants of 'low country' were absorbed in the rubber and coconut plantations, and the nobility and land gentry underwent various commercialization processes to emerge as the colonial elites of which a section of the Up-country Sinhalese nobility also formed a part.

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16 Halliday, n. 9, p. 153.

Numerically, coming next to the Sinhalese, the Tamils constitute the dominant minority group. There are two types of Tamils - the Ceylon Tamils and Indian Tamils. The Ceylon Tamils are the descendants of the early Tamil immigrants to Sri Lanka and are mainly concentrated in the Northern and the Eastern provinces. Many of them are fairly well-off and are highly conscious of their socio-cultural background. Jaffna is the main centre of Tamil politics and most of them are Jaffna-oriented. The Indian Tamils, on the other hand, are of recent origin, being brought by the colonial power as contract labourers to work in the tea plantations in the central highlands. Along with the indentured labourers, many others also came from India during this period as money lenders, agents for indentured labourers, and traders.

Alongside the two communities who comprise about 92 per cent of the total population, Sri Lanka has a small Muslim population of about 7 per cent. Officially designated as Moors, most of them are the descendants of the Arab traders with trade continuing to be the major vocation of most of them, except in the Eastern province. A large number of them are multilingual, speaking Sinhalese, Tamil, Arabic and with some also speaking English.<sup>17</sup> Other than these are the Burghers - the off-spring of Euro-Sinhalese marriages who are Christians

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17 Mohamed Mauroof, "Aspects of Religion, Economy and Society Among the Muslims of Ceylon", Contribution of Indian Sociology (New Series), no. 6, 1972, p. 68.

and usually are bilingual, speaking English and Sinhala.

Notwithstanding such distinctiveness in ethnic terms, one does discern a certain amount of cohesion and solidarity amongst the colonial elites due to their similar socio-economic background,<sup>18</sup> till the advent of the universal adult franchise<sup>19</sup> and the emergence of left parties in the

18 Besides, the cohesion among the elites during pre-independence period could be ascribed to the pre-Donoughmore constitution which ignored the principles of "collective responsibility" and responsibility of the executive to the legislatures, and encouraged "individualism in political activity and behaviour". Besides, the ministers were responsible only to the governor, hence the introduction of adult franchise was a political manoeuvring to suit the colonial rule. For details see Ivor Jemings, "Ceylon General Elections of 1947", University of Ceylon Review, vol. 6, no. 3, July 1948, p. 134; and I. D. S. Weerawardena, Government and Politics in Ceylon, 1931-1946 (Colombo, 1951), p. 140.

19 In 1927 Donoughmore Constitution by introducing adult franchise created some differences in Sri Lanka because the Ceylon Tamil leaders requested for separate Tamil seats in Western province, and the Sinhalese rejected it on the ground that it was a communal demand. Though much protest from either sides were made, it did not have immediate bearings for reasons of sorts. See for elaboration, N. Sanmugathan, A Marxist Looks at the History of Ceylon (Colombo, 1972), pp. 38-42, and Hewawasan Karunasena, Jayasinghe, The Extension of Franchise in Ceylon with some Consideration of their Political and Social Consequences (Ph. D. Thesis, London School of Economics and Politics, 1965) (unpublished).

1930s.<sup>20</sup> However, it was only in the mid fifties that the era of mass politics began. Within the democratic framework of the polity and mass involvement in elections, the scramble for power intensified the avocation of linguistic and religious sentiments for political mobilization and electoral contests in a scarce resource society.<sup>21</sup> Also, the lag between the

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20 The left parties like the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaj Party (1935) and Communist Party (1943) attempted to mobilize masses on organisational and ideological grounds and challenged the politics of notables. However, their own ideological schism and sectarian differences weakened the movement. See for details Leslie Goonewardena, A Short History of the Lanka Sama Samaj Party (Colombo, 1960), pp. 1-34; and Pieter Keuneman, 25 Years of the Ceylon Communist Party (Colombo, 1968), pp. 1-12.

21 Asaf Hussain maintains that in the course of competition for sharing "political power" in a democratic polity, political parties and groups have mobilized and manipulated ethnic and religious factors. For details see Asaf Hussain, "The Politics of Ethnic Nationalism in Pakistan" (Paper read at the 5th European Conference of Modern South Asian Studies, Leiden, July 1976), Mimeo; and Professor Das Gupta in this context remarks that linguistic cleavage is "politically generated cleavage, and the kind of conflict and outcome of the conflict generated by these cleavages can be understood only in the context of the use of language loyalty as a valuable resource by the modernised political strata in these communities". For details see Joyotindra Das Gupta, Language Conflict and National Development: Group Politics and National Language Policy in India (Bombay, 1970), p. 265. Also refer, Paul R. Brass, Language, Religion and Politics in North India (Delhi, 1974). In the case of Sri Lanka, Wilson remarks that the higher echelons of Sinhalese power elites are mostly English educated, modern in outlook, but for mobilisation purposes make extravagant use of the 'Language of Sinhalese Buddhist chauvinism on political platforms'. A Jeyaratnam Wilson, Politics in Sri Lanka, 1948-73 (Bristol, 1974), p. 129.

performance of the state and demands of the society exaggerated such ethnic cleavages further.<sup>22</sup>

Underlying such a cleavage has also been the perception of the Sinhalese Buddhists vis-a-vis the Tamils. If the experiences of the various invasions of the Tamils from South India, impinging upon the Sinhalese Buddhist civilization is as yet a significant segment of historical memories, the issue of the political status of indentured Tamil labourers underline their concern vis-a-vis this segment of population who have been perceived by many Sinhalese as aliens and as such, usurpers to the economic opportunities

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22 Lucian Pye, Aspects of Political Development (New Delhi, 1972), p. 75. He remarks: "Democratic practices in the new states are often threatened by the mood of frustration so common when there is an excessive gap between aspiration and reality. The dynamic factor in creating such tensions has generally been the uneven and discontinuous process of social change...." Though the argument of lag between social aspiration and capability of government is well made, typifying it only to the new states is ridiculous. In all pluralist democratic states whether developed or developing, lag between state capability and societal aspirations produces similar results like the Irish or French Canadian phenomena.



which otherwise would have been available to them.<sup>23</sup>

On the other hand, the events that followed the elections of 1956 and the measures adopted since then, e.g., the promulgation of Sinhala as the only official language, the introduction of the formula of standardization and regionalization in 1972 (repealed under the dispensation of the new government in 1977) and the special treatment meted

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23 Wilson also remarks: "They (Sinhala Buddhists) complain that the Ceylon Tamils have disproportionate share of jobs in the public and private sectors and when taken with the one million odd Indian Tamils they tend to regard the total Tamil population as a threat to the existence of the Sinhalese race...." Wilson, n. 21, p. 14. In this context Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike's remarks are noteworthy: "The fact that in the towns and villages, in business houses and in boutiques most of the work is in the hands of Tamil-speaking people will inevitably result in a fear, and I do not think an unjustified fear, of the inexorable shrinking of the Sinhalese language", Ceylon, Department of Information, Towards a New Era: Selected Speeches of SWRD Bandarnaike made in the legislature of Ceylon, 1931-1959 (Colombo, 1961), p. 395. For further details see Ivor Jennings, "Race, Religion and Economic Opportunity in the University of Ceylon", University of Ceylon Review, vol. II, November 1944, pp. 1-13; S.J. Tambiah, "Ethnic Representation in Ceylon's Higher Administrative Service, 1870-1946", University of Ceylon Review, vol. 13, April-July 1955, pp. 113-34; Urmila Phadnis, (a) Religion and Politics in Sri Lanka (New Delhi, 1976), and (b) "Ethnic Groups in the Politics of Sri Lanka" (Paper presented at the Seminar on Language, Religion and Political Identity, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1978); and Robert N. Kearney, Communalism and Language in the Politics of Ceylon (Durham, 1967).

to Buddhism in the 1972 Constitution have been perceived by the Tamil minority as measures which have been detrimental to their economic interests and have posed severe threats to their identity as a community.<sup>24</sup>

Coupled with these is an important demographic factor. The Ceylon Tamils are a national minority but in the Northern and Eastern provinces they are in majority. As such, the interplay of socio-economic measures and the avocation of communal cry on the part of the leaders of both the communities has led to the position of the elected representatives of the Tamil community in these areas consolidating themselves in the United Front.<sup>25</sup> That the majority-minority cleavages have got further exacerbated over the past few years is evident from the formation of the Tamil United Liberation Front (comprising virtually all Tamil parties and groups in the island) having a separate Tamil State as its prime objective.<sup>26</sup>

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24 For details see, The Ilankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi, The Case for a Federal Constitution for Ceylon as Embodied in the Resolutions passed at the First National Convention held on the 13-15th April 1951 at Trincomalee (Colombo, n.d.); A Jeyaratnam Wilson, "The Tamil Federal Party in Ceylon Politics", Journal of Commonwealth and Political Studies, vol. 4, no. 2, July 1966, p. 131; and also his book Electoral Politics in an Emergent State: The Ceylon General Elections of May 1970 (London, 1975); Walter Schwarz, The Tamils in Sri Lanka (London, n.d.), pp. 13-14, where he points out that in the civil services the percentage of Tamils from 30 per cent in 1948 has come down to 6 per cent in 1975, and Phadnis, n. 23(b).

25 See Phadnis, n. 23(b), pp. 8-13.

26 Ibid.

Such a majority-minority confrontation poses serious challenges for the foreign policy makers of the island, more so in view of the past record of some of the regional political parties of the neighbouring India's Tamil province - Tamilnadu cherishing the idea of the formation of a separate Dravidistan on their political agenda.

## II

### Less Stable Factors

#### Nationalism

Closely related to the ethnic cleavages has been the phenomenon of nationalism which has taken different forms, (from time to time) and manifesting itself through the political process, has been a less stable and yet a major determinant of Sri Lanka's foreign policy. The island has experienced three successive phases of nationalism since its independence. The United National Party<sup>(UNP)</sup> in the first decade was essentially pro-Western in outlook and its dominant elites were firmly committed to the continuance of Western cultural, economic and educational values. The UNP under the leadership of Don Stephen Senanayake, the elderman of Sri Lankan politics, was of the assumption that Sri Lankan patriotism and loyalty to Britain were complementary and not inherently

incompatible.<sup>27</sup> The leadership's perception during the period was of territorial nationalism on the basis of multi-ethnic harmony.<sup>28</sup>

The first decade leaders of the UNP in their pursuit of the policy of territorial nationalism, did not view the demands of majority Sinhala Buddhists with much sympathy. As such, discontent grew vis-a-vis the UNP, taking the form of religio-linguistic-nationalism,<sup>29</sup> the precursor of which was S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike who had broken away from the UNP in 1951 to form the Sri Lanka Freedom Party<sub>(SLFP)</sub> and who won the 1956 elections with a landslide majority.

The third phase of nationalism is more complex involving forces of various types. If the insurrection of the Sinhalese youth in 1971 was a child of Bandarnaike's policies, reasserting the Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism but with deep economic overtones, the Tamil sense of grievances vis-a-vis the majority government, manifested itself in the Tamil nationalism. A major difference in both, however, was

27 For elaborate discussion see Lucy M. Jacob, Sri Lanka from Dominion to Republic (Delhi, 1973), pp. 21-57; J.R. Jayawardene, "D.S. Senanayake's Foreign Policy", Ceylon Historical Journal, vol. 5, nos. 3-4, 1955, pp. 49-61.

28 K.M. De Silva, "Nationalism and its Impact", The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies (New Series), vol. 4, nos. 1-2, 1974, p. 62.

29 Ibid., p. 69.

that while the former questioned the legitimacy of the existing state-system,<sup>30</sup> the latter questioned the legitimacy of the territorial boundaries of the state, thereby posing serious threats to the security and stability of the polity. Both have resulted in greater dependence of the island on external resources for purposes of defence. These three phases of Sri Lanka's nationalism correlated to political processes, have had their impact upon the foreign policy, initiating changes of various sorts.

### Political Regimes

Since 1956 the politics of the island revolves around two dominant parties—representing the two distinct elites - nationalists and colonial respectively - who, along with their allies have alternately formed governments in successive elections. Generally, the SLFP has had as its allies the left parties like Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaj Party (LSSP), and the Communist Party (CP). The UNP, on the other hand, has amongst its main allies the Tamil parties and other conservative political groupings. In the process, along with such coalition patterns has evolved a two dominant <sup>Party</sup> system

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30 Gananath Obeyesekere, "Some Comments on the Social Background of the April 1971 Insurgency in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)", Journal of Asian Studies, vol. 33, no. 3, May 1974, pp. 367-84, and Halliday, n. 9.

in governance,<sup>31</sup> resulting in the bipartisan approach towards many foreign policy issues. The UNP led government's foreign policy is broadly pro-Western and the foreign policy of the SLFP led regime manifest a 'leftist' slant. This has manifested in 'emphasis-shifts' in the foreign policy objectives from time to time.

### Regional and Global Setting

Besides the domestic factors, the foreign policy of a state is also determined by factors and forces in the international and regional environment. In the regional context, India has been a critical variable in Sri Lanka's politics because of the socio-cultural linkages between them.<sup>32</sup> The

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31 Urmila Phadnis, "Trends in Ceylon Politics", India Quarterly, vol. 27, no. 2, April-June 1971, pp. 122-39; and Phadnis, n. 23(a). She maintains here that the election of 1956 marked "the beginning of a process which eventually resulted in the polarisation of the Sinhalese electorate and the emergence of the two major-party system with the two major parties - the SLFP and the UNP - having an almost equally strong support base and virtually all the minor parties and groups aligning themselves with one of the major two." p. 115.

32 For linkage approach to international political analysis refer James N. Rosenau, ed., Linkage Politics - Essays on the Convergence of National and International Systems (New York, 1969), and regional linkage network has been very aptly dealt by P.C. Mathur, Virendra Narain and M.V. Lakhi, "Intra-Regional Relations: A Study in Infrastructural Determinants", in S.P. Verma and K.P. Misra, ed., Foreign Policies in South Asia (Delhi, 1969), pp. 91-105. Indo-Sri Lanka linkages have been discussed by Urmila Phadnis, "Infrastructural Linkages in Sri Lanka - India Relations", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, nos. 31-33, spl. no., August 1974, pp. 1494-1500.

minority religion and language of Sri Lanka - Hinduism and Tamil respectively - are linked to Tamils of South India. The consequence of this configuration has been that Tamil minority population have the tendency to find response to their subnationalism from across the border. Similarly, political situation in Madras has its repercussion in Sri Lanka. The transnational twist of Tamil nationalism has had its impact upon the Sinhalese, articulating this fear (however, exaggerated it may appear to be). Thus, a prominent Sinhalese contended: "In this country the problem is not Tamil minority problem. The Sinhalese are the minority of Dravidistan. We are carrying on a struggle for our national existence against the Dravidistan majority."<sup>33</sup>

While the socio-cultural linkages are more conflicting in nature, in the economic sphere it poses a different picture. Here the situation is more centripetal. Sri Lanka's major source of foreign exchange has been tea which is also grown and exported by India. Besides common links in tea business, stability in the region facilitates and helps their normal economic and commercial activities. Furthermore, prior to independence, Sri Lanka's dependence on India in economic field was very acute, though in post-independent years this dependence has declined to a large extent, the established linkages have yet been fairly closer.

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cited by

33 A. Kearney, n. 23, p. 114.

Thus the close proximity to India, entailing various sorts of linkages along with the wide power disparity, makes Sri Lanka vulnerable to India.

In order to minimise its vulnerability in relation to the big neighbour, Sri Lanka has maintained close and cordial ties with the other major Asian power - the People's Republic of China, particularly since 1956. China's interests in the region is purely of politico-strategic nature and to a large extent coincides with that of Sri Lanka.

If the animosity in region as and when it has manifested itself in India-China conflicts has tended to be critical tests for the adroitness of its diplomacy and foreign policy, so has been the various crises and conflicts of cold war or active war character at the global plane. Even at the global level Sri Lanka's dependence on very many ways emerging from its smallness, makes it extremely vulnerable. In the context of such regional and global settings she has adopted the policy of nonalignment in furtherance of her national interests and foreign policy objectives in particular.

The success of Sri Lanka's foreign policy and actualization of its national interests depends upon the ability of the foreign policy decision making elites to manage the socio-cultural and economic cleavages at home and to manipulate skillfully the regional and international forces



in its favour through adoption of appropriate strategies. Such strategies necessitate:

- (1) Maximization of the scope of manoeuvrability in international politics through dexterous exploitation of the mutual differences and competitions of the big and middle powers.
- (2) Neutralization and diffusions of threat sources through various balancing tactics, like diversification of dependence in all its manifestations.
- (3) Escalation of the state's status in the international arena, through conscious image building roles for options of alternate sources of support, material as well as emotional.<sup>34</sup>

As the success or otherwise of such strategies depends to a considerable extent on the decision makers on foreign policy and the institutions involved in the purpose, a descriptive analysis of this will be the theme of the next chapter.

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34 Adapted with modifications from S. D. Mundi, "The Dynamics of Foreign Policy", ed., Nepal: An Assertive Monarchy (New Delhi, 1977), p. 129.

**CHAPTER III**

## CHAPTER III

### FOREIGN POLICY MAKING IN SRI LANKA : INSTITUTIONS AND PROCESSES

The pursuit of the foreign policy objectives impels a state to interact with other states and non-state actors in the international system. These interactions of the state with other 'actors' are consciously motivated to contend with perpetual changes in the national and international milieu and 'emphasis-shifts' in foreign policy objectives of other states. These interactions are based upon the decisions of the policy makers, who are responsible for the administration of the country's foreign policy. The policy makers on the basis of their perception of the reality - domestic and international power configurations and objectives pursued, by other states - decide the nature of interactions; their countries should pursue to ensure the objectives.<sup>1</sup> Such perceptions of the policy makers about the reality and the decisions taken thereof are influenced by their interactions with some of their peers. Besides, being answerable to the masses, the policy makers cannot ignore their perceptions

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1 For elaborate account of this subject refer, Joseph Frankel, The Making of Foreign Policy (Oxford, 1963), and R.C. Snyder, H.W. Bruck and B. Sapin, ed., Foreign Policy Decision Making: An Approach to the Study of International Politics (New York, 1962).

and demands, howsoever incipient they may be.<sup>2</sup>

By and large, however, the masses are not concerned about the foreign policy affairs in general,<sup>3</sup> unless a situation in the external setting has some major and immediately perceptible linkage with their surroundings like affecting their civil liberties<sup>4</sup> or their religious or linguistic sentiments.<sup>5</sup>

- 2 Complex process involved in the evolution of the perceptions of foreign policy making elites has been explained to an extent by Michael Brecher in The Foreign Policy System of Israel: Setting, Images, Process (London, 1972). (But I do not agree with the Brecherian model completely because he, more or less, neglects role of history, and tradition in the development of perceptions of the elites or the social and political aspirations of the patricians). Also see, Kenneth E. Boulding, "National Images and International System", in James N. Rosenau, ed., International Politics and Foreign Policy: A Reader in Research and Theory (New York, 1969), pp. 422-31, and O.R. Holsti, "The Belief System and National Images: A Case Study", in Rosenau, ed., *ibid.*, pp. 543-50.
- 3 David Vital, The Making of British Foreign Policy (London, 1968), p. 48.
- 4 In situations like America's involvement in Vietnam which affected a large section of Americans, particularly because of conscription, mass opinion was intensely expressed which the policy makers had to heed. In this case not only domestic public opinion was strong but also at international plane there was much hue and cry which pressurized the White House to withdraw from Vietnam. Similarly the atrocities committed by Pakistani military rulers in East Bengal while attempting to suppress East Bengali autonomy, later separatist movement had resulted in the mobilization of public opinion at international level, forcing decision makers of many states, who otherwise would have preferred to be neutrals, to take stand on the issue.
- 5 Examples of religious or linguistic factors leading to the mobilization of public opinion are: reaction of South Indian Tamils, to language issue in Sri Lanka and Sinhalese Buddhists' reactions to China's action in Tibet and American bombing in Vietnam.

Even in such contexts the mobilization of the masses is initiated by the elites of the society, and importance attached to such masses or public opinion depends upon the intensity of their mobilization and articulation.

Generally, in the sphere of foreign affairs, the people who are responsible for it in one way or the other play a decisive role in directing the state's external behaviour. The knowledgeable ones in this area may influence their decisions in varying degrees. The decision makers and influentials are: bureaucrats, ambassadors, sections of intelligentsia interested in international relations, commercial magnates, leaders of political parties and organisations. Interactions amongst them result in the formulation of the foreign policy as well as its management. Consequently, it is essential for a better understanding of a state's foreign policy to identify the individuals and groups as well as the institutional network involved in the formulation and execution of foreign policy and to underline the locus of their activities.

Before we analyse Sri Lanka's foreign policy making process, it would be worthwhile to discuss briefly certain observations made by Maurice A. East and George Reid on foreign policy making in small states. East's basic assumption is that small states are essentially different from large states; and their overall smallness results in limited foreign policy organizations in contrast to the elaborate

machineries developed and instituted by the big and middle powers. Furthermore, small states' interests are specific, mainly confined to areas which have direct bearing on them or may tend to do so in the future.<sup>6</sup> Stretching East's model further, Reid maintains that in small states, the foreign policy management is extremely personalised; it is mainly left to the head of the state.<sup>7</sup>

Though East and Reid's comments have a certain amount of validity, some of their basic assumptions seem to be far fetched. While in terms of resources and capability the small states differ from the big states, in many aspects of political structures and functions, aspirations and values, they resemble the big states partly because of their colonial past. It is also usual among the leadership of these states to be demonstrative of their independence by playing significant image-building roles in international politics, and also to make new friends, to expand aid and trade bases which would ease the position of the ruling elites to meet various

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6 Maurice A. East, "Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour : A Test of Two Models", World Politics, vol. 25, no. 4, July 1973, pp. 551-77.

7 George L. Reid, "The Impact of Very Small Size on International Behaviour of Micro States", Sage Professional Papers in International Studies (Beverly Hills and London, 1974), vol. 2, p. 19. He opines that decision making or policy formulation is predominantly centered on a single individual.

societal challenges.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, in these states, the foreign policy machinery - foreign office and missions abroad - gradually keeps growing according to the needs and exigencies of the situations.

In the light of these observations, we will attempt to analyse the foreign policy making process in Sri Lanka by identifying various elements involved and delineating their locus of activities.

## II

When Sri Lanka attained independence, it did not inherit any sort of foreign policy tradition. Unlike their Indian counterparts, the early ruling elites of the island did not evince their interests on international politics of the day. In fact, even as late as 1944, external affairs and defence were acceptably left to the imperial authority for management.<sup>9</sup> Content with their petition-memorandum strategy

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8 Already discussed in Chapter II, and interactions to overcome such demands will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

9 In 1944 the Ceylonese politicians and ministers accepted an imperial directive that they could draft a constitution which only dealt with matters of "internal civil administration". Though the draft presented was later withdrawn by the Ceylonese ministers because disagreement arose between them and the Secretary of State for Colonies, it became the basis of Soulbury Commission's recommendation. See, Government of Ceylon, Colonial Office, Ceylon: Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform, 1945, pp. 12-35.

to extract more concessions within the colonial set-up, the colonial elites, were more concerned about internal matters. They rarely contested their claim over external affairs and even when attempts were made, there was little success.<sup>10</sup>

It is only on the issues of trade and Indian indentured labourers that the local leadership had some association with external affairs.<sup>11</sup>

It was only on the attainment of independence, that the responsibility for external affairs fell upon the local leadership and since then many innovations have been carried out to make it a well-functioning organisation. Thus, today Sri Lanka's foreign office represents an elaborate organisation with numerous missions abroad, and a growing foreign office.

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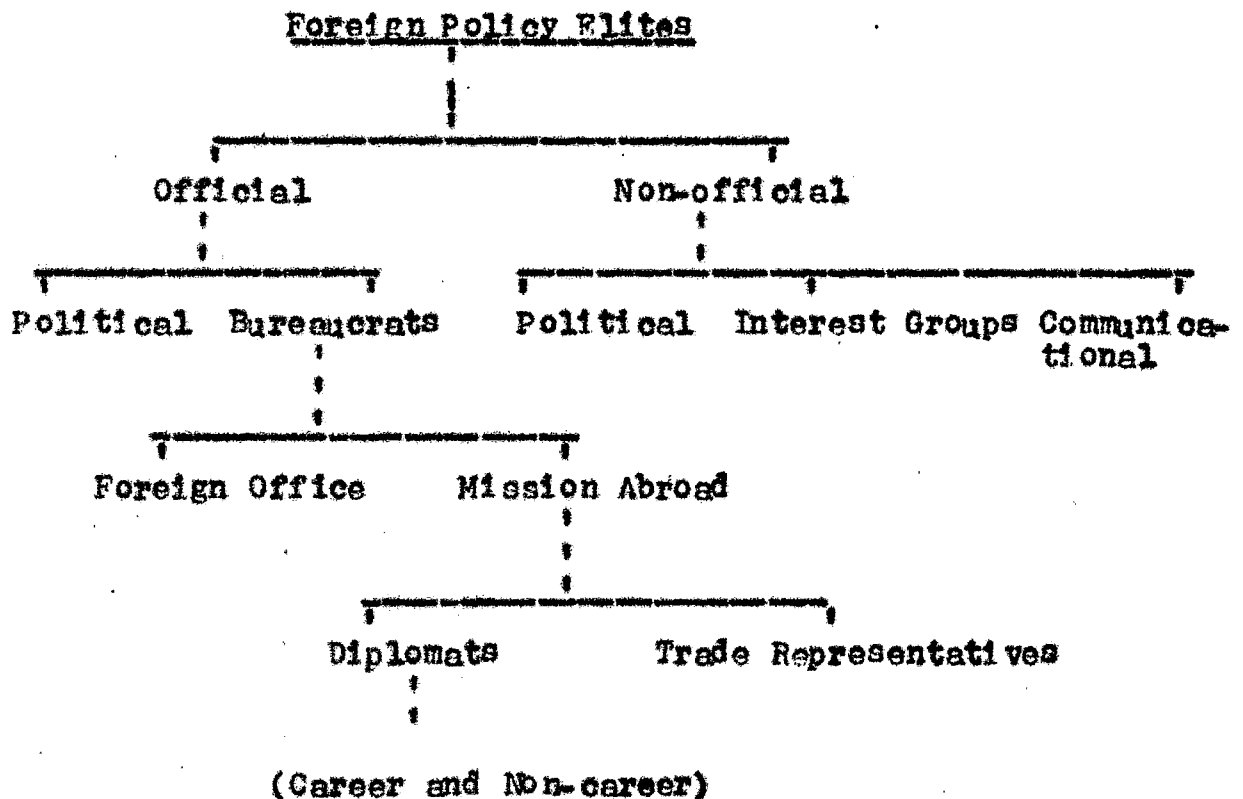
10 Later on, D.S. Senanayake at London made attempts to extract concession on external affairs and defence matters, but he did not succeed until 1947. See Ivor W. Jennings, The Approach to Self-Government (Boston, 1956), pp. 117 and 190.

11 In 1935 Sri Lanka's Controller of Labour attended the ILO conference on Immigrant Labour as a part of the UK delegation. In 1940, a Ceylonese ministerial delegation was sent to India to discuss about Indian labourers in Sri Lanka. In 1935 Sri Lanka was allowed to open a trade office at Bombay which was headed by Mr. A. de Silva. Later on, it also had a food supplies officer in New Delhi. For details see Charles Jeffries, Ceylon: The Path to Independence (New York, 1963); D.S. Weerawardena, Government and Politics in Ceylon: 1931-46 (Colombo, 1951); and F.R. Appathurai, The Making of Foreign Policy in Ceylon: A Study in Public Administration (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Toronto, 1968), pp. 14-59.



These expansions and innovations in the foreign office occurred gradually through the thirty years of independence.

A delineation of the foreign policy machinery as a whole, necessitates a broad categorization of the foreign policy making elites in Sri Lanka, which is as follows:



Source: I am grateful to Dr. (Mrs.) Phadnis for permitting me to use this table from her own research work.

Formal authority and legal responsibility for foreign policy is bestowed upon the official elites, with the cabinet being at the apex. In effect, however, it is the Prime Minister who has been mainly responsible for the formulation of foreign policy. Under his charge are the professional foreign policy bureaucrats headed by the Permanent Secretary (later Secretary) to assist and execute the policy. Besides, till 1972 the strategic elites - the chiefs of army, navy and airforce - were also under the Prime Minister who was the supreme authority of defence too. Under the new constitution of 1972, this has been somewhat relaxed.

Amongst the non-official political elites, the most dominant are the leaders of political parties and groups within the parliament and outside. The interest group elites in the foreign policy context include (i) members of associations like Ceylon Council of World Affairs and Bandarnaike Institute of International Affairs whose primary aim has been the dissemination of information on the subject; (ii) leaders of auxiliary organisations representing ideological, economic, religion and ethnic diversity of popular organisations like All Ceylon Buddhist Congress, Planters Association, Estate Workers Association and Indian Mercantile Chamber, and (iii) those groups which sprout up to mobilize and articulate views on certain issues or events. Finally, the communicational elites have been a noteworthy sector in foreign

policy,<sup>12</sup> including foreign affairs commentators, academics and journalists.

While these unofficial elites have been "influentials" in foreign policy affairs in varying degrees, at times providing strength and direction to actual interactions, it is the official elites who are formally responsible for all matters pertaining to foreign policy and particularly the Prime Minister whose position has not only been fortified by several provisions of the old constitution, but also by political traditions and practices.

### III

#### The Prime Minister

Article 46(4) of the old constitution stipulated that the portfolios of Defence and External Affairs should be under the Prime Minister, which resulted in the concentration of powers in this executive chair.<sup>13</sup> More so, there was no provision for the Prime Minister to seek the consent of the legislature except on matters relating to allocation of

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12 Gabriel A. Almond, The American People and Foreign Policy (New York, 1950), pp. 136-9.

13 Ivor Jennings, The Constitution of Ceylon (Bombay, 1953), p. 137. The new constitution does not stipulate the juxtaposition of the two positions and merely states that "The Prime Minister shall determine the number of Ministers and Ministries and the assignment of the subjects and functions to Ministers." Constitution of Sri Lanka (Colombo, 1972), p. 38.

finances. Thus, being free of parliamentary encumbrances, the Prime Minister's powers were enormous in this regard.

The rationale for such concentration of power could be found in the nature of transfer of power itself under which the British would perhaps have preferred the important department to be in the hands of faithfuls who would safeguard their interests.<sup>14</sup> Besides, the absence of parliamentary check and balance system could be partly due to the influence of British parliamentary practices and partly to keep the Communists contained, for, they were well-represented in the first parliament and were critical of the initial 'sine-qua-non' of the transfer of power i.e. the Defence and External Affairs arrangement.<sup>15</sup> However, it is also a fact that D.S. Senanayake had requested for such an arrangement because it provided him firm control over the direction, the newly

14 This is clear from the Soulbury Commission's report. Para 358 of it reads: "We suggest that there should be a portfolio of Defence held by the Prime Minister. He, as Head of the Government, would be the most suitable repository for the information in Imperial Defence policy which would in the course of his duties inevitably come his way and the natural advisor to the Governor General in all those defence questions in which local political considerations are involved...." Colonial Office, n. 9, p. 95. Moreover, by this time it was clear that D.S. Senanayake would assume the Premiership.

15 For details see Lucy M. Jacob, Sri Lanka: From Dominion to Republic (Delhi, 1973), pp. 21-57; and also discussed in Chapter IV of the dissertation.

independent country could take.<sup>16</sup> Thus, it was a union of interests of the local faithfuls and imperial authority that resulted in such a scheme.

Since then, this arrangement has continued to be in effect. Even though in 1972 the new constitution amended the provision formally, in substance and practice, the Prime Minister, Mrs Srimavo Bandarnaike, continued to keep the portfolio of foreign affairs under her office. It was only in 1977 under the UNP regime that the external affairs was put under the charge of a separate cabinet minister.

In the initial phase, such entrenchment of the portfolio in the hands of the Prime Minister resulted in his shouldering heavy burden. Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake acknowledged it as early as 1949 when he told the House of Representatives that "foreign work (sic) is becoming much heavier than I expected".<sup>17</sup> Twelve years later, Pieter Keuneman made similar suggestion in the House. How could Mrs. Bandarnaike, asked Mr. Keuneman, carry responsibility for a large number of important functions "in addition to keeping track of what is going on in external affairs".<sup>18</sup>

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16 Circles close to D.S. Senanayake have vouched on this point. For details see Appathurai, n. 11, pp. 61-62.

17 House of Representative Debates (unbound), July-August 1949, col. 151B.

18 *Ibid.*, vol. 44, 1961, cols. 312-13.

### The Parliamentary Secretary

To cope with such over-burdening situations, the old constitution did make provisions for parliamentary secretaries. This provision of parliamentary secretaries existed long before the Prime Ministers had realized the acute pressure of their job. Under Section 47 of the Soulbury Constitution, it was stated that "the Governor General may appoint parliamentary secretaries to assist the Ministers in the exercise of their parliamentary and departmental duties...."<sup>19</sup>

As regards foreign affairs, those occupying this position were not only politically important but were also men of administrative competence and diplomatic acumen. The performance of R.G. Senanayake (1947-52), T.B. Subasinghe (1952-58), Felix R. Dias Bandarnaike (1960-65), J.R. Jayewardene (1965-70) as parliamentary secretaries bear ample testimony to this. It might also be added that alongside their position as parliamentary secretaries,<sup>20</sup> persons like Felix R. Dias Bandarnaike and J.R. Jayewardene, apart from being articulate spokesmen on foreign policy, had also been holding cabinet portfolios.

<sup>19</sup> Government of Ceylon, The Constitution of Ceylon, Sessional Paper (unbound), no. 3, 1948, col. 27.

<sup>20</sup> Under the provisions of the Constitution of 1971 the parliamentary secretaries are termed as Deputy Ministers.

### Permanent Secretary

If the Prime Minister, assisted by the parliamentary secretary/Deputy Minister comprised in the main, the political wing of the official functionaries, the bureaucratic wing of foreign affairs was a much more elaborate network, with permanent secretary (designated as secretary under the 1972 Constitution) at the top. It was on him that the tasks of co-ordinating the activities of the missions abroad and that of administering of the external affairs department as a whole fell. Besides, he attended to official formalities that went on with the office like accompanying the Prime Minister on foreign tours, attending receptions hosted by foreign diplomats and managing the visits of foreign dignitaries and international conferences.

Right from the beginning, senior civil servants and diplomats held this post. The first permanent secretary, Kanthiah Vaithainathan (1948-1954), was responsible for organising the department of external affairs, particularly Sri Lanka's career diplomatic service. Gunasena de Soysa (1954-1959), who succeeded Vaithainathan was less flamboyant and usually acted according to the wishes of the Prime Minister. The period of his successor Mr N.F. de S. Jayaratne's in office was short (1959-1960), but he attempted to eradicate many unhappy practices in the department. The period of the fourth permanent secretary, N.Q. Dias (1960-1965) was marked by his efforts to 'Sinhalise' the foreign office

set up.<sup>21</sup> Dias was succeeded by G.V.P. Samarasinghe (1965-70) who had headed the Department of Immigration and Emigration (dealing in the main with the issue of the persons of Indian origins in Sri Lanka prior to his elevation as secretary). His successor was Ratnavale who served for a brief period after which he was posted abroad as an ambassador.

As regards the structure of the ministry, it remained unchanged till 1970. But colonial nomenclature (external affairs) was amended and it came to be called foreign office. Besides, the post of permanent secretary was done away with. Instead it began to have a secretary with an additional secretary. Gamini Corea as the secretary of planning maintained prefect rapport with Mrs Bandarnaike and made best attempts to project the United Front Government's radical image. But it was with the appointment of Tissa Wijeyeratne - a non-career diplomat - as additional secretary in 1974 that certain significant and supposedly far reaching changes were made in the system of recruitment. For the first time, candidates could appear for tests either in Sinhala or Tamil.

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21 It has been seen that there was little change in the social composition of the career diplomats. For details see Marshall R. Singer, The Emerging Elite: A Study of Political Leadership in Ceylon (Cambridge, 1964), p. 49. According to Tribune, there was little change in (social background of) the foreign policy elites. It is only in their style and outlook that changes were discernible. Tribune, vol. 19, no. 3, August 1967.



### The Missions Abroad

As regards the Sri Lankan missions abroad,<sup>22</sup> the ambassadorial level appointments lay within the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister.<sup>23</sup> During the tenure of the first UNP Government (1947-1952) many of the ambassadorial appointments were made from party ranks; either dislodged politicians or from the cabinet itself. Thus, Mr. R.S.S. Gunewardena was appointed Minister to Rome in 1952 after having been unseated in the 1947 elections. Similarly, Mr. C.W.W. Kanangara, who went to Indonesia as Consul General was too defeated in the 1947 elections. Among the members of the cabinet who were given diplomatic assignments were Mr. T.B. Jayah (Labour Minister) who went to Pakistan as High Commissioner, and also Sir Claude Corea, Sir Oliver Goonetilleke and Sir Edwin Wijeratne who went to London as High Commissioners. At different times during the UNP Government they had held cabinet posts.

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22 The heads of missions to Commonwealth countries are designated as High Commissioners, while to other countries as ambassador or ministers.

23 The general procedure in such appointments agreed were that the public service commission "will by normal convention accept the recommendation of the Prime Minister". The Prime Minister will normally have candidates for the post in view and no advertisement would be necessary. Ministry of External Affairs (Unpublished material).

The appointments of party faithfuls to such posts raised much criticism among the opposition. A. Reginald Perera commented in the House of Representatives:

On this question, I think that this House is correct in insisting that the Hon. Prime Minister gives us assurance that in filling these posts men who have been defeated...will not be sent abroad to represent the people. I think this House is right in asking for such assurance. (24)

Even many others criticized such a partisan nature of appointments.<sup>25</sup>

Rebutting such a line of argument, the UNP leader D. S. Senanayake stated: "One thing I wish to mention is that when we send representatives, we must send representatives who will represent the views of the existing government, not the views of any other party. Today we are the government and people who represent our views will be sent."<sup>26</sup>

The general characteristics of these appointments were that most of them were Western oriented elites, with long political experience; hence personally pleasant and politically sagacious. Besides political affiliations,

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24 House of Representative Debates, vol. 44, 1947, col. 1585.

25 Ibid., col. 145.

26 Ibid., col. 1586.

religious faith seemed to be an important consideration in such appointments. Jayah, a Muslim, went to Pakistan. Susantha de Fonseka, a Buddhist, was sent to Burma, and Sir Claude Corea, a Christian, was posted at London.

During the Bandarnaik regimes (1956-65) the selections to the heads of missions seem to draw from much larger variety of resources. University dons as well as other professionals and career diplomats were assigned such positions. Further, alongside the party faithfuls S.W.R.D. Bandarnaik also appointed certain defeated UNP members to important countries purely on the consideration of merit and political expediency. Thus, Sir Richard Aluwilare, after being defeated by the polls on a UNP ticket, was appointed as High Commissioner to India because as a Kandyan he was well versed with Indo-Ceylon problem which was being discussed by the two Governments.<sup>27</sup>

This practice set by Bandarnaikes during the 1956 and 1965 tenure has, more or less, continued to this day. Appointments to headship of mission have become more broad based, comprising persons who are career diplomats as well as

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27 Ceylon Daily News, 22 March 1957. Its report runs as follows: "He (Bandarnaik) had thought of having Sir Richard as High Commissioner because he was a Kandyan. As everyone knew it was the Kandyans who were closely concerned in the Indo-Ceylon problem, Sir Richard had also evinced a keen interest in the issue."

non-career ones showing a certain sympathy if not total alignment with the tenets of the ruling party or front.<sup>28</sup>

Apart from the permanent secretary and ambassadors, the other important functionaries are the Ceylon Overseas Service personnel, who initially manned the junior diplomatic assignments, but in course of time have gone up in the hierarchy.

### Ceylon Overseas Service Personnel

Soon after independence, the newly created department was faced with the problem of finding personnel to man it, particularly at the junior levels. Initially, civil servants from the Ceylon Civil Service (CCS) were brought on deputation to manage the affairs, but because of various problems they could not be permanently absorbed in the foreign service.<sup>29</sup> As such, in 1949, the Ministry of External Affairs resorted to the creation of the Ceylon Overseas Service (COS) by direct recruitment from the public through competitive examination conducted by the public service commission. Since then, various

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28 e.g. the appointment of C.D.S. Siriwardena to Moscow, Justin Siriwardena to India and I. Karannagoda to China fall in this category.

29 Ceylon Observer, 30 May 1949. It reported: "...owing to the shortage of officers in the public service many departments were unable to spare officers...." However, a few CCS men did change over to COS.

various changes of temporary and permanent nature have been experimented in the recruitment pattern to induct suitable talent.

In 1949, a special examination was held to recruit personnel for the COS. The system of examination was limited to essay, precis, General English, General Knowledge, Intelligence Test, World Affairs and Viva Voce.<sup>30</sup> By 1950, the system was regularised. It took a combined form of an examination for recruitment of the CCS and COS where the candidates indicated their preferences. The scheme of examination was as follows: Compulsory subjects were Essays, General Knowledge and Viva Voce. Those seeking entry to the COS were also to appear tests in either Sinhala or Tamil or Arabic. This was optional for the CCS aspirants. World Affairs and a special Viva Voce was also compulsory for the COS recruits. The special Viva Voce was designed to ascertain candidates' knowledge of foreign language, personal orientation and family background etc.<sup>31</sup>

Occasional innovations have been experimented in the selection scheme to induct suitable candidates to project the ruling parties' image and aspiration effectively. For example, in 1957-1959, Prime Minister Bandarnaike took special interest in the selection of COS recruits, as he felt that the previous

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30 Ceylon Government Gazette, 8 June 1949.

31 Ibid., 12 June 1953.

scheme did not induct suitable talents.<sup>32</sup> But he had to give up his venture in this regard for the results were not very promising. When Mrs Bandarnaike came to power in 1970, she too tried to radicalise the foreign office by permitting people to appear in the examinations in either Tamil or Sinhala. One point comes out clearly is that both the Bandarnaikes were keen on recruiting nationalist Sinhalese in the foreign service and their schemes were tailored for the purpose.<sup>33</sup> Between 1960 and 1963, there was temporary suspension of recruitment to COS, because of economic crisis in the island.

Initially, Sri Lanka had problems of training the COS recruits. While departmental and in-service training was provided within the country, for expertise in international and diplomatic practices, training arrangements were made with countries like the UK, the US and Australia. However, the problems faced by Sri Lanka being quite different than these countries and cost of such arrangements being too heavy, she had to give up the practice. In 1959 an institute for international affairs known as Ceylon Council of World Affairs came up to disseminate interest on foreign affairs. Besides,

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32 For details see Appathurai, n. 11, pp. 155-57.

33 Ceylon Observer, 19 June 1974. These changes were effected when Tissa Wijeyeratne was appointed as the additional secretary to help Sinhala or Tamil educated people to compete for the COS.

various types of 'in-service' training schemes have been evolved to make the COS personnel more concerned with national problems.

In the early stages, there was some friction between the COS personnel and the Ceylon Civil Service men who were on deputation. Also, a definite hierarchical structure was yet in its offing partly because of shortage of personnel. Thus, while in one country a COS man would hold the post of third secretary, on his transfer to another country he could be made a first secretary or vice versa. However, such problems have now been totally overcome and the system has attained stability and maturity through time and experience.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike the Indian Foreign Service, the COS is not an integrated service representing the country in all aspects of external affairs. The trade and commercial interests are looked after by personnel not from the Ministry of External Affairs, but those from the Commerce Ministry. Similarly the publicity and other related matters were for some time managed

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<sup>34</sup> Uptil 1975 there were 70 Sri Lanka Overseas Service men. The general recruitment was as follows: October 1949, 5 officers; January 1950, 2 officers; May 1951, 3 officers; July 1952, 3 officers; October 1953, 1 officer; June 1954, 1 officer; June 1956, 3 officers; June-July 1957, 8 officers; April-June 1958, 3 officers; February 1960, 3 officers; February and November 1961, 7 officers; May 1966, 6 officers; December 1967, 2 officers; August 1968, 2 officers; March 1970, 11 officers; 1971-72 and March 1975, 9 officers (of which 8 appeared either in Sinhala or Tamil and were of rural background). For cadre placement from 1968-76, see # — Table 1.

TABLE 1

## FOREIGN RELATIONS DIVISIONS - CADRE POSITION

| Cadre Position          | 1968-<br>1969 | 1969-<br>1970 | 1970-<br>1971 | 1971-<br>1972 | 1973 | 1974 | 1975           | 1976           |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------|------|----------------|----------------|
| Addl. Secretary         | -             | -             | -             | -             | -    | -    | 1              | 1              |
| Senior Asstt Secretary  | -             | -             | -             | -             | -    | -    | -              | 1              |
| Director General        | -             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1    | 1    | 1              | 1              |
| Deputy Director-General | -             | 1             | 1             | 1             | 1    | 1    | 1              | 1              |
| Directors               | 5             | 5             | 3             | 3             | 3    | 3    | 3              | 3              |
| Information Officers    | 2             | 2             | 2             | 2             | -    | -    | -              | -              |
| Assistant Secretaries   | 13            | 14            | 14            | 14            | 16   | 16   | 16             | 16             |
| Accountant              | -             | -             | -             | -             | -    | -    | 1<br>(non-COS) | 1              |
| Legal Advisor           | -             | -             | -             | -             | 2    | 2    | -              | -              |
| Administrative Asstt.   | -             | -             | -             | -             | 1    | 1    | 1<br>(non-COS) | 1              |
| Staff Assistant         | -             | -             | -             | -             | 1    | 1    | 1              | 1<br>(non-COS) |
| Others                  | 31            | 31            | 31            | 34            | 54   | 72   | 78             | 82             |
| Probationers            | -             | 11            | 2             | -             | -    | -    | 9              | -              |

Note: 82 of Career Fellows, rest in the field pooled in various countries.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Colombo. I am grateful to Dr. Phadnis for permitting me to use this data from her personal files.



by the Information Service personnel, which to all purposes was an auxiliary of the COS.<sup>35</sup>

Thus, Sri Lanka's foreign service has developed from its infancy in 1948 to a more elaborate organisation. Similarly, the foreign office as well as the missions abroad have gradually become more adept in the handling of the foreign policy.

#### Foreign Office Organisation

Sri Lanka's missions abroad have steadily increased. In 1949 it had four missions. By September 1972, Sri Lanka had missions in 24 countries, besides, the United Nations and the EEC. Presently it maintains diplomatic relationship through concurrent accreditations with about 50 countries and international organisations.

Similarly, at home, the foreign office has not only been enlarged but has been more differentiated. In 1948, for instance, the Ministry had three major divisions, each being headed by an Assistant Secretary. These were the Foreign Relations Division, Protocol and Nationality Division and Administration Division. The Foreign Relations Division was further sub-divided into four sub-divisions and was assigned special duties. (Table 2)

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35 In 1959 four persons were recruited under the Ceylon Overseas Information Service (COIS). Since then no fresh recruitment has been made under COIS, and it has virtually become defunct.

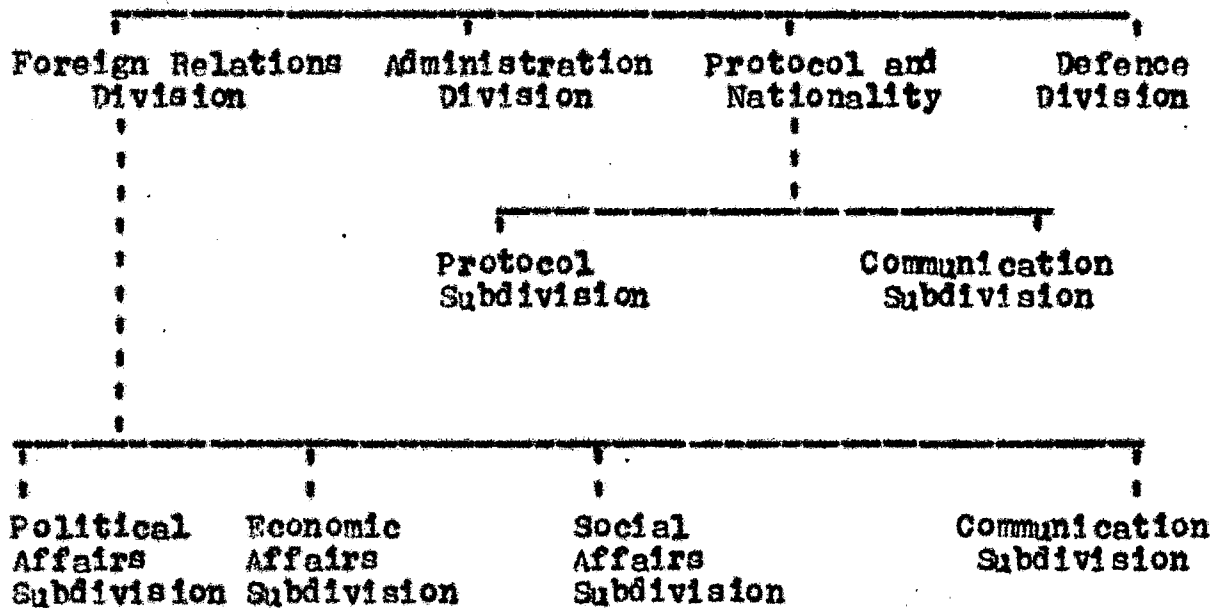
Table 2

1949

Prime Minister

Parliamentary Secretary

Permanent Secretary

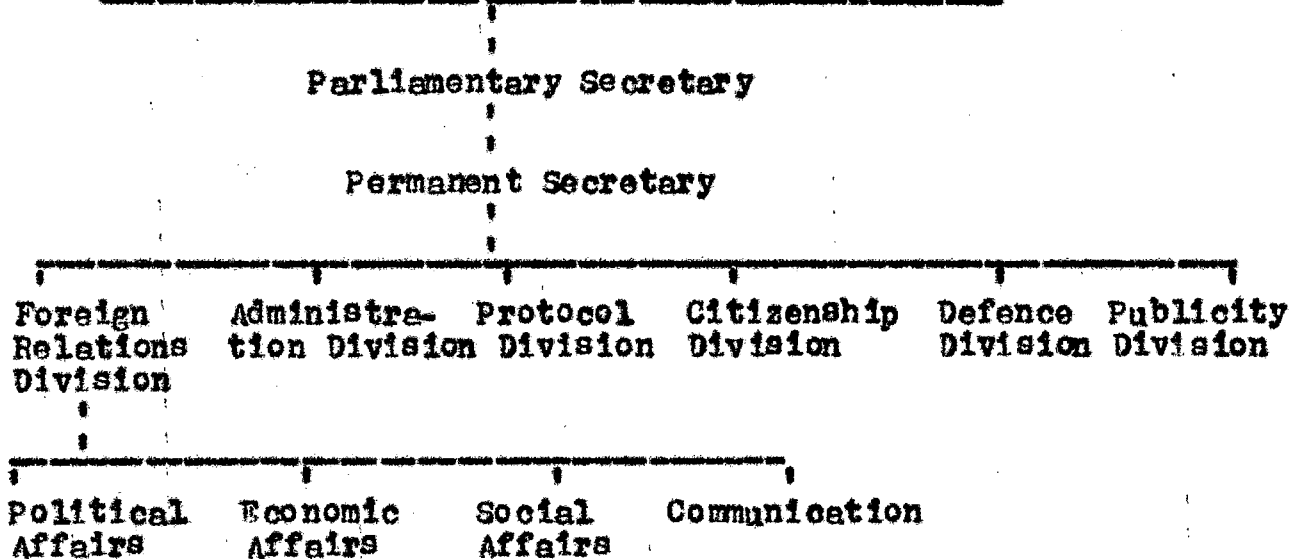


Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Ceylon. Quoted by Appathurai, n. 11.

In 1956, the Ministry was reorganized with the Protocol and Nationality divisions being separated into two divisions, and the publicity division made into a separate unit.

Table 3

1956

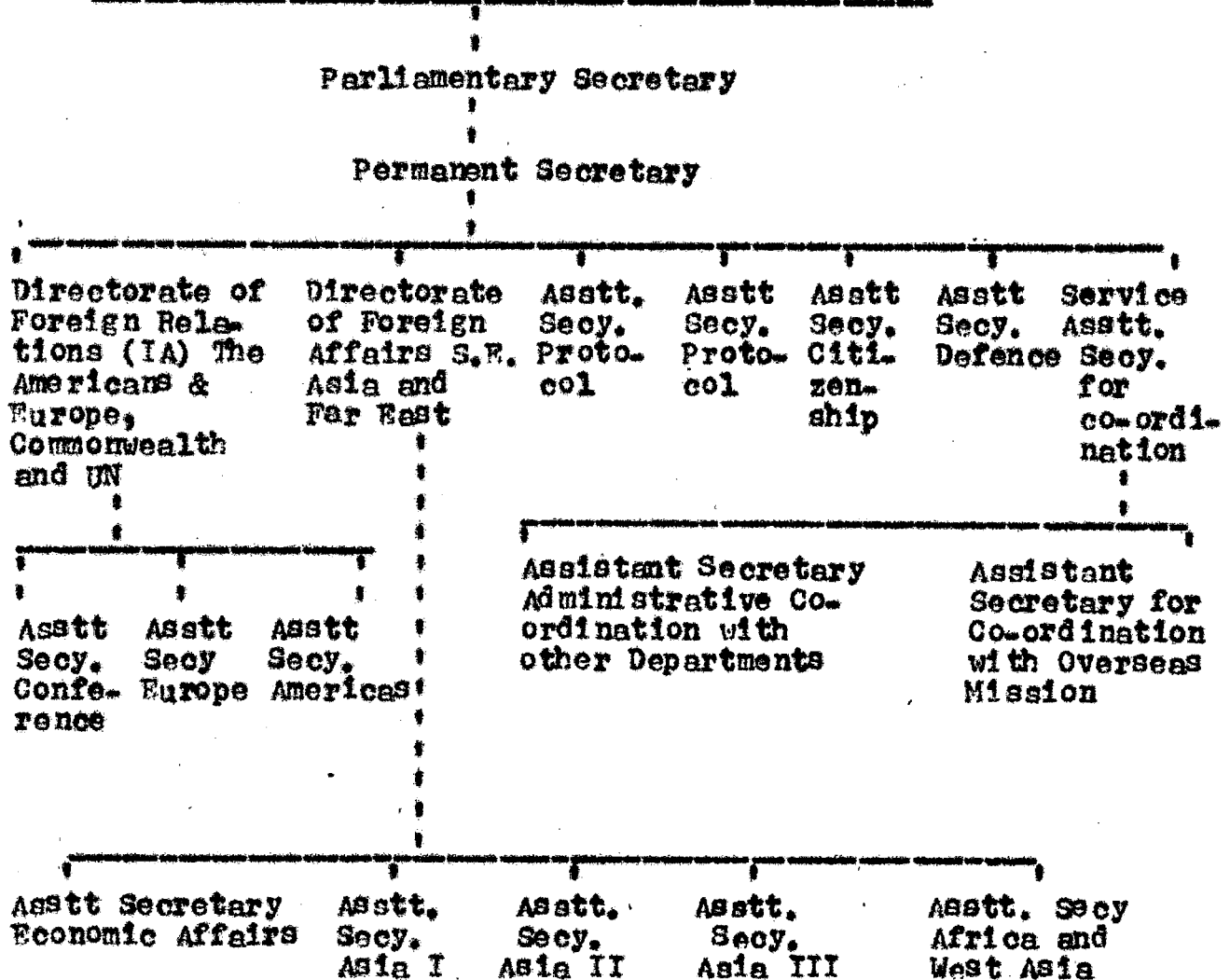
Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs

Source: Staff List of Ministry of External Affairs, Ceylon, *ibid.*

In 1961, the functional basis of division was reorganized into area "Desk" system. By 1966, the Ministry had grown considerably both in size and character. More subdivisions were established reflecting the increase in the duties which the Ministry had now assumed. Some of them were themselves further sub-divided in response to the greater specialization now required.

Table 4

1966

Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs

Source: Staff List of Ministry of External Affairs, Ceylon, *ibid.*

Again in 1970 the Foreign Office was reorganized on the following lines:

Table 5

|                     |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Secretary           |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
| ↓                   |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
| Director General    |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
| ↓                   |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
| Divisions           |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
| ↓                   |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
| Protocol            | Legal                | Foreign Relations | Overseas Administration | Archives         | Publicity       |
| ↓                   | ↓                    | ↓                 | ↓                       | ↓                | ↓               |
| Chief of Protocol   | Legal Advisor        | ↓                 | Director                | Asstt. Secy. (1) | Asstt Secy. (2) |
| ↓                   | ↓                    | ↓                 | ↓                       | ↓                | ↓               |
| Asstt Secy. (2)     | Asstt Secy. (1)      | ↓                 | Asstt. Secy (4)         | ↓                | ↓               |
| ↓                   | ↓                    | ↓                 | ↓                       | ↓                | ↓               |
| Protocol Asstt. (1) | ↓                    | ↓                 | ↓                       | ↓                | ↓               |
| ↓                   |                      |                   |                         |                  |                 |
| West                | Economic             |                   | Africa and Asia         |                  |                 |
| ↓                   | ↓                    |                   | ↓                       |                  |                 |
| Director (2)        | Director             |                   | Director                |                  |                 |
| ↓                   | ↓                    |                   | ↓                       |                  |                 |
| ↓                   | Asstt. Directors (2) |                   | Asstt. Director (1)     |                  |                 |
| ↓                   | ↓                    |                   | ↓                       |                  |                 |
| ↓                   | Asstt. Secy. (1)     |                   | Asstt. Secretary (3)    |                  |                 |

Source: Staff list of External Affairs Ministry, Sri Lanka. I am grateful to Dr. Phadnis for permitting me to use the table from her personal library.

The hierarchical pattern as indicated in the table is noteworthy for its nomenclature. To illustrate the chief of the legal division is designated as an 'advisor' because his is not an 'overseas cadre appointment'. However, the assistant secretaries working under him are from the overseas service. Also, the designation of 'Assistant Director' reflected the seniority of the person concerned but his functions were similar to that of the Assistant Secretary who deals directly with the Director and not through him. In terms of the status hierarchy, the Assistant Secretary corresponds to the Under-Secretary/Attache and few deputy secretary status of the Indian Foreign Service.

Thus, the foreign office and number of personnel have steadily increased and more specialization has been initiated into the system, but the role of bureaucrats and ambassadors in policy making has not been very significant. Whatever role they have had has depended upon the Prime Minister and their equation with him. In the time of D.S. Senanayake, for instance, some of the ambassadors like Sir Oliver Goonetilleke, and Sir Claude Corea had much say in the policy making, so also Mr Vaithainathan himself. But under the Premiership of S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike, the role of diplomats and COS personnel was rather negligent. His opinion about the capability of the COS was very low, which is clear from one of his remarks to the press: 'My dear fellow as for my ministry's top brass is concerned, first I shall have

to show them Lebanon on the map." <sup>36</sup> However, during the tenures of Srimavo and Dudley, senior officials like G.V.P. Samarasinghe and Gamini Corea seemed to have much greater rapport as well as influence on the Prime Minister. On occasions, the second in rank like Tissa Wijeyeratne had a great deal of say on policy matters. But such cases were far and few and even in these, at times, non-bureaucratic considerations were involved like relation with the Prime Minister and party leaders at a personal level.

Looking at the situation from the point of view of bureaucrats, one sees certain fundamental problems which deterred them from venturing into greater initiative and more creative actions. One being, the two party system of government under which active initiative on policy issues did have a risk of making the foreign policy bureaucrat unacceptable to the political elites of the other party when it came to power. Such political expediency amongst other things also let most of them to be rest content as implementers rather than as innovators.

### III

So far we have discussed the organisational network and <sup>the</sup> role of official elites. What role do the non-official elites play or have played in foreign policy matters? Where

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36 "The Permanent Secretary Holds the Key - 2", Ceylon Daily News, 15 March 1960.

do they fit into in this complex system? Who are more influential among these non-official elites?

Amongst the non-official elites the role of the oppositional benches in the parliament, particularly the House of Representatives, appears to be more significant in influencing the foreign policy processes. It might be mentioned here that unlike India where 'foreign affairs' or international situation has merited a full fledged discussion once or twice every year, in Sri Lanka, such opportunity comes during the debate on appropriation grant for the ministry and partly during the discussions on the presidential (formerly Governor-General's) address. Besides, information is sought on certain foreign policy issues through questions and parliamentary censure. Foreign policy issues are also brought for parliamentary debates after Sri Lanka's conclusion of a treaty or agreement. Significantly enough, though virtually all such agreements are brought before the legislature as a convention constitutionally, they are not subject to legislation per se. They do not need parliamentary ratification. As such, while the content of the agreement cannot be amended but the government can be censured; it is at best a post-mortem of the governmental action on particular foreign policy issue. The only way in which such a censure can have a positive effect on the decision making process is through voting and the possibility of the defeat of the government, which is a



remote one,<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, parliament has been a critical platform which in the process of providing a critical appraisal of the governmental objectives has mirrored the public opinion on a foreign policy issue and has presented alternatives or near-alternatives. Thus, on issues such as the Indo-Ceylon Citizenship Amendment Bill, the UNP Government agreed to consider some of the amendments put forward by the opposition.<sup>38</sup>

As regards the political parties, the fact that the top leadership of the organisational as well as the executive wings has been more or less the same (Both Mrs Bandernaike and Mr Senanayake have held the top position in party organisation) has blurred the intra-party differences, if at all, on foreign policy. It is only in case of coalition ministries like 1970 UF that differences between coalition partners existed on Bangladesh issue which ultimately resulted in a consensus. However, the left parties present a different picture altogether. Intra-party differences, essentially of ideological nature, has led to party splits. The impact of such splits on the foreign policy has been negligible.

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37 The only foreign policy issue which, by implication, could account for the defeat of a government was the Srimavo-Shastri Pact which had formed an important issue in the shortest Governor General's address and on which the ruling coalition had lost by one vote in December 1964.

38 For details see Urmila Phadnis, "The 1964 Indo-Ceylonese Pact and the Stateless Persons in Ceylon", India Quarterly, vol. 27, no. 4, 1967, pp. 382-407.

The interest groups like the Indian plantation workers and the Buddhist monks have been important influences on the foreign policy making. Lobbying by these groups on certain issues has been taken note of by the foreign policy making elites. However, the effective pressurizing by these groups have always depended upon the attitude of the dominant political elites. The dominant political elites in power during 1962 had interests which clashed with the interests of the Tamil workers and monks who blamed China as the aggressor on the India-China border conflict but Mrs Bandarnaike's Government was heedless to their pressure. On the other hand, during the Vietnam bombing of 1965, by the USA, the National Coalition of Dudley Senanayake effectively articulated the anxiety of the monks by sending a fact finding mission to Vietnam as well as took initiatives to end hostilities. In 1970 the UF Government which was riding a crisis impending economy, sought to maintain the support of the working class. To appease the working class it sought the advices of the trade unions on foreign policy making.<sup>39</sup>

As regards the communication elites, particularly the press, it has proved to be an excellent lobbyist on certain issues and the most influential newspaper group, the Lake House, has taken definite stand on certain foreign policy

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39 Ceylon Observer, 19 June 1974.

issues. Moreover, in the absence of proper informational network in the early years of independence, the newspapers of Lake House group, Ceylon Daily News and Ceylon Observer, proved to be important sources for foreign news. As the views of the UNP leaders and Lake House papers were akin and its editors were their personal friends its influence was notable.<sup>40</sup> In this context it is substantiative to note that Prime Minister Kotelawala appointed the Managing Director of the Ceylon Daily News as Special Ambassador to lobby in the United Nations for Ceylon's admission, even when there was a regular ambassador in Washington in the person of Gunawardena. While the UNP leadership found the Lake House an important and effective source for power aggregation, the UF has found it to be of continuing embarrassment and resorted to ways and means to curb its power and influence.

During the first tenure of the UNP Government there was also a marked dependence on British sources of information. Officials of Sri Lanka freely resorted to the British High Commission in Colombo for all kinds of intelligence. Reports submitted by their own ambassadors were hardly read and knowing the fate of such reports their interest had begun to lag.<sup>41</sup>

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40 For details see J.L.M. Fernando, Three Prime Ministers of Ceylon (Colombo, 1963), pp. 21-22.

41 Appathurai, n. 11, p. 253.

Even the Ministers gave more credence to the views of foreign ambassadors. Thus, Sir John Kotelawala's attitude towards 'Globe Master' was based on the opinion he got from the American ambassador. He did not even read reports of his ambassadors.<sup>42</sup> In due course, however, such a dependence on external sources for information seemed to have been given up due to the gradually increasing expertise of the foreign office as well as due to the marked differences in the orientations of the successors of Sri John Kotelawala.

Thus, the major actors in foreign policy making are the official political elites with the Prime Ministers at the apex and bureaucratic elites acting as executors of decisions, though in the initial years they enjoyed certain amount of freedom and initiative in view of the inexperience of the political elites and also due to their similar ideological and political outlook - i.e., pro-Western. The role of the non-official elites has depended upon their ability to aggregate political power through proper articulation and mobilization of popular opinion, in which case, the ruling political elites being concerned about stability, give importance to their views. However, under normal conditions, the ruling political elites assign little scope for the non-official elites to influence.

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42 Ibid., p. 250.

the decision making process, except on issues threatening independence and security, which falls beyond sectarian political interests. In the subsequent chapters we will discuss Sri Lanka's foreign policy interactions in international politics on the basis of the perceptions of the ruling political elites.

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## CHAPTER IV

### COLONIAL ELITES OF SRI LANKA AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Like all states, Sri Lanka's foreign policy operates at various levels.<sup>1</sup> Amongst these, the more prominent ones

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- 1 In the field of social sciences, particularly international politics, which is faced with severe paradigmatic dilemma, social phenomena can be inquired at the meta, macro, or micro levels or an amalgamation of them. The selection of particular levels of analyses is a matter of methodological and conceptual convenience. Pure researchers engaged in general theory building based on abstract deduction or reduction logic prefer the meta or macro levels of analysis, e.g. Hans Morgenthau, Politics among Nations (New Delhi, 1976). While those involved in partial theory construction or empirical verification of propositions and hypothesis usually adopt lower levels of analysis. The various levels of analysis have their advantages and pitfalls; hence we have studied the problem at two levels so as to bring to light both the general and particular patterns of interaction in Sri Lanka's foreign policy. For a succinct evaluation of various levels of analysis in international politics see J.D. Singer, "The Levels of Analysis Problem in International Relations", in Klaus Knorr and Sidney Verba, ed., The International System: Theoretical Essays (Princeton, 1971), pp. 77-92. For critical evaluation of macro level of analysis refer Charles P. Kindleberger, "Scientific International Politics", World Politics, vol. 11, no. 1, 1958, p. 18. For advantage of lower levels see Peter Berton, "International Subsystems: A Submacro Approach to International Studies", International Studies Quarterly, vol. 13, no. 4, 1969, pp. 329-35; and Yogesh Atal, "Subordinate State System and the Nation State: Tools of Analysis of External Milieu", in S.P. Verma and K.P. Mishra, ed., Foreign Policies in South Asia (Jaipur, 1969), pp. 40-53. Atal critically examines the subordinate state systems as a framework for determining the external milieu of a country's foreign policy. Fyodor Burlatsky in The Modern

are: (i) the level of international system which is concerned mainly with the interactions of the great powers,<sup>2</sup> and middle powers,<sup>3</sup> and (ii) the level of the sub-system of South Asia,<sup>4</sup> (which is relatively autonomous because of the non-aligned

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State and Politics (Moscow, 1978), pp. 7-51, has attempted to resolve this crisis by saying that specific political phenomena 'should' be studied on the basis of (1) the methodology of historical materialism, (2) the methods of political theory and (3) sociological case study technique. This is indeed an improvement upon previous works in the field, yet it has its own philosophical and methodological shortcomings, discussion of which falls outside the scope of the present work.

- 2 Great Powers by dint of the wide disparity that exists between them and the rest of the international community in various components of power (wealth, organisation, will, or status), tend to attract other states and thereby exert their influence and "to a degree determine the matrix within which others have to operate." Based upon Vital's definition see, David Vital, The Survival of Small States, Studies in Small Power - Great Power Conflict (London, 1971), pp. 1-2.
- 3 Middle powers' capabilities are lesser than that of the great powers. Yet they pose 'externally projectable power' to influence the behaviour of other states. Based upon Puchala's definition, see Donald J. Puchala, International Politics Today (New York, 1958).
- 4 Michael Brecher, "International Relations and Asian Studies : The Subordinate System of South Asia", World Politics, vol. 15, no. 2, 1963, pp. 213-36; W. Howard Wriggins, South and Southeast Asia in the Asian State System in 1970s (Columbia, 1971), pp. 2-8. Both have delineated South Asia as a sub-system of the global system.

strategy adopted by most of the member states).<sup>5</sup> At the sub-systemic level, Sri Lanka has to treat India with due caution because of the existence of wide discrepancies in their respective capabilities, as well as to ensure peace and stability of the region as a whole. In the international system, apart from mitigating the pressures and pulls emanating from the international power structure, it has to 'effectively' pursue the foreign policy objectives to ensure and further her national interest. In this chapter we will attempt to identify the interactional patterns of Sri Lanka's foreign

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5 Quite well argued by A.P. Rana, The Imperative of Non-alignment (Meerut, 1976). Late Professor Sisir Gupta, School of International Studies, had also emphasized on this aspect of the region in a department seminar in September 1977. Also see George Modelski, Principles of World Politics (New York, 1972), pp. 58-74. Modelski has attempted to describe how the twin trends of globalization and autonomy have been co-existing in world politics since the age of 'classical European balance of power'. He underlines the advantages of autonomy systems/states in world politics to be as follows: (i) a more perfect market for political goods; (ii) opportunities for experimentation and for the diffusion of innovation (power), and (iii) lesser danger from the failure of one component. This can be more concretely explained by seeing the competition between capital of advanced states with that of the less advanced ones within world capitalist system, where these two apparently try to accommodate each other.



policy at the level of international system<sup>6</sup> as perceived and operationalized by the 'colonial' elites in governance.

## II

### Colonial Elites and Nationalist Elites : Divergent Perceptions of the International System

In the competitive democratic political system of Sri Lanka, the two dominant parties, the United National

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6 Morton Kaplan in his seminal study of relationships between and among the major actors in international politics, has argued explicitly that the international system is a major variable which determines the foreign policy behaviour of nation-states. In this context he delineated six international systems (Balance of Power, Loose Bipolar, Tight Bipolar, Universal, Hierarchical, and Unit Veto). Later on he further modified his "loose bipolar system" and "unit veto system" into "very loose bipolar system" and "incomplete nuclear diffusion system", respectively. His major thrust has been to project the deterministic characteristic of these categories in affecting the nation states' foreign policy. For details see, Morton A. Kaplan, System and Process in International Politics (New York, 1957), and for the modification see "Some Problems in International Systems Research", pp. 469-501, in his book International Political Communities : An Anthology (New York, 1966). However, the concepts of international and regional systems have been used here as a framework of analysis, and the deterministic aspect of this approach has been kept at bay. Emphasis has been laid on the study of various types of behaviour involving nation states and Sri Lanka's responses to them. Examples of such application of the concept of international system are: (i) John W. Burton, Systems, States, Diplomacy and Rules (Cambridge, 1968); Charles A. McClelland, Theory and International System (New York, 1966), and George Modelski, A Theory of Foreign Policy (London, 1962), and Burlatsky, n. 1.

Party (UNP), and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) have alternately displaced each other in the successive polls to control the 'state apparatus'<sup>7</sup> either singularly or in alliance

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7 The term 'state apparatus' denotes the formal organisation of the state, distinguished by its specific functions of coercion, governance, administration, and judiciary of a given social formation. In Western capitalist societies the state and its organs developed along or in accordance with production and reproduction of capital and concomitant of class struggles. In post-colonial societies the relation between society and state is not similar in nature. In these societies, the institution of state is 'relatively autonomous' because the colonial powers transplanted advanced institutions over the 'indigenous coercive' institutions then in existence. This resulted in an advanced 'super structure' with weak 'base' giving the super-structure relative independence, which is likely to remain until the mode of production develops and the ruling class becomes stronger. Hence a mere characterization of these societies in the classical Marxist method would not be very helpful in understanding the role of "state as such". What is necessary is the characterization of the state apparatus on the basis of its functional policies and programmes and the political parties attempting to control it, within the broader characterization of the society. This would enable us to understand how a particular class or its elites exercise their dominance. See for detailed discussion on "State Apparatus", Goran Therborn, What Does the Ruling Class Do when it Rules? (London, 1978). Jessop defines the state as, 'neither an originating subject nor a neutral instrument, but a system of apparatuses and institutions that have determinate effects on the political struggles'. Jessop's view of the state is heavily influenced by his functional sociological approach to society and does not hold good for advanced capitalist societies, where the state is a subject of the ruling class. However it adequately explains the place of state in post-colonial societies. Bob Jessop, "Capitalism and Democracy: The Best Possible Political Shell?" in Gary Little John, et al., ed., Power and State (London, 1978), pp. 10-19. For relation between society and state refer T. Wengraf, Notes on Marx and Engels: Theories of Development of the Capitalist State (mimeo, 1970), and Robin Blackburn, ed., Ideology and Social Sciences (Glasgow, 1977). For the

with other parties.<sup>8</sup> These two parties represent two distinct sets of elites having divergent societal interests, value orientations and perceptions of the environment. Consequently their conception of foreign policy interactions has shown variations in its emphasis and nature.

The UNP has been mainly constituted of colonial elites,<sup>9</sup> with interests and aspirations closely linked up with the development of free economy, with much scope for foreign private capital investments; initially British capital was preferred.<sup>10</sup> In their values and attitudes, the colonial elites have been pro-Western and in the early years of independence aspired to transplant Western and British value

role of state in post-colonial societies see Hamza Alavi, "The State in post-colonial Societies : Pakistan and Bangladesh", in K. Gough and Hari P. Sharma, ed., Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia (New York, 1973), pp. 145-72.

8 For details regarding Sri Lanka's electoral politics refer, A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, Electoral Politics in an Emergent State : The Ceylon Election of May 1970 (Cambridge, 1973).

9 Terms like "collaborative elite" and "comprador bourgeoisie" have been used to categorize this strata of the Ceylonese society. See Harindra Corea, Freedom, What Then? (Colombo, 1960), p. 9. He remarks: "In short the governing class was still colonial oriented; the white ruler had merely been replaced by a black ruler, but policy thought (sic) had known no change."

10 Donald R. Snodgrass, Ceylon : An Export Economy in Transition (Illinois, 1966), p. 104.

conception in the country.<sup>11</sup> In the first decade of the party's inception, the UNP elite's overt affinity with Western values and orientations received adverse responses from the conservatives and religious linguistic elements, the Sinhalese Buddhists - and affected their electoral prospects. In consonance with the compulsions of the electoral politics, they have ceased to exhibit their 'Western Cultural' affinity and have apparently espoused 'populism' for electoral success.<sup>12</sup> They have been equally emphatic

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11 Calvin W. Woodward, The Growth of Party System in Ceylon (Providence, 1969), p. 173.

12 After its defeat in 1956 elections, the UNP set up a committee to recommend measures to rehabilitate it back in Sri Lankan politics. The committee recommended the formulation of mass oriented ideology and development of mass contacts with important pressure and interest groups. See, "Report of the Special Committee of the UNP". Ceylon Observer, 28 January 1956. There after the UNP's programmes and policies have had a populist note and resembled the programmes of other parties. In this context it would be worth stating the theoretical formulation of Andrew Gamble in the case of electoral politics in representational democracy. Gamble makes a distinction between 'politics of support' and 'politics of power'. By 'politics of support' he implies that it is contingent to secure the majority votes to win, and at the same time it is necessary to be realistic in terms of state power. Consequently a party to control the "state apparatus" has to be both realistic on behalf of 'capital' and popular with the 'electorate'. Andrew Gamble, The Conservative Nation (London, 1974), pp. 3-11. Poulantzas suggests that ruling class parties have two-fold tasks; (1) organise the unity of power bloc and disorganise the dominated classes objectively for which populism and manipulation is necessary. See N. Poulantzas, (a) The Crisis of the Dictatorship (London, 1976). From this it is clearly understood why the UNP elite had to change their style of functioning. Besides another very significant point is clear; how the state structures and apparatuses were partially responsible for such changes. For detailed discussion on this aspect see N. Poulantzas, (b) Political Power and Social Classes (London, 1972).

in their antipathy for communism in general and communist states in particular.<sup>13</sup> However, the domestic, regional and global constraints since the mid fifties have apparently watered down the earlier antipathy towards communism to a considerable extent. The maintenance of Commonwealth connections has been given much priority by the UNP elites.<sup>14</sup>

Unlike the UNP, the elites of the SLFP are nationalists, who came into prominence in the early fifties, when the island witnessed a belated resurgence of nationalism culminating in the parliamentary elections of 1956.<sup>15</sup> Guided by the forces of nationalism they have aimed at asserting

- 13 Woodward, n. 11, p. 68. This is also clear from the fact that D. S. Senanayake had resigned from the Ceylon National Congress, in protest against the younger members' stand to admit communist elements to the party. Sir John Kotelawala's hatred for communism was so intense that he once remarked: "Even if the devil wants my help to fight communism, I am on his side." Ceylon, House of Representative, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 17, 1954, col. 369. Also see John Kotelawala, Between The Two Worlds (Colombo, 1954).
- 14 D. S. Senanayake's remarks in this context is self substantive: "My Government is keenly aware of the significance and unity of purpose of the Commonwealth in the effort to preserve peace in the post-World War and will use its utmost endeavour to cherish and safeguard those valuable associations." Ceylon, House of Representative, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 18, 1950, col. 486. Similarly Dudley and Kotelawala expressed their commitment to the Commonwealth.
- 15 For details see, Densil Peiris, 1956 and After : Background to Parties and Politics in Ceylon Today (Colombo, 1958), and Marshall R. Singer, The Emerging Elite : A Study of Political Leadership in Ceylon (Mass., 1964).

Sri Lanka's political independence and developing it into an independent economy free from dependence upon the metropolis.<sup>16</sup> In their pursuit of the twin objectives, the nationalist elites have been dynamic and vigorous.

None of these elites - colonial or nationalist - have been able to establish their dominance over the masses for a long spell. At the same time, their political-ideological dominance has not been challenged, because of the absence of an alternative.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, the literacy ratio, social welfarism and politicization through parliamentarism,

16 Clearly implicit in S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike's speech, "We have to build up a new society for ourselves, as I have said what best suits the genius of our own country. We should like to get some ideas and some principles from this side and some from the other, until a coherent form of society is made up that suits our own people in the context of the changing world of today." S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike, The Foreign Policy of Ceylon. Extracts from Statements (Colombo, 1957), p. 7. Also see S. Lenka and S. Patnaik, "Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy: A Class Analysis" to be published in the forthcoming issue of Social Scientist.

17 The parties supposedly representing the dominated classes have not been able to mobilize and raise the mass consciousness to assert over that the dominant classes, and on the contrary have been caught up in 'parliamentarism', what Lenin called the "best possible shell for capitalism". See V.I. Lenin, State and Revolution in Selected Works (Moscow, 1963), vol. 1.

has made the masses aware of their needs and aspirations, initiating in the process, a politics of 'welfare economism'. Consequently, when the economic and concomitant aspirations are unfulfilled or standards of living deteriorate, the masses shift their political allegiance to the dominant party in opposition. Thus, the shift of political power and control of state apparatus between the two sets of elites is a manifestation of 'representational variations'.<sup>18</sup>

Another significant aspect of Sri Lanka's electoral politics is its coalitional patterns. Usually the nationalist elites have either directly or indirectly ensured the support of the major left parties, while the colonial elites have formed alliances with splinter communal or regional parties such as the breakaway Sri Lanka Freedom Socialist Party (SLFSP) from the SLFP and the Tamil parties. Conspicuous too is the fact that both the dominant parties have tried to ensure the support of the Tamil parties whether it be the Tamil Congress(TC),

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18 The concept of 'representational variation' means that without any significant changes in the mode of production, control of state apparatus changes from one section of the ruling class to another. It is different from the concept of 'representational crisis' which is used by Poulantzas to explain 'split between the political parties and the classes and class fractions'. See for details Poulantzas, n. 12(a), p. 102, and Gramscian concept of "Crisis in Hegemony" wherein the dominant classes' political and cultural supremacy is challenged, and an effective alternative is put forth by the exploited and dominated classes. Antonio Gramsci, Prison Notebooks (London, 1971), p. 210.

Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), or Federal Party (FP).<sup>19</sup> But whatever may be the alliance system, the major actors in foreign policy matters are the ruling dominant party elites.

The alternate control of political power between the two major parties resulting in the dominance of two distinct elite groups - colonial and nationalist respectively - has conditioned conflicting tendencies in foreign policy behaviour. However, overriding environmental factors and shared historical experiences have also ordained certain commonalities in their perceptions,<sup>20</sup> resulting in some consensual interactions, and national role conceptions. Such areas of convergence between the nationalist and colonial elites will be touched upon in this chapter as well as in the next in which we will analyse, in the main, the foreign policy behaviour of the nationalist elites as and when they controlled the power apparatus, in some detail. In the

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19 Wilson, n. 8. In 1965 elections CWC and TC were part of the National Front while the FP lent its support indirectly. In 1970, the Tamil parties were not in the United Front excepting the CWC, whose leader joined the UF Government. In 1977-78, the UNP Government enlisted the support of the CWC by inducting its leader, S. Thondaman, into the cabinet.

20 Foreign policy is not only modelled by the internal relations of the bourgeoisie but various nationalist factors cutting across class cleavages are taken note of. Besides, supra class factors pertaining to nationalism play important role in foreign policy also, because of the struggle between competing "national capitals" within world capitalism. For details, see Therborn, n. 7, pp. 97-102.



following sections of this chapter, we will identify the perceptions of the domestic and external milieu of the colonial elites and their response to it. With a view to further their foreign policy objectives i.e. security, stability and status.

### III

#### The Colonial Elites and Foreign Policy Interactions

In the backdrop of the unfolding of the cold war, the colonial elites under D.S. Senanayake hurriedly formed the UNP by bringing together various conservative political notables,<sup>21</sup> including the Sinhala nationalist elements under S.W.R.D. Bandarnaika,<sup>22</sup> with the sole purpose of taking control of the state apparatus, following the British withdrawal.

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21 A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, Politics in Sri Lanka in 1947-73 (Bristol, 1973), p. 130; and Woodward, n. 11, pp. 172-3.

22 Mr. Bandarnaika had his own party, the Sinhala Maha Sabha (SMS), espousing the interests and aspirations of the rural and urban Sinhalese populace. The SMS had reluctantly joined the UNP, as it would not have been possible for any one party to form a government after independence. Mr. Bandarnaika viewed the UNP as a 'coalition party'. For details see Bandarnaika's pamphlet, "The United National Party", in S.W.R.D. Bandarnaika's Speeches and Writings (Colombo, 1969), pp. 114 and 128.

Initially, independence was not envisaged by the colonial elites, who were preoccupied with the task of extracting greater concessions from the metropolis, within the colonial state structure.<sup>23</sup> However conjunctural factors prevailed upon Britain to withdraw<sup>24</sup> and the colonial elites too were

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23 For details see, G.C. Mendis, Ceylon Today and Yesterday: Main Currents of Ceylon History (Colombo, 1963), p. 83. K.M. de Silva, "The History and Politics of the Transfer of Power", in K.M. de Silva, ed., History of Ceylon (Colombo, 1973), vol. 3, pp. 489-533; and Sir Charles Jeffries, The Transfer of Power (London, 1960), especially Chapter 8. Though these scholars differ in details, there is a consensus among them that D.S. Senanayake (initially) wanted more say in the colonial administration and later on "Dominion status".

24 During the war, the colonial elites had co-operated with the British so that their demands for Dominion status should be conceded, which was being seriously opposed by left parties who demanded total independence. The colonial power realized that if this demand was not conceded, the prospects of the colonial elites in the general elections would be affected, and the Marxists would make gains. Hence it came forward to acknowledge their demand. Details see, K.M. de Silva, "The Transfer of Power in Sri Lanka - A Review of British Perspective", The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies (new series), vol. 4, nos. 1-2, January-December 1974, pp. 18-19. Besides the distortion of the economy under colonialism had made the Ceylonese economically subservient to the metropolis, which the metropolitan bourgeoisie were well aware of. All they were concerned, were that power should be transferred to the 'faithfuls'.

anxious for independence.<sup>25</sup> Hence, it is not surprising to find that none of the colonial elites evinced interests on foreign policy matters. As a result, the three UNP Prime Ministers - D.S. Senanayake (1947-52), his son Dudley Senanayake (1952-53), and his nephew, Sir John Kotelawala - had hardly any definite notions about the island's external relations.<sup>26</sup> At best, their pro-Western and anti-Communist predilections and prejudices determined the pursuance of foreign policy interactions to ensure the three inherent objectives of the island: 'security', 'stability', and 'status'.

These elites perceived threat from communism both on domestic and international plane. Within the country, the communists were strong enough during the period (to be perceived as a threat by the colonial elites) and well

25 Mendis, n. 23, pp. 112-13. According to him, the Ceylonese middle class, steeped in liberalism, were influenced by the nationalist struggles in the neighbouring land masses, as well to have better opportunities in government and private sectors (some of them wanted to own tea, rubber and coffee plantations) sought independence.

26 A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, "Sri Lanka's Foreign Policy - Change and Continuity", The Ceylon Journal of Historical and Social Studies, n. 24, pp. 52-53.

represented in the parliament.<sup>27</sup> The left parties were very critical of the UNP's programmes and policies.<sup>28</sup> Naturally, the colonial elites were apprehensive of their designs, particularly when their dominance in the state apparatus was not fully entrenched and that too attained with a segment of the nationalist elites. On the other hand, the left forces had substantial support among the productive labour force of the island, the urban proletariat and plantation workers. On the international plane too, communists were on the verge of capturing power in Indonesia and Burma, but for Western help to the anti-Communist and reactionary forces.<sup>29</sup> In China, the capture of state power by the Communist party under the able leadership of Mao Tse-tung was more or less a historical inevitability.<sup>30</sup> The Soviet Union, in adherence to Stalin's

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27 In the 1947 parliament, the LSSP had 10 members, its splinter wing, Bolshevik Leninist Party of India (BLPI) had 5 members, CPC had 3 seats in contrast to the UNP's 42 members. For details see, Report of Commission of Parliamentary Elections, 1947; and J. Howard Wriggins, Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation (Princeton, 1960), pp. 128-9.

28 Woodward, n. 11, pp. 69-71, and 96-99; also see Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India, Manifesto of the LSSP (Ceylon Unit of BLPI), 1947; Leslie Goonewardene, A Short History of Lanka Sama Samaja Party (Maradana, 1960).

29 J. Romein, The Asian Century: A History of Modern Nationalism in Asia (London, 1962), p. 137.

30 For details refer Israel Epstein, From Opium War to Liberation (Peking, 1964).

rigid class-struggle line, unhesitatingly helped the foreign Communist parties and other radical and progressive elements fighting colonialism and imperialism.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the ruling colonial elites perceived Sri Lanka's geo-political location to be of special interest to the Communists. This was not stated so discreetly, but the idea was impregnated in some of the speeches of the leadership. "We are in a especially dangerous position", said D.S. Senanayake, "because we are in one of the strategic high ways of the world. The country which captures Ceylon would dominate the Indian Ocean."<sup>32</sup>

Besides, the above stated factors influencing the colonial elites to nurture such apprehensions, Western propaganda against communists and the Soviet Union in particular, also influenced and shaped their attitude. Besides, the assertion of the local communist parties of external linkages further strengthened the seeds of doubt in their minds. This is clear from the fact that the early colonial elites tried to politically isolate the communists on the basis of their external connections by castigating

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31 John P. D. Lamont, German Marxism and Russian Communism (London, 1954), pp. 334; see also Geoffrey Barraclough, An Introduction to Contemporary History (Middlesex, 1977), pp. 222-7.

32 Ceylon, House of Representative, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 1, 1947, col. 44.

them as agents of the Soviet Union in the island.<sup>33</sup>

The response to such apprehension was the signing of a Defence and External Affairs pact with Britain, which provided the later to retain their naval base at Trincomalee and air base at Katunayake for the purpose of mutually assisting each other for their security, stability and economic interests.<sup>34</sup> The arrangement enabled Britain to maintain her control over the maritime routes which was an important prerequisite to the continuation and protection of her economic activities in South and Southeast Asia.<sup>35</sup> From the point of view of the colonial elites, it was a fortification against the Communists' designs from within and abroad, as well as from other adverse interests.

The UNP leadership also co-operated with the Western bloc to contain the spread of communism in the

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33 John Kotelawala, An Asian Prime Minister's Story (London, 1956), p. 186.

34 For details refer, Ivor Jennings, The Constitution of Ceylon (Bombay, 1953), pp. 136-40; and Lucy M. Jacob, Sri Lanka: From Dominion to Republic (Delhi, 1973), p. 24. She calls this arrangement a convergence of "mutual self-interests" of metropolitan and colonial elites.

35 G. Wint, The British in India (London, 1947), pp. 162-3.

Southeast Asian region, because Communist takeover of power in those states would have threatened the dominance of the colonial elites. Hence in 1950, it permitted port facilities to American Flotilla en route to Korea to check the aggression of 'international communism',<sup>36</sup> and in 1954 allowed refueling facilities to American planes carrying troops to fight communist forces in Indochina.<sup>37</sup> In fact, at one time, Prime Minister Kotelawala was pondering over the idea of joining the SEATO, but had to give it up because of adverse domestic and international pressures.<sup>38</sup>

The acuteness of a threat perception from the Communist states is also clear from the fact that during the UNP period Sri Lanka virtually kept away from the Soviet Union and China. It banned import of Communist literature to the island,<sup>39</sup> and refused visas to delegations from

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36 J. R. Jayawardena, "D. S. Senanayake's Foreign Policy", Ceylon Historical Journal, vol. 5, 1955, p. 55.

37 Urmila Phadnis, "Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka in the Seventies", Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, vol. 8, no. 1, 1975, p. 95.

38 Wriggins, n. 27, p. 387. Besides domestic pressures, Kotelawala had to heed to the nationalist aspirations of the Southeast Asian states. In 1954 Colombo Conference of the Southeast Asian Prime Ministers, it became clear that they did not appreciate this arrangement. Kotelawala, n. 33, pp. 120-51.

39 New York Times, 22 December 1953.

Communist states or parties to attend the tenth anniversary of the Communist controlled Ceylon Trade Union Federation.<sup>40</sup> Finally, notwithstanding the trade agreement with China in 1952, Kotelawala remained indifferent to China's expressed desire to send a goodwill team to the island to explore areas of co-operation and trade expansion, on the grounds that the visiting Communists were apt to disseminate more harm than goodwill.<sup>41</sup>

While security objectives were attained through the defence arrangement with Britain and by helping the containment of Communism, the colonial elites pursued the stability objective with a similar pro-Western bias. Initial uncertainty that independence created, hampered the inflow of British capital into the island. Being impeded by their own class background to innovate major structural changes, the ruling colonial elites favoured foreign capital investment in the island by assuring complete remittance of profits and dividends earned abroad.<sup>42</sup> Despite these assurances, British capital investment was not significantly large because of the lack of opportunities for profitable investment. However, it

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40 Ceylon Daily News, 12 September 1950.

41 Kotelawala, n. 33, p. 115.

42 Jacob, n. 34, pp. 119-25.



did not face the dearth of capital to draw upon as she had accumulated huge sterling balance through war time activities.<sup>43</sup> Despite the absence of new investments, British capital still continued to play an important role in Sri Lanka's economy. This is illuminated by the fact that in 1954 the remittance abroad was greater by Rs.7.6 millions, from what it was in 1953.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, major trading activities

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43 H.N.S. Karunatilake, Economic Development in Ceylon (New York, 1971), pp. 27-28.

44 Jacob, n. 34, p. 112. British capitals' important role is clear from the amount that went out of Sri Lanka as profits and dividends between 1948 and 1955. (In Sri Lanka, the major productive sectors were controlled by British companies.)

| Year | Profits and Dividends sent<br>out of Ceylon by foreign<br>enterprises |
|------|---|
|      | (Rs. mn)  |
| 1948 | 75.0  |
| 1949 | 35.0  |
| 1950 | 67.4  |
| 1951 | 84.4  |
| 1952 | 60.6  |
| 1953 | 54.3  |
| 1954 | 61.2  |
| 1955 | 84.9  |

Source: Compiled from Budget Speeches.

of Sri Lanka <sup>were</sup> was with sterling area countries and London was the centre for disposal of its major export items like tea.<sup>45</sup> Economic assistance also was availed from International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Bank of Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and under the scheme of the Colombo Plan. Besides, till 1952, she received aid and assistance from the US, then she later enforced the Battleship Act because of Sri Lanka's economic activities with China.<sup>46</sup> Thus, the colonial elites pursued economic development through Western capital and technical assistance.

Till as late as 1955, Sri Lanka could not get the United Nations membership because of the exercise of veto by the Soviet Union, which considered her independence to be fictitious.<sup>47</sup> In the absence of the UN membership, the

45 Out of her total trade, imports from Britain accounted to 34.2 and exports 24.3 per cent respectively. Ceylon Year Book (Colombo), 1950, p. 41. This pattern continued till 1955.

46 For details see D.M. Prasad, Ceylon's Foreign Policy under the Bandarnaik's' (1956-65) : A Political Analysis (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 26-32.

47 UN Security Council Official Records, year 2 mtg., col. 351, 18 August 1948, p. 11. The Soviets maintained that for "all intent and purposes" Sri Lanka was a British colony.

Commonwealth obtained higher priority in Sri Lanka's foreign policy calculations, since it was one of the major platforms available to her, through which she could interact with other states. The membership of the Commonwealth also ensured her economic and security interests.<sup>43</sup>

The second time when the UNP elites came to power (March 1965), there was marked transformation in the domestic and external settings. The cold war was on its wane, making way for 'detente'. The Soviet Union under Khrushchev had already enunciated the doctrine of peaceful co-existence of all nations, despite ideological differences. He had also developed the theory of non-capitalist path of development and of peaceful transition to socialism through the parliament. These two theoretical formulations considerably altered the views of liberals and conservatives regarding communism. Their fear of revolutionary nature of communism diminished, if not totally got extinct.

In late fifties the monolithic notion of communism also proved illusory following the breakaway of China from the Soviet camp. By 1960s, the Chinese Communist party had developed major ideological differences with the Soviet

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<sup>43</sup> Ceylon, House of Representatives, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 8, 1958, col. 436. Also, the Commonwealth ties provided a counterpoise to India. It enabled her to interact with other members as equals to further her trading activities.

Union on the global situation and also on the role of the Soviet Union as a Communist state itself. It accused the Soviet Union of 'revisionism' and of becoming 'a social imperialist power'. These ideological differences to an extent were determined by nationalist considerations.<sup>49</sup> Consequently, China strove to emerge as a big power and proclaimed herself to be the champion of the exploited nations and peoples of the world. She also attained proficiency in nuclear capabilities. All these developments led to the appearance of a new cold war - popularly called the Moscow-Peking Anti-  
 Thesis.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, she desired to be acknowledged as the leader of the 'underdog' nations and people, against imperialist forces, but found in India an important rival. India enjoyed a position of respectability among the 'underdog' countries for many reasons. In 1962 these two states were engaged in a border conflict, which threatened the peace and stability of the sub-continent.<sup>51</sup>

Besides, significant changes were marked in the domestic setting. During the tenure of the SLFP led

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49 For details see K.N. Ramachandran, Power and Ideology: Sino-Soviet Dispute - An Overview (New Delhi, 1977); Donald S. Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-1961 (Princeton, 1962), and Harrison and Salisbury, The Coming War between Russia and China (London, 1969).

50 Allen S. Whiting, "Contradictions in Moscow-Peking Axis", Journal of Politics, February 1958, pp. 127-61.

51 Ceylon Daily News, 2 November 1962.

governments under the Bandarnaikes, the state apparatus was used to radicalize the political processes to facilitate the development of state capitalism in the island.<sup>52</sup> During this period, Sri Lanka not only recognized a number of the Communist states but also established diplomatic and economic relations with them. The UNP, in order to remain a force, had to adjust to the new developments, which infused a degree of liberalism in its external attitude.

The major concern of the UNP led National Front Government, headed by Mr Dudley Senanayake was to maintain stability in the island. The crisis impeded the economy because of huge population growth,<sup>53</sup> and unemployment,<sup>54</sup> rising expectations of the masses, coupled with the increasing prices of import items and declining prices of export

52 For an elaboration of the theme see, Lenka and Patnaik, n. 16.

53 Administration Report of the Registrar General (Colombo, 1965). It mentions population growth rate to be above 2.5%. This meant more unproductive labour force and more consumption demand, leaving little investible capital for development.

54 For details see, S. Selvaratnam, "Impact of Population Growth on Employment and Training in Sri Lanka", Report of National Management, Seminar on Population and Family Planning (Colombo, 1972); and Peter J. Richard, Employment and the Under Employment in Ceylon (Paris: OECD, 1971).

commodities,<sup>55</sup> Under the circumstances, Dudley needed to implement the populist programme offered by the party, otherwise its fate in Sri Lanka politics would have been a foregone conclusion.

For the purpose, the UNP Government's interaction was more with the Western countries. It settled the misunderstanding that had cropped up following Mrs Bandarnaike's nationalization of the Anglo-American oil companies in 1962,<sup>56</sup> which had resulted in the suspension of American aid to Sri Lanka.<sup>57</sup> The UNP Government agreed to pay Rs. 55 millions as compensation to the oil companies within a period of seven years.<sup>58</sup> Once again, Sri Lanka became a

55 See Buddhadasa Hewavitharana, "Economic Compulsion and Foreign Policy : Ceylon - A Case Study", in S.P. Verma, and K.P. Mishra, ed., Foreign Policies in South Asia (Jaipur, 1967), pp. 106-7.

56 The Times, 15 May 1962. The MEP Government was willing to pay compensation but the hitch was over the manner of payment of compensation and the amount to be paid.

57 The Foreign Assistance Act of 1962 empowered the US President to suspend assistance to the government of any country to which assistance was provided under the Act, if the government of the country nationalized or expropriated property owned by American citizens or corporations. See for details Prasad, n. 46.

58 Ceylon Daily News, 20 June 1965.

recipient of American aid and assistance. Mr Dudley Senanayake also undertook goodwill tours to various Western capitals to procure aid and assistance for the island. During the period, Mr Dudley Senanayake seriously considered the prospects of joining the ASEAN, but the government had to give up because of severe criticism from the opposition political parties and groups.<sup>59</sup>

In procuring foreign capital, Prime Minister Dudley faced the hurdles raised by Mrs Bandarnaike's Government to deter foreign private capital operations in the island. In 1961, she attempted to implement the Ten Year Plan recommended in 1958 to promote economic development and expansion of employment opportunities through regulation and control of industry in the private sectors, which was then mainly in the hands of foreign capitalists.<sup>60</sup> To attract foreign capital to the island, Dudley assured that his government had no intention of nationalising the foreign companies and in case they were prompted to do so, in the nation's interests, adequate compensation would be paid.<sup>61</sup>

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59 Ceylon Daily News, 28 September 1967, and 9 October 1967.

60 For details see, A. Thiagarajah, The Economic Development of Ceylon with Special reference to Industrialization (Jaffna, 1966), pp. 81-93.

61 Ceylon Today, vol. 15, no. 4, April 1966, p. 13. For details see, The Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Governments of Ceylon Private Foreign Investments (Ceylon), May 1966.

Through legislation he also lifted restriction on the activities of foreign banks. Consequently, there was more inflow of Western aid into the island than it was under the SLFP Government. It is worth-mentioning that Western assistance was mainly channellized through international developmental agencies like IBRD and IMF.<sup>62</sup> This reflects their new strategy to camouflage the exploitative basis of such grants which had become self-evident in country to country transactions leading to articulation of adverse international public opinion. Even the channellized grants had strings tied to them, to suit to market and production conditions in the donor countries. However, Premier Dudley Senanayake had little hesitation in accepting such help for it enabled him to stabilize the economy, besides countering the penetration of communist states as well as up-setting the nationalist elites' initiated, phenomena of state capitalism.

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62 Appendix Tables 1-4 provide a detailed comparative break up of loans availed by the SLFP and the UNP governments from the socialist countries as well as Western states and the manner in which the grants were channellized. However such compilation of 'aid' to Sri Lanka could be possible, because of non-availability of data, compilation of which would necessitate a visit to Sri Lanka.



British banks in Ceylon were first to respond to the initiatives taken by Dudley. They concluded an agreement with the Central Bank under which they had offered credit to the tune of £ 4,000,000 and a further £ 2,000,000 as a contingent arrangement to be used in an emergency.<sup>63</sup> Also, these banks agreed to provide long term loans to the Development Corporation of Ceylon.<sup>64</sup>

Other than this, the World Bank too favourably responded by organising an Aid Ceylon Group in 1965 comprised of Australia, Canada, Japan, France, West Germany, the UK, and the US, to provide aid to Ceylon on 'planned' basis. Through five comprehensive programmes it committed aid to the tune of Rs.2,100 million between 1965 and 1969.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to this, Sri Lanka received individual aid and grants from the USA under PL-480 funds.<sup>66</sup> It also received aid and assistance from Britain in its individual

63 Ceylon, House of Representative, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 79, no. 9, 1963, cols. 1451-2.

64 Ibid.

65 Ceylon Today, vol. 18, nos. 7-8, July-August 1969, p. 13.

66 Under this agreement, the US agreed to provide 50,000 metric tons of wheat flour and 5,000 metric tons of corn grain. This agreement was the fifth of its kind. Before in 1958, 1959, 1960 and 1962 such agreement were concluded. Ibid., vol. 15, no. 4, April 1965, p. 13.

capacity and as a member of various other aid organizations. In 1965 Britain committed to Sri Lanka interest-free loan to the tune of Rs. 12.71 million maturing over a period of 25 years, for the import of British goods, such<sup>as</sup> fertilizer, vehicles, tractors necessary to increase agricultural productivity in the island. Under the Rome Food Aid Convention scheme, Britain granted aid of Rs. 1 million for the purchase of wheat or coarse grain other than rice.<sup>67</sup> It also helped in the expansion of telecommunication lines in the island.<sup>68</sup>

Though a pro-West tilt was clearly discernible under the UNP regime, it continued to interact with the socialist countries in the pattern set by Bandarnaikes. For, these interactions provided Sri Lanka a stable market for her export items and import commodities. Besides the UNP premier also welcomed aid and assistance from them. To this the two communist power centres reacted in different ways. While the Soviet Union and its allies in East Europe continued to help Sri Lanka, as had been the case during the SLFP period, China for certain conjunctural reasons maintained an indifferent posture.<sup>69</sup> The Soviet Union's warm

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67 Ibid., vol. 13, no. 1, January-February 1969, p. 13.

68 Ibid., vol. 16, no. 6, June 1967, p. 17.

69 See Anuradha Muni, "Sri Lanka's China Policy : Major Trends", South Asian Studies, vol. 8, no. 1, 1973, p. 8.

relation could be ascribed to her basic motive to curb the influence of China in the region, and having found an opportunity because of China's lukewarm attitude, set to exploit it effectively. The Soviet Union's commitment during the Senanayake's period amounted to Rs. 142.8 million in grants and credits.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, in response to the 'not so cordial' relations prevailing between them, China only confined her activities to the Rubber-Rice pact which was annually renewed and reviewed. China also acknowledged other previous commitments. However there was no new initiatives from the Chinese side.

The erosion of cordiality with China resulted from the misperceptions of Ceylonese as well as Chinese ruling elites.<sup>70</sup> Though the UNP was induced with liberalism in its external relation, it continued to maintain its conservative posture within the country. Besides, it also had to appease the religious groups who had played an important role in its victory. To satisfy these conservative elements, it reimposed the ban on import of revolutionary and Marxist literature into the island, which

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70 Nara Narayan Das, "Sino-Ceylonese Relations, 1950-67", China Report, vol. 5, no. 5, September-October 1969, p. 7. He maintains that China's initial response to the UNP led Government was cordial, and China agreed to the exchange of goods worth 12 crores each way. But this growing friendship was somewhat marred in the second half of 1967 by the controversy of the import of 300 Mao badges.

had been annulled in 1956. Also, the Government requested three communist embassies to reduce their staff to the bare minimum.<sup>71</sup> It refused visas to delegates of the Indonesian Communist Party to participate in the Communist controlled Sri Lanka plantation workers' union. Visas of two Chinese diplomats were also not renewed.<sup>72</sup> The Government imposed restrictions on the import of Mao badges upto 300, that too only for the official use of the embassy and not for propaganda and distribution.<sup>73</sup> Other than these measures, the colonial elite's response to certain events also underlined their attitude towards China.

The UNP's attitude towards China started crystallizing as early as 1959 when she annexed Tibet, which raised much anxiety among the local Buddhist ecclesiastics. In 1962, again China was involved in a border clash with India which had its repercussion on Sri Lankan politics. The local Tamil population expressed their sympathy and castigated China as the aggressor. On both the occasions the UNP then in opposition, had articulated the populist feeling, as the ruling LFP had refused to take positions on the issue.<sup>74</sup>

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71 The Hindu, 12 April 1965.

72 Ibid.

73 Tribune, 2 September 1967.

74 Urmila Phadnis, "Ceylon and the Sino-Indian Border Conflict", Asian Survey, vol. 3, no. 2, 1966, pp. 189-96.

During the Cultural Revolution, political liquidation of religion like Islam affected the sentiments of the local Muslims. Mr. Mahommed, Labour and Housing Minister, in Mr. Dudley Senanayake cabinet protested against the ill-treatment meted to the Chinese Muslims.<sup>75</sup> The Chinese Government vehemently reacted to Mr Mahommed's protest note and demanded that the Government "should bear unshirkable responsibility for Mr. Mahommed's statement because he is a minister".<sup>76</sup> The Government refused to shoulder any such responsibility and maintained that statement deploring alleged "atrocities" was made in his individual capacity and as a leader of the Muslim community.<sup>77</sup>

The other issue concerned the invitation extended to a sports and cultural delegation from Taiwan by its Sri Lankan counterpart. Peking, reading, between the lines, apprehended that Dudley Senanayake's Government was opting for the two China theory and accused the Government of maintaining secret relations with Taiwan.<sup>78</sup> While refuting such charges as 'baseless' and 'frivolous', Mr. Dudley

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75 Ceylon Daily News, 25 February 1967; also see The Hindustan Times, 27 February 1967.

76 The Statesman, 6 March 1967.

77 Ibid.

78 Ceylon Daily News, 9 September 1967.

Senanayake made it clear that the Government had nothing to do with the activities of autonomous organizations and institutions. More than that, in the Parliament, he strongly took exception to the intemperate language of the Chinese notes and remarked, "as far as we are concerned, we want to be on the best terms with China...but we will not be bullied by anyone".<sup>79</sup>

Thus the colonial elite's preference to the maintenance of close relations with the West continued with greater sophistication in the second phase. In the first phase the colonial elites were under the illusion of Communist internationalism and took an anti-Communist stand. In the second phase domestic and international conditions helped in the petering down of the anti-Communist prejudices. Though they continued to be pro-West, now they also maintained relations with the Communist countries. Here again, one sees difference in degree of friendship between the Soviet Union and China. While friendship with the Soviet Union was on better footing, that with China was of indifference. However, this indifference was not because of any ideological reasons, but due to different perceptions the ruling elites had of

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79 Cited by Muni, n. 69.

each other's domestic politics and moreover the UNP had to develop such an attitude because of electoral prospects.

In this general interactional patterns of the colonial elites, certain exceptions and deviations are to be found which emerged from the island's political and economic constraints.

In 1950, Sri Lanka recognized China. This was more in response to the British decision to recognise China. Britain was motivated to recognize China because protection of her imperial interest in the East called for the maintenance of cordial relations with her. As Sri Lanka's foreign policy management was heavily dependent upon Britain, she had little alternative than to follow the suit. But when China in reciprocation gestured for the establishment of diplomatic relations,<sup>80</sup> D.S. Senanayake found it a 'bit unusual' and conveyed that his government would use the good offices of Britain in Peking.<sup>81</sup>

Another exception was the sign of Rubber-Rice barter agreement with China in 1952 under which China bought Sri Lanka's rubber at a price higher than world market

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80 New York Times, 10 January 1950.

81 K.P. Karunakaran, India in World Affairs, 1950-53 (Calcutta, 1955), p. 68.

and supplied her rice at a low price.<sup>82</sup> Following the invocation of the Battle Ship Act and the UN declaration banning all trade with China, she was denied rubber by her traditional suppliers - Singapore and Malaysia. Similarly, Sri Lanka was facing a huge stockpile of rubber following the US Government's decision to protect her own synthetic industries. Moreover, the island was facing severe shortage of rice. Burma, her traditional supplier, was faced with problems of sorts.<sup>83</sup> Thus, the colonial elites were forced to compromise with their anti-Communist posture because of economic necessities.<sup>84</sup>

Economic dependence upon China partially caused Kotelawala to be <sup>mild</sup> in his attitude towards <sup>her engine</sup> Bandung Conference. As a matter of fact, Kotelawala went to the extent of making a distinction between the Soviet Union and China, and regarded the latter to be acceptable. One wonders why a rabid

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82 For details about the agreement see, Muni, n. 69.

83 S.K. Ghosh, "Insurgency in South East Asia", Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, vol. 8, no. 4, April-June 1976, p. 443. He comments: "...the insurgents were active almost all over Burma till the end of the '60s...."

84 John Cardew, "Ceylon's Trade with China : The Economic Background", New Commonwealth, vol. 25, no. 377, April 1953. He remarks: "It was not so much from economic motives as economic compulsions".



anti-Marxist like Kotelawala soft paddled on China? Various theses have been put forward like his idiosyncracies - his personality clash with Nehru resulted in cultivating cordiality with Chou En-lai etc. Though one cannot deny the personality dimension of the affair, it would be naive to assume it as the exclusive factor. One should note the economic constraints that were involved in moulding Kotelawala's views. Besides, towards the latter part of the first phase, economic relations were initiated with some of the West European Communist countries too.

Similarly, Dudley Senanayake as an opposition leader was harshly critical of the Maritime agreements that Mrs Bandarnaike had arrived with the Soviet Union and China to facilitate commerce and trade with them. Even during the election campaign he had pronounced to abrogate them if his party came to power.<sup>85</sup> However, on coming to power he continued with arrangement which was flagrant violation of his election pledges. But he had little choice to make in this regard. Abrogation of the agreements would have affected Sri Lanka's relation with all the socialist countries, including the availability of stable markets for her export items like tea. With economy in doldrums he could not afford to take such risks.

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85 See K.P. Krishna Shetty, "Ceylon's Foreign Policy : Emerging Patterns of Nonalignment", South Asian Studies, vol. 1, no. 2, 1966, pp. 29-31.

## IV

Despite their dependence upon West, the ruling colonial elites pursued the status objectives as it helped them to ensure the island's security as well as its internal stability and systemic balance. As the public opinion in the island was for the manifestation of independence resulting in the development of emotive links with other Afro-Asian people fighting colonialism and imperialism, the colonial elites unhesitatingly identified themselves with the popular current. Such identification with Afro-Asian nationalism not only helped them to carry the masses along but also provided them a larger platform to interact with other states which minimized their threat perception.

It is in this context that Don Stephens Senanayake declared his foreign policy to be that of 'middle path'.<sup>86</sup> The 'middle path' policy manifested in his government's activity participation in the Asian Relation Conference in 1947 at New Delhi to mobilize pressure for Indonesian nationalist struggle.<sup>87</sup> His Government projected its support to the Indonesian nationalists and thereby refused port facilities to the Dutch war-ships en route to Indonesia for

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86 Wiggins, n. 27, p. 396.

87 Prasad, n. 46, p. 149.

suppressing the liberation movement.<sup>88</sup> Besides, the Government articulated its desire to join the United Nations but being embroiled in the prevailing bloc politics, it failed in this aspiration. Consequently, the colonial elites ventilated the grievances and demanded for the establishment of an Asian United Nations free from cold-war politics.<sup>89</sup>

In the pursuit of the status, Sir John Kotelawala was more outward than his two predecessors because of his own desire to be an acknowledged leader of Afro-Asian Community.<sup>90</sup> In this regard, he aspired to make Sri Lanka the 'Switzerland of Asia' and for the motive he convened in 1954 a conference of five South East Asian Prime Ministers at Colombo to discuss problems of the region. It was in this conference that he abnegated the idea of joining the SEATO because it conflicted with the aspiration of the South East Asian States.<sup>91</sup> In Bandung Conference of 1955, he championed the cause of Afro-Asian nationalism and even went to the extent of signing two declarations, viz. (1) to abstain from the use of collective defence arrangements to

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88 Shetty, n. 85, pp. 3-4.

89 Prasad, n. 46, pp. 149-50.

90 S. A. Pakeman, Ceylon (London, 1964), p. 205. He remarks that Sir John was "more interested in world politics, than his two predecessors".

91 Kotelawala, n. 33, p. 140.

serve the particular interest of any one of the big powers, and (2) to declare colonialism in all its manifestations as an evil which should be speedily brought to an end. It is here that he made a distinction between China and the Soviet Union, characterizing the latter to be a colonial power in relation to the East European countries.<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, the colonial elites in their second term of office under Dudley reflected their preoccupation with the pursuit of status by identifying with other oppressed and weak nations. In the meantime, S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike had already given a more concrete shape to the policy of middle path, to which Dudley adhered to. During his tenure he supported China's membership to the UN and expressed concern over the unstable situation in the Middle East and Vietnam. Particularly in the case of Vietnam, he took initiatives to bring peace in the area. In this regard he proposed a solution for peace which was conveyed to the involved parties. The North Vietnamese authorities agreed to Prime Minister Dudley's proposal only on the condition that if it should precede a ceasefire in accordance with the Geneva agreement of 1954. Besides, the North Vietnamese contended that the first talks should begin with the National

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92 Ibid., pp. 170-73.

Liberation Front and the South Vietnam Government. But such a conference was precluded because of the resumption of incessant bombing on Hanoi.

e Premier Dudley Senanayake's proposal viewed the problem of Vietnam as an internal affairs of the Vietnamese people which should be settled by consultation between North Vietnam, the National Liberation Front, and South Vietnam, and the meetings of these parties should be free from external interferences. If, however, the concerned parties decided that the services of a 'neutral' nation was necessary, he made his government's willingness to play such a purposeful role clear.<sup>93</sup>

However, the UNP Government refrained from voting on the resolution in the United Nations having cold war prejudices, because it did not wish to alienate any of the involved parties, the USA, the Soviet Union or China, because of their assistance to Sri Lanka in stabilizing the economy. However, in an informal manner, the UNP Prime Minister did not approve of American bombing and military operations.

In 1968, when the Soviet military intervened in Czechoslovakia to suppress popular reaction against the government, Sri Lanka strongly disapproved of the act, and

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93 The Sun, 6 June 1966.

demanding immediate withdrawal of foreign troops and restoration of democratic rights to the Czechs to determine their own government. Nevertheless, Sri Lanka avoided to be a party to the controversial resolutions having undertones of bloc politics.<sup>94</sup>

Mr. Dudley Senanayake in various conferences like the Commonwealth, non-aligned, and bilateral discussions made his position in opposition to colonialism, racialism, and imperialism and wanted early withdrawal of the colonial powers from Africa or elsewhere. It is in this context that he criticized the minority regime of Ian Smith in Rhodesia and also suspended all activities with her. Besides, he upheld the demand of Mrs Bandarnaike's Government for declaring Indian Ocean as 'a zone of peace'. Even, other policies of the previous government pertaining to world peace and disarmament, continued to get the support of the colonial elites.

However, in both their tenures, the colonial elites have projected their pro-Western biases and prejudices, and have made compromises with status objective at times. Such compromises have been determined by the class perceptions of the ruling elites and their inability to exercise dominance on the system as such. In early phase, when the

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94 See The Ceylon Today, vol. 16, nos. 4-5, March-April 1967.

policy was more outward oriented, such elites were clearly discernible from their external interactions. The colonial elites, in this phase had no hesitation in co-operating with the Western bloc to suppress the Communist-led nationalist struggles in Vietnam or Korea.<sup>95</sup>

However, in the second phase such open 'alignment' with the West on <sup>the</sup> issue is not discernible. The incapacities of the socio-economic system prevailed upon them to function in the pattern set by Mr. Bandarnaike. However, if one looks at Dudley Senanayake's policy in the country his pro-Western tilts are clear, as has already been discussed.

Besides, while opposing racism and supporting rights of self-determination, he did not take a firm stand against South Africa, as had been the case of Rhodesia.<sup>96</sup> In the Middle East crisis of 1967, Dudley Senanayake also refrained from castigating Israel which had violated the UN resolutions. Such compromises or deviations were due to the market they offered to Sri Lanka's export commodities.

In sum, the colonial elites' interactions in the international system displays penchant, for the West and

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95 Shetty, n. 85, pp. 3-5.

96 See Hewatharana, n. 55, pp. 114-16. Such discrepancies are because of economic pressures. The Government could not afford to be firm towards South Africa as it purchased about 7 per cent of Sri Lanka's total tea output.

antipathy towards the Communist states. During the first tenure, such prejudices were clearly reflected in their foreign policy manoeuvrings. In the second term, such prejudices, to a considerable extent, were camouflaged because of the general changes in the contextual environment including the pattern laid down by Mr Bandarnaike and his wife - Srimavo. However, their predilections for West and indisposition towards the Communist states were clear from their policy within the country. However, because of the weakness of the socio-economic system, their stands towards Communist states could not be of total alienation. It is only with the case of China that some sort of casual indifference is projected, but essential economic relations <sup>with</sup> was maintained. At the same time, the colonial elites pursued the status objective by identifying with the currents of Afro-Asian nationalism in international politics as well as by adhering to broader <sup>democratic</sup> domestic values and ethos because it helped them to maintain systemic equilibrium within the country.

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CHAPTER V

## CHAPTER V

### THE NATIONALIST ELITES AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

With the landslide victory of the People's United Front - Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP)<sup>1</sup> - in the 1956 elections, the state apparatus came under the control of the nationalist elites with Mr S.W.R.D. Bandarnaika as the Prime Minister. As the representative of the nationalist forces,<sup>2</sup> Mr. Bandarnaika's main motivation was the assertion of Sri Lanka's economic and political independence. This necessitated

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1 The MEP was constituted of SLFP, Philip Gunawardena's Viplakari Lanka Sama Samaj Party (VLSSP), Ehasa Peramuna (EP), and a group of independent MPs led by R.A. Irigolle. It had arranged no-context pacts with the left parties. For details see A. Jeyaratnam Wilson, Politics in Sri Lanka in 1947-73 (Bristol, 1973), p. 140; and for the objectives of various constituents of the Front see Calvin W. Woodward, The Growth of Party System in Ceylon (Providence, 1969), pp. 171-223.

2 The leadership of the MEP was essentially petty bourgeois, which was guided by petty bourgeois socialist principles, which in reality manifests into state capitalism, the major feature of which is that state intervenes both in the production as well as distribution of commodities. This is possible through state ownership of major productive sectors, as well as market regulatory laws.

state interventionism<sup>3</sup> in domestic sector to facilitate the development for state capitalism, because the indigenous capitalists were not strong enough to carry out the task on their own. As a result, Bandarnaike had to look forward to the external environment for support, and in this context his strategy was that of minimization of dependence upon foreign private capital and maximization of its manoeuvrability to exploit the contradictions in the international power structure. This is correlated in specific terms, to the endeavour towards diversification of trade and assistance procurement to overcome the inbuilt constraints of the colonial economic structure's potentiality to generate capital.<sup>4</sup>

But the efficacy of such motivations and corollary actions were conditional to the removal of the stigma which branded Sri Lanka with the West, and on the contrary being

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3 The term has been borrowed from Ernest Mandel, Late Capitalism (London, 1975), pp. 482-6. It means increased economic intervention by the state through nationalization and expropriation of various sectors of production. This is, however, a manipulative strategy which attempts to integrate the exploitative classes with the state power for the sake of legitimization, but its effectivity depends upon the nature of the social formation. In Sri Lanka, it has partly succeeded and partly failed. Failure could be identified from 1971 insurgency and success is in the sense that in 1977 election the left parties faced a debacle, as well as their getting bound in parliamentarism.

4 For detailed discussions on this aspect refer Andre Gunder Frank, Latin America: Underdevelopment of Revolution (London, 1970), and his other book, Lumpen Bourgeoisie and Lumpen Development (London, 1975).

able to attract the attention of various competing interests in the global politics. It is in this context, that Mr. Bandarnaike declared his foreign policy to be based upon nonalignment and friendship with all countries.<sup>5</sup> He systematically interacted to establish Sri Lanka's independent status in international politics.

The first and the foremost concern of Mr Bandarnaike in this regard was to remove those 'issue areas' in Sri Lanka's politics which dubbed her as pro-West. In conformity with the MEP's election pledges, he negotiated the withdrawal of the British military bases from the island. During the course of negotiation, Mr Bandarnaike withstood pressures from various Western quarters, trying to deter his move.<sup>6</sup> In 1957, the negotiations culminated in an agreement between the two governments for elimination of these bases, but it was also agreed that the dislocation would take about three years and certain services would be provided for five years. Mr Bandarnaike agreed to pay a sum of Rs.22 million as compensation for the unremovable property.<sup>7</sup> However, it

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5 Ceylon, House of Representative, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 14, 1953, col. 509.

6 e.g. Ceylon Daily News, 7 May 1956. It quoted New York Times for advising all members of the Commonwealth to 'put all reasonable' pressure on S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike to modify his stand on the issue of withdrawal of the bases. This was on the eve of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference at London.

7 Ceylon, House of Representative, Parliamentary Debates, vol. 29, 1957, col. 86.

should be mentioned that despite the removal of bases, the External and Defence pact, as such, was not abrogated.

The continuation of the pact could be ascribed to the inherent constraints of smallness of the island. It did not have a strong militia capable to protect and defend its territory in case of an external attack, and if at all such situation arose in the given circumstances the agreement could come handy, since Sri Lanka could rely upon Britain for help. Furthermore, with all sorts of pressures from Western quarters against the withdrawal of bases, abrogation would have been an extreme act, especially in the height of cold war. The outcome of this would have adversely affected Sri Lanka; more so when her dependence upon Western market for disposal of export items was still acute. Hence in the given correlation of political, economic and security forces, Mr Bandarnaike was constrained to take a moderate stand, which helped to remove the stigma of being a 'colony' without alienating Western powers.

During the negotiation with Britain for removal of the bases, the Suez crisis broke out, where Britain involved herself militarily, and this posed a serious test to Mr. Bandarnaike's non-aligned policy. He took a firm stand on the issue i.e. Britain would not use the Sri Lankan bases for military operations against Egypt.<sup>8</sup>

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8 Ibid., vol. 27, 1956, col. 426.

Secondly, the indifferent and hostile attitude of the colonial elite towards communism and communist states which had undermined Sri Lanka's independence, was done away with. The interests of the nationalist elites to build independent capitalism as well as to assert their political independence, found aid avenues from socialist states useful too.<sup>9</sup> In this context, he negotiated the establishment of diplomatic missions with the Soviet Union and China.<sup>10</sup> In 1957, Sri Lanka appointed G.P. Malalasekara and W.A. Perera, as Ambassador to the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China respectively.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as the nationalist elites, perception of communism differed from that of the colonial elite, Mr. Bandarnaike, on assumption of office, annulled the ban imposed on the importation of Marxist literature into the island.<sup>12</sup> A number of dignitaries from the Communist

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9 See for details Harish Kapur, The Soviet Union and the Emerging Nations (Geneva, 1972); see also, J.P. Anand, "Sino-Ceylonese Relations", Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, vol. 3, no. 3, January 1971, pp. 325-52; Sreedhar and S.K. Ghosh, "China's Foreign Aid Programme", ibid., vol. 5, no. 1, July 1972, pp. 1-46.

10 Ceylon Daily News, 26 April 1956, and D.M. Prasad, Ceylon's Foreign Policy under the Bandarnaike: A Political Analysis (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 55-57.

11 Ibid.

12 Urmila Phadnis, "Non-alignment as a Factor in Ceylon's Foreign Policy", International Studies, vol. 3, 1962, pp. 426-7.

states also visited Sri Lanka in appreciation of the changing attitude of the government to cultivate friendship and win her support.

In February 1957, Chou En-lai visited Sri Lanka and stressed China's conviction on the five principles of peaceful co-existence (Panchshila) and in 'the spirit of Bandung'.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the Soviet Union sent a cultural delegation to Sri Lanka in November 1956<sup>14</sup> and in early 1958 the Czech Prime Minister, Mr. William Siroky, visited the island.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, the nationalist elites also continued their friendly relations with the United States and other Western countries. Despite the fact that Bandarnaike did away with the British bases, he did not alienate the British nor did he try to incur the wrath of the Western bloc. As maintenance of link with the Commonwealth was still in the interest of Sri Lanka, because of large volume of trade with its members, he gave special attention to it. During Suez crisis, when there was pressure on Mr Bandarnaike from the left forces to quit the Commonwealth because of British involvement, he maintained that Sri Lanka's membership of

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13 New York Times, 2 February 1957, p. 13.

14 The Weekly Times, 20 November 1957, p. 5.

15 New York Times, 2 February 1958, p. 3.



the Commonwealth stood in no way contravention with the basic policy of the government.<sup>16</sup> However, in this regard, Mr Bandarnaike was not guided by "sloppy sentiments", nor did he feel tied to it by the crimson thread of common blood, but by "the golden thread of a common tradition".<sup>17</sup> In the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference, he exchanged views with other leaders on various problems and wanted it to play an effective role in world politics. Similarly, Mr Bandarnaike's relation with the US was cordial. He appreciated the peace making role of the US in the Suez crisis and visited the United States to have an informal talk with President Eisenhower.<sup>18</sup>

To boost his non-aligned policy, Mr. Bandarnaike did not take a partisan stand in the Hungarian crisis because such stand would have only escalated instability and war; instead he worked for peace in the area.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, when his government agreed to allow the 'Voice of America' to

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16 Ceylon Daily News, 2 November 1956.

17 Prasad, n. 10, p. 63.

18 Ceylon Daily News, 30 November 1956.

19 See for details, Prasad, n. 10, pp. 69-72. Discussed in Section V.

broadcast its programmes over Radio Ceylon for its listeners in the South and South East Asia, he also made it clear that the Soviet Union and the East European countries would be provided with such facilities if they were interested.<sup>20</sup> When it was brought to the Government's notice that the VOA was using the facilities to vilify China, the Government wanted the scripts to be approved before broadcasting.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the nationalist elite led by Mr Bandarnaik tried to ensure Sri Lanka's independent status by maintaining cordial relations with both the blocs. Through the abrogation of various measures within the country like the ban on import of left literature and her non-aligned role on cold war disputes, Sri Lanka made herself acceptable to the socialist states. Similarly, she did not alienate the Western bloc. Consequently, both the competing interests were keen on having friendly relations with the government, because of their interests in the area.

Moreover, Sri Lanka's membership in the UN<sup>22</sup> made these states, not to let her go in favour of their adversaries,

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20 Ceylon Daily News, 18 July 1956.

21 Ibid., 5 April 1956.

22 In 1955 Sri Lanka through the package deal entered the UN. For details see Jerry Joldersma, Ceylon and the United Nations (Unpublished thesis) (Michigan University, Microfilm, 1969), pp. 5-20.

since the battle was then mainly being fought in the General Assembly and Security Council, where Sri Lanka's vote was a big weapon for either. Thus, the competitive interests shown by the two bloc leaders took care of Sri Lanka's security objectives because neither would like to have a change in the status quo detrimental to their respective national interests.

Simultaneously, the nationalist elite's desire for economic development received a filip because both the Western and the Communist states came forward to help Sri Lanka.<sup>23</sup> In the USA, the Battle Act was revoked and in 1956 the US made a grant of \$ 500,000 with no strings attached to it.<sup>24</sup> Besides, the US Government requested the Congress for a further appropriation for economic aid to Sri Lanka under various schemes like the PL-480. In aggregate, Sri Lanka received aid worth Rs. 360 million under various schemes of the US Government. Consequently, the US-Sri Lanka relation took a more realistic view of the situation. When Kennedy came to power, aid and assistance to Sri Lanka was even more readily available.

Sri Lanka also continued to maintain its economic links with the UK, while at the same time striving to

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23 See Appendix Tables 1-3.

24 Ceylon Daily News, 19 May 1956.

diversify its markets.<sup>25</sup> In this context, Japan and the East European countries were giving tough competition to the UK in supply of consumer goods. Consequently, the percentage of imports from UK decreased,<sup>26</sup> entailing decline in the degree of dependence on it.

However, Sri Lanka's relations with the US and the West in general marked a decline when Prime Minister Mrs Bandarnaike nationalized the Anglo-American oil companies like the Shell, ESSO and Caltex which had virtual monopoly over petroleum business in the island. This decision was in pursuance with Government's policy to strengthen the domestic economic base. It was willing to pay compensation to the companies too. However, disagreement occurred over the amount to be paid and on the manner of payment. The United States Government strongly reacted against this decision of the Government by stopping aid to the island under Foreign Assistance Act of 1961.<sup>27</sup> Besides, the World Bank also took similar action against Sri Lanka.<sup>28</sup>

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25 Buddhadasa Hewavitharana, "Economic Compulsion and Foreign Policy : Ceylon, a Case Study", in S.P. Verma and K. P. Mishra, Foreign Policies in South Asia (Jaipur, 1969), pp. 106-17.

26 Prasad, n. 10, p. 87.

27 S.U. Kodikara, "Ceylon's Foreign Policy : Global Compulsions and Regional Responsibilities", in S.P. Verma and K.P. Mishra, n. 25, pp. 252-3.

28 Hindustan Standard, 22 September 1964.

But the most significant cast of Sri Lanka's foreign policy was its economic interactions with the Communist states. Bilateral trade agreements were signed with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Rumania. These agreements not only suited the nationalist elites' desire to diversify dependence but also provided better market opportunities for exports to overcome the vagaries of Western markets.<sup>29</sup> The biggest share in this context was of China which not only renewed the Rubber-Rice pact in 1957 and 1962, but also granted large quantum of aid. The Chinese aid during this period amounted to more than Rs.200 million. The Soviet Union and the East European countries helped to develop the industrial infrastructure in Sri Lanka. The importance of such economic interactions with the Communist state is also indicative from the fact that in July 1963, Mrs Bandarnaike concluded Maritime agreements with China and the Soviet Union which provided that the ships of these countries would sail to and fro the ports of the two countries to Sri Lanka to undertake cargo and passenger services. These agreements were favourable to China and the Soviet Union because it facilitated the early transport of commodities.<sup>30</sup>

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29 For details see Buddhadasa Hewavitharana, "The Management of External and Internal Finances in Sri Lanka Problems and Policies", Asian Survey, vol. 13, no. 12, 1973, pp. 1137-54; and Hewavitharana, n. 25.

30 Kodikara, n. 27, pp. 124-5.

It is worth mentioning that towards the end of the first phase of the nationalist elite Government under Mrs Bandarnaike, economic interactions were more with the Communist states than the West because of Sri Lanka's own economic and political imperatives,<sup>31</sup> and also because of the stringent measures taken by the US Government and the World Bank following her nationalization of the oil companies.

When in 1970 the nationalist elites in alliance with the left parties of the LSSP and the CP, formed the United Front Government, the same independent stance was maintained in political sphere. This was manifested in her recognition of North Vietnam, East Germany, the Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam and North Korea as well as the suspension of diplomatic relation with Israel in July 1970 which was in pursuance with the United Front Government's pledges to take such steps, unless Israel withdrew from the occupied area in the Middle East.<sup>32</sup> It also took stringent measures against various foreign organisations operating in the country which

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31 Prasad, n. 10, pp. 112-17; also see S.U. Kodikara, "Sri Lanka's Nonalignment Policy", Asian Survey, vol. 13, no. 12, December 1973; Appendix Tables 1 and 2.

32 Kodikara, *ibid.*, pp. 1132-3.

were perceived as working against its national interests.

In economic interactions the bias towards the Communist States was even more pronounced,<sup>33</sup> and reflected the radical programme the government had embarked upon within the island. The sections where foreign private capital played a major role like plantations and banking were nationalized. However, its close co-operation with the Communist states - particularly China - was about to have 'temporary' set back after the insurgency of 1971, because of her alleged complicity with the insurgents.<sup>34</sup> Later on, however, China emerged as the major economic partner of Sri Lanka.

The Janatha Vimukti Peramuna (JVP) - People's Liberation Front-led insurrection of April 1971 exposed the weakness of the state power to meet various societal demands and brought to light the growing contradictions in the economy which threatened the dominance of the nationalist

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33 See <sup>Appendix</sup> Table 7. Countrywise quantification and demarcation could not be possible because of non-availability of data. Same is the case with the tabulation of aid received by the island.

34 Ceylon Daily News, April 1971.

elite in the state apparatus<sup>35</sup> and thereby prevailed upon them to divert their emphasis to the maintenance of security and stability objectives.

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35 For details see Kathleen Gough, "Imperialism and Revolutionary Potential in South Asia", in Kathleen Gough and Hari P. Sharma, Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia (New York, 1973); Jayasumana Obeyesekere, "Revolutionary Movements in Ceylon", *ibid.*, pp. 368-98; Fred Halliday, "The Ceylonese Insurrection", in Robin Blackburn, ed., Explosion in a Subcontinent (London, 1975), pp. 151-221. Also refer Charles S. Blackton, "Sri Lanka's Marxists", Problems of Communism, vol. 22, no. 1, January-February 1973, pp. 28-43. He highlights the challenge posed to the established left parties by the JVP and its insurgent strategy. For a comprehensive study on the 1971 insurgency refer, P. Dutt, Youth Protest in South Asia: A Case Study of JVP in Sri Lanka (M.Phil Dissertation, JNU, 1976). But I have serious objections to Dutt's characterization of the insurgency as a manifestation of youth protest. Protest is essentially a form or method of plebian politics in an oppressive feudal society. In the capitalist system protest as a political strategy is adopted in the pre-revolutionary stage, particularly in economies where elements of feudalism exist within the capitalist system, with the purpose of instilling revolutionary consciousness among the oppressed sections of the feudal sector of the society i.e. peasantry. But JVP insurrection was by no means a pre-revolutionary struggle; as it aimed at capturing state power to bring about socialism in the island. Therefore, to characterize the JVP politics as "protest politics" is sheer misreading of history. Even such a characterization is also wrong from the liberal stand point which views protest as objection to specific aspect(s) of the political system and demands for its change. Also from this angle the JVP cannot be conceptualized as a form of youth protest. Its main aim was total breakdown of the prevailing capitalist economic structure.



This revolutionary political tendency<sup>36</sup> was on the verge of capturing state power, but for the help of countries like the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain, Pakistan, India and others.<sup>37</sup> Other than the brewing of such tendency, the state apparatus was also threatened by the Tamils who were clamouring for greater autonomy and the more radical Tamil elements were for secession.<sup>38</sup> with

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- 36 I prefer (with certain reservation) the term 'political tendency' to 'movement' because the JVP insurgency was mainly confined to the alienated youth population, and majority of the labour force proletariat and peasantry were out of it. Either they were under the leadership of the established left parties or with the mass fronts of the bourgeois liberal democratic parties. The JVP leadership made no attempts to win over the working class forces and instil revolutionary consciousness in them. Besides, the JVP had a sectarian outlook because it was anti-Tamil, consequently against the Tamil plantation workers, which constitute the largest working class forces in the island and the most exploited and oppressed ones too. This is against the basic postulates of Marxism-Leninism.
- 37 Mrs Bandarnaika stated: "During the insurgency in April 1971, the help and assistance received by my government from the USA, China, USSR, India, Pakistan, Britain, UAR, Yugoslavia, GDR and the Federal Republic of Germany and others bear striking testimony to the correctness of the policy, we have followed." Ceylon Today, vol. 21, nos. 5-6, May-June 1972, p. 37. Also see Dutt, n. 35.
- 38 Amirthalingam, General Secretary of the Federal Party (FP) while addressing a party rally at Kankesanturai (East Province) on 13 January reported to have said that it was time that the FP gave its stand for federation and demanded a separate state. Patriot, 15 January 1972; The Sun, 13 January 1972, carried a front story on the Tamils headline, "Secession Threats Perturb Government"; See The Guardian (Rangoon), 19 January 1972.

the increasing intensity of economic deterioration, the momentum of such demands were rising. The strengthening of the island's military forces to meet such exigencies as well as economic growth and development were important for the appeasement of the alienated social forces and containment of class struggles in society, along with the rehabilitation of the insurgents, mainly youth.<sup>39</sup> Since the actualization of such schemes necessitated 'capital' whose internal generation was difficult, the ruling elites tried to maximise the quantum of aids and loans from abroad to enable them to reconsolidate their position.<sup>40</sup>

In this regard, the SLFP led Government found a very responsive external environment. Members of the international community interested in the region not only helped in suppressing the insurgency, but readily came forward to the aid of government to meet the challenges thrown by the event. The foreign powers were concerned about maintenance

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39 Dutt, n. 35.

40 The Government also tried to get better prices for tea; in this regard it united with other basic commodity exporting states and with India in the case of tea. Details will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. See Ceylon Daily News, 23 January 1976.

of the status quo, because a non-conformist revolutionary party<sup>41</sup> in power could have created an 'unpredictable' situation, and affected the existing power relationship in the subcontinent. China, just after the insurgency, offered a loan of \$ 25 millions in convertible currency for economic development and provided two cargo ships to facilitate the island's trading activities, besides renewing the traditional Rubber-Rice Pact. She also tried to help Sri Lanka's military by giving her five high powered naval boats, and arms and ammunition. Simultaneously aid flowed from other countries and international agencies, like the Soviet Union,<sup>42</sup> the USA,<sup>43</sup> the UK, IBRD, Asian Development

41 Non-conformist ideological stand of the JVP has been aptly stated by Phadnis as "eclectic, incorporating the world outlook of Marxism-Leninism, a Maoist itch for violent action, a Che Guevarist obsession with instant revolution, the ethnocentrism of Sinhalese Buddhism and last but not the least, the universal frustration of angry educated unemployed and under-employed youth." Urmila Phadnis, "Insurgency in Ceylonese Politics : Problems and Prospects", Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, vol. 3, no. 4, April 1971, p. 596.

42 Swaroop Rani Dubey, "Sri Lanka : A Survey of Events - 1970-72", South Asian Studies, vol. 8, no. 1, 1973, pp. 113-18. Russia also donated a 250 ton patrol boat to the Sri Lankan Navy christened as the Samadhra Devi fitted with sophisticated electronic gear and armaments. Dawn (Karachi), 3 January 1976.

43 Ibid. Similar assistance were earlier available from the US like a 10-ton tractor, one 25-ton bed trailer and four tractors as the first delivery of the US consignment to Sri Lanka. Ceylon Daily News, 27 January 1972.

Bank and many other sources. The World Bank channelled about \$ 50 millions as aid, while the Asian Development Bank granted loan of \$ 860,000 for modernization of tea industry and other agricultural production processes.<sup>44</sup> Bulgaria, Poland and East Germany concluded bilateral agreements on economic and technical co-operation entitling her to huge amounts of credit for industrialization programme.<sup>45</sup> The Middle East countries bought large quantities of tea from her and in turn supplied crude petroleum and sugar.<sup>46</sup> Thus the nationalist elite under Mrs Bandarnaike looked forward and received economic aid, assistance and loans from diverse quarters for stabilization of the economy and containment of class struggles and communal strifes<sup>47</sup> in the society.

Thus the general interaction pattern of the nationalist elites' governments of Mr S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike and his wife Srimavo aimed at an independent stance in

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44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 "Communal strife" here denotes the conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils which cut across class contradictions and took the form of struggle between two distinct nationalities.

international politics based on the policy of non-alignment and friendship with all, and at the same time strove to assert foreign policy objectives. This was possible because the various power centres accepted their nationalist postures and showed interests in maintaining friendship with Sri Lanka for various reasons.

However, the inherent smallness of the island raised obstacle of sorts and led the ruling nationalist elite to compromise with the basic policy pronouncements. The nature and degree of such compromises were influenced, if not determined, by contextual factors. For example, following the insurgency, Mrs Bandarnaike's Government de-recognized North Korea and ordered the closing down of their embassy because it was alleged that the North Koreans in many ways were involved in fomenting the insurgency.<sup>48</sup> But actions were not taken against China, though similar allegations were reported because of the dependence of the island<sup>a</sup> upon her.<sup>49</sup> What also appears interesting is that China

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48 Dubey, n. 42, pp. 110-17.

49 The Statesman, 16 May 1971. It comments: "while the Ceylonese Government also suspects China to have a role in insurgency (though officially such charges are denied), it is in a dilemma and is prepared to absolve her.... China dilemma stems on the economic assistance it provides. A severance of ties with China under the circumstances would be unthinkable, subversion or no subversion."

expediently criticized the insurgency and also helped the ruling elite to consolidate their position.

Similarly, the Government did not take any notice of the big powers' naval activities in Indian Ocean area.<sup>50</sup> She maintained a neutral attitude towards such activities,<sup>51</sup>

50 Refer A.R.H. Taylor, "Cold War about to Overtake Diego Garcia", Hong Kong Standard, 2 February 1971; Raymond Heard, "The Cold War Rivalry in Indian Ocean", The Strait Times, 24 January 1972. He comments: "The fact is that Russians have established their own naval presence in Indian Ocean in the last few years and have exploited the South Asian crises (Bangladesh and April 1971) to re-inforce it.... Hence Mr Nixon intends 'to show the flag in the Indian Ocean that the Russians will not regard it as their own hunting ground...." Besides the two French, Chinese and British fleets were in the area on naval exercises. See Ceylon Daily News, 15 October 1973. In reference to the Soviet vessel lurking near Sri Lanka coast, Lakshman Jayakody said very mildly that it could not immediately be identified and it even did not respond to Sri Lanka's navy's signals, but later on was found to be a Soviet trawler which "probably failed to understand the signal". The newspaper reported that though it was in the guise of a trawler, it was fitted with latest military equipments. Besides, it also reported that Soviet submarines were lurking around Sri Lanka. Similarly American "Enterprise" was also cruising in the area. See The Statesman, 9 January 1972. For a lucid discussion of power politics in Indian Ocean see K.R. Singh, The Indian Ocean: Big Power Presence and Local Response (Delhi, 1978).

51 Though the UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim had asked India, Sri Lanka and other littoral countries to send him factual reports with regard to Big power naval activity in the area, Sri Lanka, the champion of the zone of peace idea, did not respond to it. Ceylon Daily News, 14 December 1973.

and at times provided hospitality to the big powers' naval ships in the area<sup>52</sup> despite her emphatic stand on the region being declared a zone of peace.<sup>53</sup> The post-insurgency dependence upon these countries resulted in the dilution of her independent postures.

Despite the constraints upon Sri Lanka's autonomy due to its dependence upon the external milieu, the nationalist elites, impelled to manifest Sri Lanka's distinctive identity in global plane, evinced interest in playing important roles in world affairs. Consequently, during their tenures in power, foreign policy interactions were more outward oriented and dynamic. Rightly did they perceive the potentialities that lay in the non-aligned policy for achievements of such ends.<sup>54</sup>

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52 Guardian (Rangoon), 23 January 1972, reported that a 18,000 US 'mobile' warship of the Seventh Fleet called at Colombo. Similar cordiality was provided to other countries.

53 It is for this that the Statesman editorial comment was that "The Ceylonese resolution calling for the Indian Ocean - a zone of peace, which was euphorically (sic) passed last month by the UN General Assembly, without a dissenting vote is already worth little more than the paper on which it was written." The Statesman, 9 January 1972.

54 For an elaborate discussion on this subject refer, J.W. Burton, International Relations (Bombay, 1971), pp. 163-227.

Mr. Bandernaike's foreign policy interactions, motivated by the principles of non-alignment and friendship with all nations, enabled Sri Lanka to take up forthright positions against colonialism and imperialism. In this context, one finds that Sri Lanka categorically supported Egypt in Suez canal issue and the peoples of Algeria, Tunisia, Cyprus, Palestine and Vietnam in their nationalist struggles.

In the Middle East crisis, the nationalist elites, in 1970, unhesitatingly suspended diplomatic relations with Israel, for her violation of the UN resolutions and for occupying Arab territory. In various international conferences and foras, the nationalist elites condemned the racist regimes and their apartheid policy practices, particularly in Southern Africa.

However, on the cold war issues, the nationalist elites being severely handicapped, were less forthright, but no less conspicuous. Disinterested in going into the merit of the conflicts, they worked towards their resolution through negotiations and discussions. As such, the small-state-role assertion was made in unison with other new states to put pressure on the rival blocs to end hostility. However, at the same time they differentiated the human dimension from that of the cold war and supported the former, instances being that of Hungary and Congo crises.



In the Hungarian crisis of 1956, the nationalist elites helped the refugees in whatever meagre way their might permitted them, as well as voiced the demand that Hungarian people should have the right to select their government.

But, on the cold war aspect of the problem, particularly those pertaining to the UN where the West was bent upon castigating the Soviet Union for military intervention in Hungary to stabilize the 'unpopular' regime, Sri Lanka kept aloof, the deviation being only once when its UN representative voted in favour of a Western resolution which called for the institution of an UN inquiry committee on the Hungarian issue. As the repercussion of such an act was unwelcoming,<sup>55</sup> the nationalist elites reverted back to their early non-committal policy by making Ambassador R.S.S. Gunawardena a scapegoat. He was replaced by Mr Claude Corea as Sri Lanka's Ambassador.<sup>56</sup>

During Mrs Bandarnaike's tenure in 1960s, Sri Lanka used her Security Council membership very effectively

55 Later on a committee was instituted mainly dominated by Western states of which Sri Lanka was also a member. On the basis of the committee's report many condemnatory resolutions were put forth by the Western bloc. For details see, K.P. Shetty, "Ceylon's Foreign Policy : Emerging Patterns of Nonalignment", South Asian Studies, vol. 1, no. 2, 1966, pp. 29-31.

56 Ibid.

to put pressure on the two big powers to negotiate and resolve their differences in the Congo as well as Cyprus crises. But in neither of the events did Sri Lanka get involved in the cold war rivalry.

Nevertheless, when responses to events in the external setting had the potentiality to aggravate Sri Lanka's vulnerability, the nationalist elites preferred to adopt a low posture. In 1959 China decided to do away with the autonomy of Tibet by incorporating it as an integral part of Chinese territory, leading to nationalist uprising in Tibet, which China militarily suppressed. The Tibetan spiritual and temporal leader, Dalai Lama, fled to India with a large number of followers. This aroused the sentiments of Buddhists all over the world. However, it was only Malaya that was officially critical of China.

In Sri Lanka, the monks mobilized much pressure upon the government to raise the issue in the UN and other multilateral bodies. Even the opposition political parties like the UNP joined them for obvious reasons.

However, Mr Bandarnaike refrained from succumbing to any such pressures because he viewed Tibet as an integral part of China, and maintained that whatever happened there came within the purview of China's internal affairs; hence his government was not prepared to interfere

in it.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, he showed concern for an early settlement of the chaotic situation and maintained that the Tibetans should be allowed to follow their own way of life under the suzerainty of China.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, he offered Sri Lanka's good offices to bring an understanding between Dalai Lama and Peking.

Presumably, Mr Bandarnaike's low profile on China's flagrant violation of the right of self-determination of Tibetans was due to the dependence of the Sri Lankan economy upon China, and also due to the Chinese help towards the development of state capitalism in the island.

Notwithstanding the divergence in the external behaviour of the colonial and the nationalist elites one also discerns convergence area in their behaviour patterns. Such area reflected coincidence of interests of both.

## II

### The Consensual Interactions and National Roles

The consensual perceptions of the two sets of elite of the vulnerability of the island, in case of

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57 For details refer, Urmila Phadnis, "Nonalignment as a Factor in Ceylon's Foreign Policy", International Studies, vol. 3, 1962, pp. 432-4.

58 Ibid.

global conflagration, nationalist aspirations of the people, the currents of Afro-Asian nationalism in international relations and the general economic disparity between the rich and poor countries resulted in the evolving for Sri Lankan leadership certain common national roles in international politics. These are: adherence to the policy of non-alignment, support to national liberation movements, commitment to national sovereignty and independence of nations and concern for world peace and stability.

Even in the course of realization of the common roles, the ruling elites were forced to make compromises in the form of deviations or observance of neutrality, because of immense constraints on the island's autonomy; emerging partly from excessive external dependence and partly due to the fragility of its political and economic structures.

### Non-alignment

Both the sets of ruling elites pronounced their commitment to the nonaligned policy, yet within this broad continuum the emphases have been different. In spite of the defence arrangement with Britain and the anti-Communist stance the colonial elites, in the first phase, characterized their foreign policy to be that of "middle path and Asianism" and later to be of non-alignment. It is on the

basis of this policy posture that their external interactions were carried on, of course with a definite pro-Western tilt.

So far as the nationalist elites were concerned, Mr S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike evolved the more coherent and dynamic strategy of non-alignment, or dynamic neutralism which enabled Sri Lanka's rise to global prominence. His successor, Mrs Bandarnaike, pursued it with due vigour and dynamism.

In the initial days the posture of "middle path" or "non-alignment", enmeshed as it was in cold war atmosphere, was essentially of politico-military nature, but in the detente era, the emphasis and focus has shifted to problems of underdevelopment, economic growth, and unfair and exploitative trade-and interactions, resulting in the demand for a 'New Economic Order'. To achieve this, both the colonial and nationalist elites of Sri Lanka joined hands with other ex-colonial states to mobilize international public opinion and bargain with the developed states. Such a joint action drama of the developing states was mainly enacted in the UN forums like UNCTAD and also in the Conferences of Nonaligned states.

#### National Liberation Struggles and Maintenance of Independence

The colonial and the nationalist elites more or less manifested similar responses to the anti-colonial and

anti-imperialist struggles, despite certain reservations maintained by the colonial elites in the initial years. Such support by them was expressed both in multilateral as well as bilateral interactions.

The two elite groups stated their commitments to the principles of national sovereignty and the right of self-determination, but in reality, discrepancies of sorts were manifested because of the inherent weakness of the island. The colonial elites, while not appreciating the role of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia or the US in Vietnam, did not go into the merit of the controversy. Similar was the position of the nationalist elites in case of Hungarian or Tibetan episodes. However, both differentiated the human dimension of the problems and upheld it.

#### World Peace and Stability

Vulnerability of the island has made both the elite groups to be concerned with the maintenance of peace and stability in the international system. Instability of any kind is likely to have its chain-reaction on the island, and endanger its security and stability. It is in this context that we see both the elite groups being concerned for peace. They came forward to act as conciliators and mediators, in the cold war disputes, instances being Suez

Crisis and Czechoslovakia episodes, Tibet issue <sup>and the</sup> or Vietnam war. D.S. Senanayake as member of the Commonwealth gave serious consideration to such issues and used the Commonwealth conferences for this purpose. Kotelawala's role at the international conferences (Colombo, 17 April 1954; Bogor, December 1954; Bandung, April 1955) is well known in this regard. Particularly in the Colombo Conference of the Southeast Asian states held in 1954, the Prime Minister pursued these goals with vigour. Mr Bandarnaike used the United Nations for the same. Though his term was too short, he set certain trends in this regard, which were pursued by his successors. His wife was more dynamic in her role implementations; functioning through the United Nations, Commonwealth and non-aligned conferences.

In the cold war disputes, the prime concern of these elites was to localize conflict between the rival powers, by pressurizing them through evocation of international norms and ethos. In this context both supported China's membership to the UN, so as to make it a part of such convention.

On the issue of Indian Ocean as a zone of peace there seems to be unanimity of opinion. Mrs Bandarnaike raised the issue as early as 1964 in the Cairo conference of non-aligned states and her successors - the colonial

elites - pursued the idea.

Both the elite groups articulated in favour of total disarmament in opposition to the piecemeal approach of the militarily powerful states. While the West put forth a technical outlook towards the issue, the Soviet Union advocated for a gradual approach to the problem. Sri Lanka opposed these views because neither of them seemed to take note of the political and economic aspects of international relations. According to Sri Lankan authorities, a conducive environment through total disarmament would create better condition for international economic and political co-operation, and help the underdeveloped countries to ameliorate poverty.

To conclude, from our analysis of Sri Lanka's foreign policy at the level of the international system, two major trends are discernible, reflecting the divergent perceptions of the two groups of the ruling elite, and the interests they represent in the state apparatus. The colonial elite interacted more with the West, while the nationalist elites preferred to interact more with the socialist states. However, their shared historical experiences, and pre-occupation with problems of stability and security of the polity helped them to evolve certain common national roles



in international politics. In the pursuit of either their specific interests, or the consensual ones, the ruling elites made compromises because of the structural limitations upon national autonomy imposed by their socio-economic system.

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**CHAPTER VI**

## CHAPTER VI

### SRI LANKA AND THE SOUTH ASIAN SUB-SYSTEM

In the previous chapters we analysed Sri Lanka's foreign policy within the framework of a larger international system, and discerned various patterns of interactions -- pro-Western, pro-socialist and consensual -- on the basis of the ruling elites' perception of <sup>the</sup> environment. Alongwith it, an attempt was made to point out the constraints on Sri Lanka's independence imposed by the structural limitations of its socio-economic system, and their bearings on the external behaviour of the island. Invariably in the international system framework analysis there is a tendency to overemphasize the role of great and middle powers at the expense of local and regional issues which may be less conspicuous, yet of no less importance in conditioning the concerned states' foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> Generally, scholars very often have taken the position that sub-systemic framework should also be employed in the analysis of a country's foreign policy to overcome the drawbacks of the larger framework.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Peter Berton, "International Subsystems : A submacro approach to International Studies", International Studies Quarterly, vol. 13, no. 4, 1969, p. 330.

2 Ibid.

Particularly, the sub-systemic framework assumes much importance in the study of small states' foreign policy, which is usually conditioned to respond to the occurrences in the contiguous environment. The reasons for stressing a sub-systemic analysis of the small states' foreign policy arise from their inherent weakness and dependence upon the external setting with which there is a response-stimuli relationship. Besides, the vulnerability of small states to the push-pull forces resulting from the interpenetration of socio-economic and cultural linkages in the post-colonial societies need to be focussed. Consequently, it is imperative on small states to take cognizance of regional setting and to fortify themselves from the sources of imbalance and insecurity.

Before we venture into the specificity of Sri Lanka's sub-systemic level behaviour, we should underline the characteristics of a sub-system on the basis of which the region is demarcated as a distinct macro-unit of the global system. The characteristics which stand out prominently in the South Asian sub-systems are five,<sup>3</sup> namely (1) South Asia is delimited in scope to India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka on geo-political considerations;

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3 Michal Brecher, "International Relations and Asian Studies : The Subordinate State System of Southern Asia", World Politics, vol. 15, no. 2, 1963, pp. 213-35; and Louis J. Cantori and Steven L. Spiegel, "International Regions : A Comparative Approach to five Subordinate Systems", International Studies Quarterly, vol. 13, no. 4, 1969, pp. 361-81.

(2) the states are recognized by members of other systems to be distinct community and region, that is the Indian sub-continent; (3) the members of sub-systems also project such an identity (of late, however, some sections of Pakistani ruling class<sup>a</sup> have attempted) to project closer connections with the West Asian sub-systems; (4) Shared historical experiences, and commonalities in ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political aspects have lent special Indo-centric character to the region;<sup>4</sup> (5) finally, the South Asian power structure has maintained its own distinctiveness without getting integrated into any of the alliance systems.

#### Texture and Structure of sub-System

On the basis of <sup>the</sup> prevailing power-structure and power relationships, the sub-system can be differentiated into three sectors: (a) core sector, (b) peripheral sector, and (c) intrusive sector.

#### Core Sector

India stands at the apex of South Asian power - structure, and there is wide disparity between her capability and the rest of the units. Coupled to the power disparity,

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4 P.C. Mathur, Virendra Narain, and M.V. Lakhi, "Intra-Regional Relations : A Study in Infrastructural Determinants", in S.P. Verma and K.P. Misra, ed., Foreign Policies in South Asia (Jaipur, 1969), pp. 91-106.

are the infra-structural linkages with the peripheral actors, deterring the process of state building in the core as well as in the peripheries.<sup>5</sup> But centripetal and centrifugal forces govern the attitudes and responses of the peripheries to the core. While vulnerability to India pulls them away from her, historical heritage of colonialism, cold war, politico-economic inter-dependence gravitate them to the core.

In the case of Sri Lanka, the binding factors are common legacies of colonialism, common perceptions of their geo-politics and awareness of the fact that instability in one, would affect the other and disequilibrium in the region would endanger its political system. The pull factors are the presence of the Tamil population in the island which has refused to get assimilated into the dominant community - Sinhalese - to evolve a common national identity. On the contrary, a segment of this minority community has nurtured sub-nationalist sentiments, demanding initially regional autonomy within a federation and now, secession.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the presence of the Indian Tamil population, mainly constituting indentured labourers, have been a vexatious problem between the two countries.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the other irritant

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5 Ibid.

6 For details refer, Urmila Phadnis, "Infra-Structural Linkages in Sri Lanka-India Relations", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, nos. 3-33, special issue, August 1972, pp. 1493-1501.

7 Refer, Lalit Kumar, "India and Sri Lanka - Srimavo Shastri Pact" (Delhi, 1977).

areas had been territorial disputes over the atoll of Kachchathivu, maritime boundary demarcations and imbalance in trade transactions with India which still continues.

### Peripheral Sector

The peripheral sector consists of countries like Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka who have similar socio-cultural linkages, having harmonious relations and affecting their foreign policy interactions. For instance, the Muslims which form the dominant community in Pakistan and Bangladesh, are in minority in other countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka where they have been traditional allies of dominant communities. Buddhism, which is the religion of dominant community in Sri Lanka is less important in Nepal, yet harmoniously co-exists with the dominant faith there. Besides there is no adverse balance of payments problems in their economic inter-actions. In the light of these linkages and because of the common threat-potential of the core, there has been cordial and co-operative interactions with the development of certain common motivations; like ensuring regional stability and balancing India's predominance. However discrepancies are manifested in their urges to contain

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8 Asoka Verma, The Government of India's Approach to Territorial Boundary Disputes : The Case of Kachchathivu (B.Phil Thesis, St. John's College, UK, 1976) (Himeo.).

India's superiority, because of diverse perceptions of ruling elites of these countries and consequently, pursuit of similar but at times, parallel strategies towards it.

### Intrusive Sector

The intrusive sector denotes the states belonging to other systems who have had or are attempting to gain foothold in the region to influence its power-structure in the desired direction for the furtherance of their respective national interests. In this context, one can identify states like Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union, China and others.

Following her withdrawal from the region, one of the major objectives of Britain has been to maintain friendly relations with the regional actors for the continuation of her economic activities. Besides, with the turmoil of the post-war political scenario, she wanted to ensure her economic and trading activities in the east of the Suez, for which control over the Indian Ocean was imperative. Since Sri Lanka's geo-politics placed her at a vantage position and as Britain had established naval and air bases for such exigencies, their retention became important in her foreign policy calculations.

Initially the United States and <sup>the</sup> Soviet Union had not shown much interest in the area but with the



intensification of their rivalry, the sub-continent came to attain high priority in their respective foreign policy formulations. The two great powers obviously attempted to woo India to their respective camps, but having failed to do so, they adopted other tactics to influence the regional power structure. The American objective in this regard has been two-fold; (i) to maintain friendly relation with core and periphery to contain the Soviet Union and later on China, and (ii) to prop up the capabilities of the peripheral actors to restrict India's pre-dominance.<sup>9</sup> By and large, the Soviet Union has tried to project a friendly image by helping and co-operating with the ruling elites in the task of state and nation-building, with the objective of checking American and Chinese penetration.<sup>10</sup>

With the breakdown of the monolith communist power-structure, China too has given high priority to the area. Guided by her desire to be an acknowledged leader of the 'underdog nations' of the third world, she has interacted with the peripheral actors to keep the Soviet Union away and belittle India's image. In this context, her major policy has been to sell a "friend in need is friend indeed" image to the peripheries.<sup>11</sup>

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9 Baldev Raj Nayar, American Geopolitics and India (New Delhi, 1977).

10 Charles McLane, Soviet Strategies in South East Asia (New Jersey, 1966), pp. 455-73.

11 Bhabani Sen Gupta, The Fulcrum of Asia: Relation among China, India, Pakistan and the U.S.S.R. (New York, 1970).

Other than these states, this sector is also marked by the presence of Afro-Asian states whose intrusion is of emotive and ideological nature. Thus, since the 1970s, the Middle East petro-dollar states have been able to make their presence felt in the area due to the oil crisis affecting the fragile economies of the regional states.

### Structure of the sub-System

In this complex interplay of competing forces, India's policy towards neighbouring states has been usually liberal, enabling the smaller neighbours to take initiatives to exploit the intrusive actors for the furtherance of their own national interests as well as outgrowing their "India psychosis". However excessive interactions with intrusive actors inimical or adverse to India's national interest has not been tolerated.<sup>12</sup> As regards the peripheral actors, they have reacted and interacted according to their respective ruling elites' perception of the contextual factors. Pakistani elites, in their urge to be at par with India, joined the American alliance system in 1954.<sup>13</sup> The Sri

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12 Reference may be made to 1971 Indo-Pak war and India's support to 'Bangladesh'. Pakistan was going beyond the anticipation of India in befriending China etc.

13 S.M. Burke, Pakistan's Foreign Policy: An Historical Analysis (London, 1973). It is a very biased work, but aptly reflecting the mind of the Pakistani decision makers.

Lankan and Nepalese ruling elites<sup>14</sup> have, on the other hand, tried to maintain a more favourable balance of power which would increase their manoeuvrability, through manipulation of the core and intrusive actors as well as by joining hands with their own peripheral brethren.

Within this broad strategy, the emphasis and nuances of Sri Lanka's manipulation have differed because of contextual factors. The colonial elites in their first term in the power (1948-56) were more apprehensive of threat from India, while in their second tenure (1965-70) the focus of apprehension shifted more towards China, causing changes in patterns of interactions. Similar changes can be seen in the case of the nationalist elites too.

### III

#### The Colonial Elites and Regional System

In the first phase of their governance, the colonial elites' acute threat perception emanated not only from communism but also from the core sector - India. Such apprehensions were not only based upon disproportionate power distribution but also due to the presence of the Tamil

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14 For details see, S.D. Muni, "The Dynamics of Foreign Policy", in Muni, ed., Nepal: An Assertive Monarchy (Delhi, 1977), and Leo W. Rose, Nepal Strategy for Survival (Bombay, 1971).

population. Besides, soon after the attainment of independence, some responsible Indians had suggested the creation of an Indian dominated confederation for her own security interests. This touched the sentiments of the colonial elites who equated the remarks with the thinking of majority of Indians as such. Though Pandit Nehru made honest efforts to assuage such apprehensions on the part of Sri Lankan leadership by dismissing the suggestions as fantastic imagination, it did not hold much ground.<sup>15</sup>

There is no doubt that the colonial elites held Nehru in high esteem, but the serious tone given to these suggestions were based upon objective conditions aptly summed up by Professor Jennings. These colonial elites, according to him, were well aware of "the danger implicit in having nearby population of three hundred fifty million people pressed outward by a standard of living much lower than that of Sri Lanka, and hence under wrong leadership were capable of becoming aggressive".<sup>16</sup>

The fact that Nehru was acceptable to the colonial elites, initially could have been a good means for initiating

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15 Kumar, n. 7, pp. 3-7.

16 Sir Ivor Jennings, "Crown and Commonwealth in Asia", International Affairs, vol. 32, April 1956, p. 133.

more harmonious relationships, which would not have given rise to such apprehensions. However, such chances were precluded by the divergent foreign policy interactions of the two countries. While the colonial elites were vehemently anti-Communists, the Indian nationalist ruling elites attempted to cultivate friendship with both <sup>the</sup> Soviet Union and China. From the perspective of Colombo, India was thought to have gone out of her way to be friendly with the Communists by signing 'panchshila' with China in 1954.<sup>17</sup>

To mitigate the perceived threat potentialities from India, the colonial elites became active protagonists of the Commonwealth which was given high priority in their foreign policy interactions in the absence of the UN membership. The membership of Commonwealth instilled confidence among them and enabled them to face India at equal plane. The psychological inspiration gained by the Commonwealth links has been aptly described by a Ceylonese scholar<sup>as</sup> the one which "provided Sri Lanka an artificial but useful equality with India".<sup>18</sup>

Besides, her defence arrangement with Britain was partly motivated to shield Sri Lanka from the possibility of

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17 S.U. Kodikara, Indo-Ceylon Relation since Independence (Colombo, 1965), p. 11.

18 Ibid., p. 38.

an Indian attack. This has been clearly stated by Sir John Kotelawala that the day we dispense with Britain, Sri Lanka would go under India.<sup>19</sup>

When Sir John Kotelawala came to power, the threat perception seemingly appeared to have increased. This was not so much determined by transformation in the objective conditions as by his own subjectivity. Sir John is said to have suffered from identity crisis in relation to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. This clash of personalities and his dislike for Nehru got translated into dislike of India. Consequently, he tried to minimise India's stature by interacting more with India's rivals, and attempted to erode India's support base among the Afro-Asian states. In this context, there are many interesting instances like the Kashmir issue where he deviated from Sri Lanka's earlier stand of neutrality and openly accused India of being 'intransigent' on Kashmir;<sup>20</sup> in 1954, he convened South East Asian Prime Ministers' conference at Colombo to discuss international problems for which India was conveniently not invited;<sup>21</sup>

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19 The Times, 26 May 1955.

20 Cited by Hafeez-ur-Rahman Khan, "Ceylon : Pakistan's Valued Neighbour", Pakistan Horizon, vol. 15, no. 1, first quarter, 1962, p. 55.

21 D.M. Prasad, Ceylon's Foreign Policy under the Bandarnaikes, 1956-65 (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 164-8.

at the Bandung Conference (1955), despite his vehement opposition to Communism, he interacted with China and made attempts to elevate China as a counterweight to India.<sup>22</sup>

The manipulation of intrusive and peripheral actors like the UK and the Commonwealth countries, the Afro-Asian states, China and Pakistan, enabled the colonial elites to neutralize India's pre-dominance on her. At the same time the ruling colonial elites were cautious enough not to alienate and antagonise India completely. It seems that the Indian ruling elites understood the security dilemma of the island and adopted a liberal posture.

This manipulative strategy thereby increased Sri Lanka's bargaining and resisting power which is clear from the fact that it was India who was responsive to D.S. Senanayake's unilateral decision on Indian Tamil population by passing the 'citizenship laws'. The Indian High Commissioner Mr. C.C. Desai initiated talks with Dudley to arrive at the more amicable and mutually suitable solution. Later on in June 1953, Nehru took up the issue with Dudley Senanayake at London. Though the discussion between them remained inclusive, yet Sri Lanka was prepared to grant citizenship to 400,000 workers. Another 600,500 were to be given permanent residence

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22 For details see G.H. Jensen, Afro-Asia and Non-alignment (London, 1966), pp. 214-16.

permit and their civic and political status <sup>was</sup> was to be decided ten years later. The residual number of Indian Tamils numbering 300,000 were to be granted Indian citizenship and repatriated to India. Nehru, however, did not agree to the scheme of compulsory repatriation. He also wanted the maximum grant of permanent residence permit for 700,000.<sup>23</sup>

Before any further meetings could be held, Dudley Senanayake was replaced by Sir John Kotelawala as the Prime Minister. Sir John was invited to India on 12 October 1953 to resume discussion on Indian Tamil problem. In these discussions, there was agreement to check illicit immigration by all possible avenues and for Sri Lanka to undertake the preparation of a new electoral register. It was agreed that after the preparation, if any person was not enrolled in the register he would be presumed to be an illegal immigrant and India would extend all facilities for his deportation. However, the Nehru-Kotelawala agreement was not seriously and scrupulously implemented by either of the two governments.<sup>24</sup>

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23 Prasad, n. 21, pp. 237-42.

24 Urmila Phadnis, "The 1964 Indo-Ceylonese Pact and the 'stateless' Persons in Ceylon", India Quarterly, vol. 20, no. 4, October-December 1964, p. 378. She remarks: "The ink was hardly dry on the agreement, when differences of opinion regarding certain clauses of the Pact arose between the Indian High Commission in Ceylon and the Government of Ceylon." Similar views have been expressed by Kodikara, n. 17, pp. 127-8.



Nevertheless it brings to light the amount of confidence Sri Lanka had gained and the manner in which its manipulative strategy had increased its bargaining power.

Though in their bilateral relationship the colonial elites attempted to check India's pre-dominance, on issues pertaining to global peace and stability, there was much consensus. This is evident from Sri Lanka's active participation in the Asian Relations Conference at New Delhi in 1947 to mobilize international public opinion in favour of the Indonesian nationalist movement. At the conference, the representative of the colonial elites voiced for more co-operation among the underdog nations and proposed the creation of an Asian United Nations. Even on issues pertaining to colonialism and imperialism, there was more or less unanimity of opinion.

When in 1965 the colonial elites came to power for the second time, significant changes were marked in their patterns of interactions in the sub-continent. The new government perceived greater threat from the intrusive sector -- China. During the rule of nationalist elites, China had been able to penetrate into the Ceylonese economy through her generous aid programmes, which had provided her much leverage in the Ceylonese politics. It also helped her in the propagation of her ideology. This created much anxiety among the colonial elites.

Moreover, their anxiety from China also resulted from the image they perceived of her -- as an aggressive power. In the 1962 Sino-Indian border conflict, the UNP had viewed China as the aggressor and had attempted to mobilize public opinion to pressurise the Prime Minister, Mrs. Bandarnaike, to declare China as an aggressor.<sup>25</sup>

As regards India, ~~her~~<sup>the</sup> image of her being an aggressive power had considerably diminished after the 1962 war,<sup>26</sup> and also because of India's co-operation in resolving the vexed problem of Indian Tamils in 1964. Besides, domestic constraints on the colonial elites forced them to soft paddle on India because the local Tamil parties were their partners in the government.

This being the general scenario, the core and the intrusive power like China perceived the UNP Government in different ways. While the Indian Prime Minister warmly greeted the new government and expressed his desire for greater co-operation,<sup>27</sup> China seems to be ambivalent. In reciprocation to Indian gesture, Prime Minister Senanayake said: "I feel sure that as good neighbours, as close friends and as the members of Commonwealth, there is much that can

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25 Urmila Phadnis, "Ceylon, and the Sino-Indian Border Conflict", Asian Survey, vol. 3, no. 2, 1963, pp. 189-96.

26 Ibid.

27 Ceylon Today, vol. 14, no. 5, April-May 1965, pp. 43-44.

contribute towards the attainment of those objectives which your government and mine are pledged...I look forward to the opportunity of meeting you very shortly."<sup>28</sup>

Thus, during the tenure of the colonial elites, a number of high level goodwill tours between the two countries were exchanged. In 1963, Dudley Senanayake came to New Delhi and discussed with his Indian counterpart, problems relating to world peace and stability. The purpose of such visits were, firstly, to appease the local Tamil population of the close relationship of his government to New Delhi and secondly to seek aid from India for stabilizing the economic situation. In both the objectives Dudley was successful to a considerable extent.

India realized the problems of the government and came forward to help her. The sympathetic and understanding attitude of India was motivated by the desire to minimize China's influence on Sri Lanka. In this regard, India co-operated in the implementation of the Srimavo-Shastri Pact of 1964 pertaining to the Indian Tamils. In 1965 when the Indian Foreign Minister went to the island, he categorically stated that his government was genuinely interested in implementing the agreement. Moreover, India helped Sri Lanka economically, through government-to-government trade, as well as a number of Indian industrial houses came forward to establish industries in Sri Lanka.<sup>29</sup>

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28 Ibid.

29 See Table 1.

Table 1

| S.No.   | Field of Collaboration                              | Indian Collaborator                         | Date of sanction | Remarks                          |
|---|---|---|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4                | 5                                |
| <u>Sri Lanka</u>  |   |   |                  |                                  |
| <u>Units in operation and under implementation</u>                        |   |   |                  |                                  |
| 1.  | Glass Factory                                       | M/s. Swastic Glass Works, Chandarpur        | 28.1.67          | In production since August 1969  |
| 2.  | PVC Leather Cloth                                   | M/s. Ehor Industries, Bombay                | 5.10.69          | In production since 5.3.69       |
| <u>Units sanctioned by Government of India but subsequently abandoned</u> |   |   |                  |                                  |
| 3.  | Mica Mining   | M/s. Krishna Mining Co., Gudur              | 7.2.69           | Permission withdrawn on 24.5.73. |
| 4.  | Room Coolers, Air-conditioners etc.                 | M/s. Electronics Ltd., New Delhi            | 7.2.69           | Abandoned since 7.3.73           |
| 5.  | Pharmaceuticals                                     | M/s. Themis Pharmaceuticals, Bombay         | 5.2.69           | Permission withdrawn on 30.8.73  |
| 6.  | Electrostatic Tea Leaves/ Stack separators Machines | M/s. General Industries, Calcutta           | 30.7.65          | Not implemented                  |
| 7.  | Trucks  | M/s. Ashok Leyland Ltd., Madras             | April 67         | Not implemented                  |
| 8.  | AAC/ACSR  | M/s. Mysore Wires and Industries, Bangalore | 18.3.69          | Not implemented                  |
| 9.  | Filters etc.  | M/s. Fritz and Singh, New Delhi             | 24.3.69          | Not implemented                  |
| 10.   | Textiles  | M/s. Birla Bros, Calcutta                   | 2.4.69           | Not implemented                  |

Source: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, (New Delhi), July 1978 Report.

This was encouraged by Dudley for it was a way to stabilize the economy as well as to counter China's penetration in the Ceylonese market. However, when the nationalist elites came to power in 1970 along with the leftists, much of the agreements with private Indian houses were abandoned.

Furthermore, India also co-operated with Sri Lanka in the competitive area of tea trade. In March-April 1968, the Indo-Ceylonese delegates met at Colombo to discuss the common problems of tea export. It was decided that the two states would harmoniously work for the promotion of tea export.<sup>30</sup> Such co-operation went in favour of Sri Lanka because she neither could afford sophisticated quality control programmes, nor embark on expensive sales promotion schemes. Such co-operation had also an added advantage of diminishing the cut throat competition in the item between them.

India's attitude towards Sri Lanka was reciprocated by the Ceylonese which is explicit from Mr. Senanayake's statement on the Kachchathivu, a major irritant then between them. In this context, Mr Senanayake reiterated Sri Lanka's claims but was not prepared to adopt a confrontationalist attitude. On the eve of Mrs Gandhi's

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30 The Statesman, 23 and 26 January 1968.

visit to Colombo in 1968, Premier Senanayake replied to a question directed on Kachchathivu thus: "...the civilized approach is to discuss these differences and arrive at an understanding. I have every reason to believe that what differences there are can be amicably settled."<sup>31</sup>

While the colonial elite tried to boost Sri Lanka's interaction with India for a variety of contextual factors, its apprehension of India could not be completely ruled out. The objective conditions were bound to make the ruling elites conscious of such threat potentials and Mr. Senanayake was no exception. In this context it is worth mentioning that the UNP premier's interactions with Pakistan also received a fillip, with the quantum of trade increasing because of new items were brought into the list.<sup>32</sup> Besides, credit agreements were signed between the two countries to boost the economic activities.

Politically also, Dudley Senanayake, when got an opportunity sided with Pakistan implicitly, like during the 1965 war. While Sri Lanka overtly maintained a non-aligned stance, declaiming violence and <sup>urging</sup> for peace in an official statement before the Parliament, the colonial

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31 Asian Recorder, vol. 13, no. 45, 5-11 November 1967, p. 8000.

32 Cited in Urmila Phadnis, "Ceylon and Indo-Pak Conflict", South Asia Studies, vol. 12, no. 1, 1967, p. 41.

elite's government emphasized that Indian troops had crossed the border at Lahore.<sup>33</sup> Such blanket statements without proper contextual references were certainly with an obvious purpose. This gets further substantiated from the fact that when the Indian High Commission protested against such remarks, the government while admitting its error in narrating the sequence of events, issued no official clarification.

Despite threat perception from China leading to the deterioration of political relation between them, neither Sri Lanka nor China could completely break off contacts. For Sri Lanka, maintenance of economic contact was imperative for availing China's rice and disposing off her rubber. Also, it could not afford to break the economic activities that had been built during the last decade, especially when the economy was at a point of breakdown.

On the other hand, China had immense politico-strategic interests in Sri Lanka and therefore without signing any new aid or loan agreements, it continued to acknowledge her previous commitments. Besides, as the Rubber-Rice agreement was of immense importance to Sri Lanka, it was annually renewed. Thus the symbiotic convergence of interests compelled them to maintain the bare minimum contacts. Nevertheless, whatever apprehensions were envisaged out of such dependence were effectively countered through

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33 Ibid.

interactions with other powers who essentially wanted to restrict China's influence.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the colonial elites' preoccupation during the second term was to counter-balance China's growing penetration into Sri Lanka's economy and for the achievement of this objective, they took resort to the external forces, opposed to or interested in curtailing China's growing influence. So far as India was concerned, the image had considerably changed following the 1962 war and signing of the Srimavo-Shastri Pact of 1964, but the fear of a mighty neighbour was latent in the Sri Lankan psyche. Hence, colonial elites at times attempted to restrict her dominance in the region, instance being that of the 1965 Indo-Pak conflict.

#### IV

#### Nationalist Elites and the Regional System

The nationalist elites came to power for the first time in 1956, marking significant changes in Sri Lanka's interactions in the region. The world views of Mr Nehru and his Lankan counterpart, Mr. Bandarnaika, were identical on almost all problematic issues. Both viewed capitalism as a decaying force and communism in existing form as degenerated. As such, none of the two systems was considered suitable for

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34 Discussed in the previous chapters.



their respective countries. This resulted in having identical foreign policy of non-alignment. Besides, Mr. Bandarnaike did not nourish the apprehension nurtured by his predecessors about India; "Nobody in his right senses would have imagined that a country like India would, at any date annex Ceylon (Sri Lanka)."<sup>35</sup> Finally, on the issue of the Indian Tamils, which had been the bone of contention between the two countries, Mr. Bandarnaike's approach was 'least embarrassing'. He viewed the problem to be essentially a problem of Ceylonese citizenship and it was not possible for India to resolve it. Besides, he abrogated the politico-legalist agreement of 1954 and initiated registration of all Indians in the island who desired to be Sri Lankan citizens. And once this work was complete he thought it wise to take up the question of those who had failed to obtain Ceylonese citizenship with India on a fresh basis.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Nehru was more categorical about India's humane stand on the issue, by contending that though it was essentially a Ceylonese problem, it should not be treated purely from legal and political angle, but from humane view point.<sup>37</sup> Such overlapping and concurrence of opinion

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<sup>35</sup> The Hindu, 12 and 15 June 1956.

<sup>36</sup> Prasad, n. 21, pp. 250-1.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

between the two countries' ruling elites heralded new dimension in their interactions.

Sri Lanka consulted India on the two major cold war disputes of Suez and Hungary and broadly their stands were analogous.<sup>38</sup> On the issue of Kashmir, the new government wanted peaceful resolution of the problem and made efforts in the direction by appealing to the involved parties, as well as mobilizing international public opinion for an amicable and honourable solution. While Nehru accepted it as a friendly approach and showed his willingness to negotiate, Pakistan outrightly refuted it as 'neutralist and communist', proposal.<sup>39</sup>

Even in the bilateral plane, there was better cordiality between the two countries, with high level dignitaries from India like Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, visiting the island and Bandarnaike reciprocating them.

The harmonious relations, however, did not mean that the nationalist elites had no fear from India and forsook the strategy of creating a regional balance. The balancing strategy continued to be the pivot of Mr. Bandarnaike's foreign policy. The changes in international,

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38 During the two crises the Colombo Powers had met at New Delhi and took a joint stand in the UN.

39 Hafeez-ur-Rahman, n. 20, p. 58.

regional, and national settings altered the international patterns to create the balance.

Under the nationalist elites, Sri Lanka pursued more outward and self-confident foreign policy, and various factors like her non-aligned strategy, membership of the UN had considerably increased her manoeuvrability. As the new elites were nonchalant towards Britain there was significant improvement in relations with China and Russia.

Sri Lanka's interaction with China paid good dividends. China in her desire to spread her area of influence and curtail India's predominance projected a friendly image. In January 1957, Chou En-lai, the Chinese Premier, visited the island and signed an agreement underlining the basic principles of "Panchasheel", Asian solidarity and co-operation. Besides, he repeatedly said that countries with different political systems could live together and in a meeting with the Members of Parliament, he said: "as far as China is concerned we shall never forget the question of help you have rendered us through these agreements (Rubber-Rice Pact of 1952) during our difficult days".<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, China involved herself in Sri Lanka's economic development and industrialization. In this context it is worth mentioning that the premium and floor price

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40 Anuradha Muni, "Sri Lanka's China Policy - Major Trends", South Asian Studies, no. 1, January 1973, p. 82.

of rubber was abolished.<sup>41</sup> Besides, she gave Sri Lanka loan of Rs.15 million annually for imports from China. Permission was also given for the sale of Chinese goods in Sri Lankan market.<sup>42</sup>

The permission to market Chinese goods affected India, which mainly dominated the consumer sector along with Japan. In textile import particularly China posed serious competition to India as well as Japan.

It is worth noting that Mr. Bandarnaike as a sort of acknowledgement of China's friendship, refused to comment on Tibetan affairs, despite immense popular pressure. All that he was concerned was immediate initiation of peace in the area.

When Mrs Bandarnaike assumed power, she continued the policy set in motion by her husband. Friendly relations were maintained with India and relations with China continued in the same vigour and smoothness set in motion by her husband.

In the 1962 border conflict Sri Lanka adopted a neutralist stand,<sup>43</sup> with her only concern being for immediate cessation of violence and initiation of peace.

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41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Phadnis, n. 25.

Amidst the conflict, Mrs. Bandarnaike communicated with New Delhi and Peking to explore ways and means for a ceasefire. The Indian Government's precondition for a ceasefire was that Chinese troops should withdraw to the dividing line of 8 September 1962 and China was of the opinion that the 7 November 1959 arrangement should be respected. However, the ceasefire came into effect at midnight on 21-22 November 1962 and China announced her withdrawal to the line as existed on 7 November 1959.

But as the line of demarcation still remained unresolved, Mrs Bandarnaike convened at Colombo a conference of six non-aligned nations to explore the possibilities of bringing the two Asian states together. As the emissary of the Colombo Powers, she went to New Delhi and Peking to sell their formula for durable peace, but it was a futile exercise.<sup>44</sup>

It is very interesting to know why Mrs Bandarnaike was so much concerned about peace between the two countries. The concern shown by Sri Lanka was due to its inherent vulnerability. Instability in the region would have affected the island, particularly when it involved India and China, with whom her interactions were pretty close. Besides, the clash between the two powers had shown signs of turning into a global drama as the US, the UK, and the USSR had already

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44 Ibid.

come into action either directly or indirectly. If such a situation reemerged, the great powers' involvements were inevitable which might have encroached upon Sri Lanka's independence and manoeuvrability.

After the war, the South Asian power equation had changed to an extent. India's hitherto acknowledged leadership had been challenged by China, who too like India was professing similar ideals. While China's image went up, India's was being tarnished by her neighbour Pakistan. The Pakistani ruling elites, who aspired to be at parity with India, found this an opportune moment to erode India's image among the Afro-Asian states. In this context Ayub Khan took a circuitous tour to paint an aggressor's image of India. Besides vilifying India's image, he boosted the image of China. At Colombo, he went further to embarrass India by announcing Pakistan's willingness to take back all persons of Pakistani origin from Sri Lanka.<sup>45</sup>

While such forces were in operation in the regional sphere, within the country Mrs Bandarnaike was facing serious challenges to her political leadership. The UNP had taken advantage of her neutral stand on the 1962 crisis to come closer to the conservative Sinhalese elements and also endear itself to the Tamils. At the other extreme was the attempt to forge a United Left Front of LSSP, MEP and CP. Under the

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45 Prasad, n. 21, pp. 370-7.

circumstances Mrs Bandarnaike shrewdly broke the envisaged alliance of the left parties by inducting the Trotskyite LSSP into the Ministry. Obviously, with the coming of the Trotskyites into the government, Sri Lanka became ideologically closer to China. Besides, within the bureaucracy, there was an anti-Indian and pro-Chinese lobby, which could now exercise effective strength.<sup>46</sup> Also, the government was keen on improving the economic plight of the people because the elections were drawing nearer. In this context, China held an upper hand because of her aid programmes. As such, combination of these factors gave Sri Lanka a definite tilt towards China.

Sri Lanka-China relations during this period were at its peak with tremendous economic and political collaborations to help Sri Lanka's economic development. Chinese Premier Chou En-lai visited the island twice and China undertook to supply large quantities of powerlooms and other material to increase production of goods in the island and provide more employment to the people. To facilitate early transport of goods from China, Mrs Bandarnaike signed a Maritime Agreement on 25 July 1963, which allowed Chinese ships to carry goods to Sri Lanka.

The growing friendship between Sri Lanka and China caused much concern and anxiety for India, who made bids to

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46 Ibid.

appease Sri Lanka and bring her back to her nonaligned and equidistance policy. In this context Nehru made attempts to resolve the bugging problems of 'Indian Tamils'. But he died in May 1964. His successor Lal Bahadur Shastri pursued Nehru's initiatives. In October 1964 Shastri and Srimavo Bandarnaike concluded an agreement, popularly known as Srimavo-Shastri Pact.

According to the agreement Sri Lanka was to grant citizenship to 300,000 stateless, and India was to repatriate 525,000 stateless and confer citizenship on them. The whole process was to be carried out within a stipulated period of 15 years.<sup>47</sup> Regarding the political status of the residual 150,000 residents, it was agreed that their future would be the subject of a separate agreement.

In addition (subject to the Exchange Control Regulations), Sri Lanka agreed to permit the repatriates to take all their assets, including their gratuity and provident fund at the time of their final departure to India. The Government further gave an assurance that the total assets per family would not be reduced to less than Rs. 4,000. This was the only condition on which India insisted at the final stage.<sup>48</sup>

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47 Kumar, n. 7, p. 52.

48 Ibid., p. 57.



The implementation of the agreement has not been very encouraging, as it had to face various bottlenecks,<sup>49</sup> However, one of the significant achievements have been that in 1974 the Prime Ministers of the two countries agreed to equally share the burden of the residual 150,000.<sup>50</sup> On the whole, the implementation is progressing gradually and both the states seem to be making amendments from time to time to set things in the proper perspective.

AS far as the peripheral states were concerned, Sri Lanka under nationalist elites had favourable relations and particularly with Pakistan she had growing economic activities. Pakistan was supplying Sri Lanka with rice, textiles and other commodities, and imported tea, coconut, copra etc. An interesting dimension of the interactions of the periphery and intrusive sectors was that all the three peripheral countries - Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal - were in close contact with China, much to the chagrin of India. This increased their manoeuvring capacity to a large extent.

When the nationalist elites came to power for the second time in 1970, in alliance with the left parties under

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49 Ibid., p. 88.

50 Ibid.

the leadership of Mrs Bandarnaike, they continued to pursue an outwardly rigorous regional policy. The United Front attempted to draw upon the complex interaction of various national interests to its advantage.

Pursuing a balancing strategy, it was not difficult for Sri Lanka to be assertive with regard to the core, in pursuance of its national interest. Radicalism in this sphere was shown in her dealings with India.

As the presence of a large number of Indians controlling the commercial activities in Sri Lanka was not appreciated by the Ceylonese, the UF passed various enactments to curtail the economic activities of the Indian business community, like abolishing the temporary residence permits. In order to protect the local film industry, the Government imposed restrictions on the import of film from India.<sup>51</sup> As economic pressures were aggravating communal tension, restriction was also imposed on the import of periodicals from South India.

Apart from this, as the slow implementation of the Srimavo-Shastri Pact which was causing much burden on the crisis ridden Ceylonese economy, the UF Government insisted that for every four persons registered as Ceylonese, seven should be registered as Indian citizens and repatriated

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51 Urmila Phadnis, "Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka in the Seventies", The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, vol. 8, no. 1, 1975, pp. 107-8.

immediately. The implication of this was that once the Indian population of stateless were removed, employment prospects for Ceylonese would improve considerably.

Though at various levels, much anxiety was raised over the actions of Sri Lanka, official views of Indian Government were very cool and cautious. The Madras publishers were worried over the restriction on journals and viewed it as a prelude to internal banning.<sup>52</sup> On the issue of the "temporary resident permit" concern was expressed by the opposition parties over the manner in which Indians in Sri Lanka were treated.<sup>53</sup> The Government of India maintained that there was no discrimination in Sri Lanka's decisions to abolish the category of temporary residents.<sup>54</sup> When the amendment was passed on the Srimavo-Shastri Pact, similar concern was ventilated by vested interest circles.<sup>55</sup> But Government's view on this was expressed by Swaran Singh

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52 Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses : News Review South Asia, October 1970, p. 22.

53 Hindustan Times, 24 June 1971.

54 The Statesman, 24 June 1971.

55 The Hindustan Times, 30 January 1974. It reported that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi did not welcome the agreement between India and Sri Lanka, as that would increase the burden on the state government.

in the Lok Sabha on 23 June who maintained that there was complete co-operation between India and Sri Lanka in implementing the 1964 agreement. He added that it was essentially a human problem and the difficulties in its settlement were now being overcome.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, it appears that Sri Lanka adopted a more aggressive stand, while India adopted a cautious posture in response. This was because of the balance of forces that came into being and provided much manoeuvrability to Sri Lanka. India could have opposed Sri Lanka by taking a firm stand or being critical of such actions. But this would have furthered the "Indian apprehensions" and driven Sri Lanka towards China. By posing a low posture, India managed to pursue its foreign policy objective of stability and peace in the peripheral states.

However, Sri Lanka did not go entirely against India. It continued to maintain restraint -- friendliness towards her. Their economic interaction remained as before. When an Indian aircraft was hijacked to Pakistan in February 1971, the Government of Sri Lanka deplored the act.<sup>57</sup> This

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56 The Times of India, 24 June 1974.

57 Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses News Review, South Asia, March 1971, p. 14. It reports: "the cabinet at its meeting on 12 February deplored the recent hijacking of the Indian aircraft and expressed its grave concern over the resulting situation in India and Pakistan."

was in pursuance of its policy of friendly gestures towards India. Besides, its deploration was also because such acts would bring instability to the region by igniting the hostility between the two unfriendly neighbours.

However, within less than a year in power, Mrs. Bandarnaike's United Front Government was forced to give up the outward foreign policy orientation directed to enhance the country's international status, in preference to the maintenance of stability within the country, as well as to counterbalance various sources of threat and insecurity. Such shifts in the foreign policy orientation were effectuated because of new challenges the island had to face from within as well as without.

The unsuccessful attempt of the JVP to seize power brought to fore the underlying forces of discontent and social miseries which alienated large sections of the population and drove them towards the revolutionary path. Though the 1971 insurrection was suppressed by Mrs Bandarnaike's Government, through timely help from foreign powers, she, well aware that unless and until the socio-economic plight of the masses, was alleviated, the possibility of threat of instability in the system could not be ruled out. Hence Mrs Bandarnaike Government's efforts were directed to contain the process of alienation of individuals from the system and rehabilitate those already alienated.

Besides, the Government was also to strengthen the security system of the island as insecurity could not be ruled out either from the outbreak of another insurgent movement or from a separationist movement launched by the Tamils. The success of the sub-nationalist aspirations of the East Pakistan Bengali Muslims to create their own independent state and India's help to them in this regard, provided a sort of emotional inspiration to the Tamil separatists within the island.<sup>58</sup> The Government of Sri Lanka was much concerned with such developments.

To overcome the problems of maintenance of stability and ensuring of security that the foreign policy efforts were directed in the regional as well as international systems. Particularly in the regional system, the interactions were very interesting because of peculiar combination of forces. On the one hand, India's immediate help to suppress the insurgents evoked a sense of gratitude amongst the Ceylonese; but her subsequent involvement in the "internal affairs" of Pakistan made Sri Lanka uneasy. Similarly, China too was alleged to have a hand in the insurgency, yet she made a belated condemnation of it as "counter revolutionary" and

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58 The Sun, 14 January 1972. Mr Amirthalingam, General Secretary of the Federal Party, at a public rally raised the demand of a separate state like Bangladesh.

attempted to wash the alleged stigma.<sup>59</sup>

In the case of Sri Lanka, though she might have suspected Chinese involvement, she could hardly afford to offend her, because of massive Chinese involvement in her economy. Thus Sri Lanka's major aim to skilfully balance the core with the intrusive power to further her gains and alliance with the peripheral members - depended upon expediency and exigencies of the situations. Besides, when many global powers intruded into the sub-system, the island's inner contradictions forced upon her a low profile in foreign policy which was very unusual of her.

Almost simultaneous to the insurgency, Sri Lankan ruling elites had to face the challenges of Indo-Pakistan confrontation and East Pakistani civil war. Sri Lanka adopted a very low posture on the issue of the East Pakistan's demand for autonomy in the initial stages. She indirectly condemned India's involvement in the crisis - when in the United Nations she mentioned that it was an

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59 For details refer, G.S. Bhargava, "Ceylon Uprising and China", China Report, vol. 7, no. 3, 1971, pp. 10-12; and Ceylon Daily News, 18 June 1971. It reported that Chou En-lai described "the Che Guevara movement as a counter-revolutionary aimed at deceiving the mass and disrupting the government."

internal issue of Pakistan and viewed East Pakistan's demand as one of fratricidal and separatist in nature.<sup>60</sup> She allowed all facilities to Pakistani civil and military planes on the way to Dacca. The reason for Sri Lanka's attitude could be explained in terms of her own integration and legitimacy problems. The Tamils in the island were a source of constant concern and the recent youth insurgents furthered such fear. If the ruling elite took up moral and ethical stand of supporting the East Pakistanis, they could be embarrassing themselves over their own Tamil problems.

Though Sri Lanka implicitly favoured Pakistan, she did not openly take her side. This was because she was indebted both to India and Pakistan for their assistance to suppress the insurgency. Besides, open assertion of support would have alienated India, consequences of which would have been risky. Not being prepared to indulge in risky behaviour, she attempted to balance the two parties to further her own interests. But crisis in the neighbourhood and in its internationalization through the involvement of Big Powers was a cause of concern to the neighbouring states; obviously to Sri Lanka too. In her anxiety she was concerned

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60 S. D. Muni and Urmila Phadnis, "Ceylon, Nepal and the Emergence of Bangladesh", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, no. 8, 19 February 1972, pp. 471-5.



about immediate installation of peace in the area. Even Mrs. Bandarnaike made attempts to play the role of a mediator between the two countries to initiate peace. She proposed to convene a nonaligned conference similar to the one called in 1962 on Sino-Indian border crisis.<sup>61</sup>

However, the Government which for a long time was nonchalant over the issue of East Pakistani struggle for self-determination, was finally forced to acknowledge it because of severe domestic pressure. This shift in Sri Lanka's attitude is easily discernible from her stand on the issue in the United Nations. On 8 December 1971 in the General Assembly session, Sri Lanka voted in favour of the Argentine resolution which called for immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of Indian troops. But later, Sri Lanka's representative Mr Amarsinghe sought special permission to speak in the Security Council of which his country was not a member. Revising his earlier stand, Mr. Amarsinghe described political settlement of Bangladesh issue as the key to the Indo-Pak strife and wanted a "settlement" to precede withdrawal of troops. Later on, it was reported that Sri Lanka even

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61 Rising Nepal, 25 August 1971. Mrs Bandarnaike had offered 'to act to stop any further escalation in tension and to ensure peace' in the sub-continent.

refused to comply with Pakistan's request of reopening the issue before the UN General Assembly.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, initially Sri Lanka, within the broad terrain of an uncommittal stand, attempted to manipulate India and Pakistan to maintain a balance of power situation to safeguard her own security. But when Bangladesh became a virtual reality, Sri Lanka readjusted her position, in the light of the new power relationship that emerged in the sub-continent.

Following the Indo-Pakistani crisis, Sri Lanka's foreign policy emphasis shifted to the maintenance of internal stability. In this context, the ruling elites were confounded with two major source of instability, one arising from economic imbalances and other from Tamil sub-nationalism. So far as the former aspect of stability was concerned, Sri Lanka strove to have greater degree of co-operation with the core, intrusive and peripheral actors. With India she signed numerous aid and trade agreements. The most significant aspect of her co-operation with India was in February 1976 when Sri Lanka Commerce Minister, T.B. Illagaratne, and his Indian counterpart signed a joint pact underlying various areas of science and technology in which the two countries

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62 See Muni, n. 60.

would help each other. In these agreements it was agreed that surplus goods produced in Sri Lanka would be absorbed in the Indian market. India was also to supply power and technology to the island,<sup>62</sup>

While relation with the core improved considerably, Sri Lanka also maintained and continued to improve her co-operation with China and Pakistan. As India was out to help Sri Lanka on pragmatic diplomatic consideration similar was the case with the other two countries. During this period China not only emerged as Sri Lanka's biggest supplier of commodities, but also her biggest buyer.

On 18 December 1972, the two countries signed, for the fifth time, the Rubber-Rice Pact for a period of five years. Under the provision of this agreement, China was to supply rice at £ 15.4 (less than the world market prices). Besides, China also granted financial assistance to the island. In June 1972 China gave an interest free loan of £25 million, while in 1974 a second interest free loan of £ 4 million was given. In January 1976, China granted its third interest free loan to Sri Lanka of Rs.22.9 million in convertible currency. China described this as a

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62 Ceylon Daily News, 4 February 1976. It reports: "One of the most important results that could emerge from the New Delhi talks is that once the joint ventures are established the surplus goods produced here, would be absorbed in the Indian market." Also see, The Financial Express, 9 April 1972.

step further in the development of friendly relations and co-operation between the two countries. Moreover, in January 1976 China agreed to help Ceylon Ceramic Company to set up a modern glass factory which would cost around Rs. 70 million. She agreed to finance the entire foreign exchange component of this factory.<sup>63</sup>

While Sri Lanka ably manipulated India-China rivalry to extract benefits from them, her economic interaction with Pakistan was also significant. These common concern of India helped them to develop closer friendship. Besides, Pakistan needed tea which Sri Lanka could supply. From Sri Lanka's point of view, her leaders were vigilant in making friends, who would help to stabilize the economy, as well as be an asset on security matters. In this context Sri Lanka-Pakistan trade improved. In March 1974 representatives of the Central Banks of both the countries entered into a credit arrangement on a bilateral basis for a sum of \$ 4 million which would be settled every six months. During the period Pakistan emerged as a major trading partner of Sri Lanka. In 1976 Mrs Bandarnaika's Government procured 80,000 tons of rice from Pakistan to meet domestic short supply.<sup>64</sup> Besides, Pakistan was an important rice supplier

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63 For details about China's assistance refer Gemini Navratne, The Chinese Connexion (Colombo, 1976), pp. 133-8.

64 Ceylon Daily News, 31 January 1976.

to Sri Lanka though her prices were higher than those offered by China. But as there was favourable balance of trade between the two, Sri Lanka could afford it. Earlier in May 1972 the two had signed a barter agreement, providing for an exchange of goods valued at about Rs. 45 million. Under this agreement the two countries mainly barter tea and cotton yarn.

While on the economic level, Sri Lanka attempted to co-operate with all the three states of different sectors of the sub-system, so as to appropriately exploit their difference, on political level the post-insurgency period clearly reflected a greater tilt towards the core -- India. This could be possible because of the new power balance wherein India attained a prominent position,<sup>65</sup> and China's inability to deter India from aiding the separatists East Pakistanis. As China failed to prove an effective counterweight to India, in the case of Pakistan's security, Sri Lankan ruling elites must have lost faith in her. Other reasons may be that though the Bandarnaike's Government did not unearth China's involvement in the JVP movement as per the rumours to embarrass her, she preferred to keep her at a distance. It was also alleged by a section of the press that China was using her economic leverages to pressurize Sri Lanka

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65 For details see Ashok Kepur, "India and the Emerging Balance of Power in Asia", Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses Journal, vol. 4, no. 3, 1972, pp. 327-54.

to grant her base facilities in the eastern shores of the island. Later on when some foreign correspondents questioned Deputy Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Laksman Jayakoddy, on this matter he categorically replied that no military base facilities in Sri Lanka would be given to foreign powers.

Sri Lanka's tilt towards India might also have been due to the renewed demand for autonomy by the Tamils, and an extremist section's call for separate statehood. In the light of Bangladesh experiences, Mrs Bandarnaike might have had the feeling that appeasing India would put her off from helping the separatist Tamils. In fact Mrs Gandhi in her visit to Sri Lanka in April 1972 in an interview to the editor of Times of Ceylon assured them that India had no intentions of encouraging such idea. She said: "The very idea is not merely fantastic but absurd and unthinkable....I am aware there is insidious campaign by vested interests to drive a wedge between our countries."<sup>66</sup>

In the subsequent years also, the Tamil problem soured the friendly relationship between the two countries. Vested interests in India misquoted a Sri Lankan diplomat's

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<sup>66</sup> The Hindustan Times, 1 April 1972. Mrs Gandhi was interviewed by Reggie Micheal, Editor of The Times of Ceylon. She also said "those who think that India has designs on Ceylon are victims of malicious propaganda".

remarks by stating that Sri Lankan Government found the Tamils to be disloyal which was fabricated because Deputy Minister of External Affairs Laksman Jayakoddy denied any such discriminatory bases of his government.<sup>67</sup> Moreover during this period the Tamil leaders were becoming more restive and vocal in their assertion for autonomy and also an international conference of Tamils was organized in the island. Obviously this caused uneasiness to the Government. However, when Srimavo Bandarnaike's son Anura Bandarnaike was on a goodwill visit to India in February 1974, India made her position clear. Anura Bandarnaike seemed satisfied on Indian assurances that there was no link between the DMK of Tamil Nadu and Tamil United Liberation Front.<sup>68</sup>

Even from Indian side, there were attempts of building better relations with Sri Lanka during this period. India relinquished her former claims over Kachchathivu in 1974 and signed a maritime boundary with Sri Lanka. This was prior to the Law of the Sea Conference and was supposed to act as a pressure upon the conference to accept certain principles. Besides, the problem of the 150,000 stateless was resolved during this period with each of them sharing

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67 The Indian Express, 8 September 1973.

68 The Motherland, 8 February 1974.

half the burden and Srimavo Shastri agreement was implemented with greater vigour.

The reason for India's cordiality towards Sri Lanka was to reduce the image of an aggressor that she had acquired in the eyes of the small neighbouring states after Bangladesh and also to properly exploit Sri Lanka's suspicion of China.

The co-operative relations that developed between the core and Sri Lanka is clear from the fact that Sri Lankan ruling elites did not immediately criticise India's nuclear blast as had been the case with many countries. In fact what seems to appear is that she wished to remain silent on the issue, but had been forced by the opposition to react. Jayakoddy made it clear that his government accepted India's assurances of carrying out tests for peaceful purposes. Nevertheless in her global stand on nuclear free zone she had maintained that "as far as the countries of the region are concerned, they will have to commit themselves to a policy of de-nuclearization which would entail the permanent renunciation by them of nuclear weapons".<sup>69</sup>

Besides, Sri Lankan Government also supported the imposition of emergency by Mrs Indira Gandhi's Government

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<sup>69</sup> Ceylon Daily News, 17 May 1974.



in India.<sup>70</sup> Thus what seems to be clear is that during the stability phase there was better understanding between India and Sri Lanka at political and diplomatic levels, while in economic sphere she made attempts to exploit differences among various actors to further her gains. But on the whole she continued with her balancing strategy with a tilt towards India.

Despite the tilt, Sri Lanka did maintain its distinctiveness which was prerequisite for the attainment of greater manoeuvrability. This is clearly indicative from Sri Lanka's stand on Indian Ocean. While India like Sri Lanka was concerned about big power rivalry and had supported the Ceylonese proposal for a zone of peace, Sri Lanka went further and proposed for the permanent renunciation of nuclear weapon options by the littoral and hinterland states, to which India expressed her reservations. But when Pakistan proposed a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in South Asia (NWFZA), in the wake of India's nuclear explosion, Sri Lanka voted in its favour, as well as that of which was sponsored by India.<sup>71</sup>

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70 Ibid., 13 February 1976. In an official banquet given in honour of Mr. Y.B. Chavan during his tour to Sri Lanka, his Sri Lankan counterpart I.B. Illangatrane, voiced full support to Indian Government decision to impose emergency. He said, "India's stability was vital to the region and the world as a whole."

71 Rising Nepal, 22 November 1974.

Such manipulations made Sri Lanka an important in India's foreign policy affairs, and her ruling elites, knowing the strategic importance of the island did want it to go in an adverse direction. Therefore, Indian policy makers always tried to project a good neighbourly image, which is clear from the fact following the nuclear explosion. India resolved the disputed problems of Kachchathivu and maritime boundaries. Sri Lanka's sovereignty of Kachchathivu was acknowledged.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, the Sri Lankan ruling elites' regional balancing strategy considerably depended upon contextual factors. The early colonial elites lacked a regional policy as such, and tried to secure regional peace and equilibrium through their Commonwealth connection and the defence arrangement with Britain. Besides, Sir Kotelawala also attempted to look for other counterweights in the Afro-Asian world to reduce India's pre-eminence. In this context he took a pro-Pakistan stand on the Kashmir problem. However, the colonial elites in their second term under Mr. Dudley Senanayake accepted the regional policy bias of Mr. Bandarnaike to manipulated the core - periphery-intrusive sectors to Sri Lanka's advantage. In this context Dudley perceived greater threat from China and to balance her, he took resort of India. At the same time his

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72 Refer "Accord on Kachchathivu", Tribune, vol. 19, no. 10, 13 July 1974, pp. 1-4.

government maintained close interactions with the peripheries particularly Pakistan to reduce India's pre-eminence. On the one hand, the nationalist elites under Mr. Bandarnaike manifested a regional policy, while keeping away from Pakistan, he befriended China whose interest was eventually to contain India's predominance. When Mrs Bandarnaike came to power after his death the tilt towards China was discernible particularly after 1962 war. Such strategy increased Sri Lanka's bargaining capacity as has been clearly discernible from the Srimavo-Shastri Pact of 1964. However, tilt towards China did not result in alignment of any sort, which is clear from the government's support to the NPT which was being vehemently opposed by China. Similarly the nationalist elites opposed China's proposal for a second Afro-Asian Conference - as that would have resulted in the creation of a parallel movement to the nonalignment movement. When she came to power in 1970s, in the beginning, she pursued the same strategy, but following the insurgency and the new subcontinental power equation because the bifurcation of Pakistan, she became concerned with the task of stabilizing the economy as well as external equilibrium and was more inward in her regional interactions. In this context it becomes clear that both the elites groups were concerned about regional equilibrium and through skillful manipulation of the core, peripheral, intrusive sectors,

attained their objective and maintained Sri Lanka's distinctive existence to derive benefits from 'competing national interests' in the area.

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**CHAPTER VII**

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSIONS

The foreign policy of Sri Lanka has been dealt with, in the light of interactions of small states in international politics, taking note of the ruling elites' perceptions of the environment. Certain conclusions have been drawn on the basis of the above mentioned factors, which are in fact the moving forces behind the foreign policy of almost all small states.

More than a century and a half of British colonial rule has left a deep imprint upon the Sri Lankan society and given it a peculiar character. The economy bequeathed by the British presents a combination of a developed plantation sector and other underdeveloped and under-nourished subsistence sectors. The reliance on export oriented sector, i.e. the plantation sector, has exposed the island to adverse supply-demand conditions of export commodities, posing threat to systemic equilibrium.

In contrast to the economic distortions, the colonial rule has left behind the legacy of a welfare conscious populous. As a result, despite differences in character and nature of the ruling elites, their survival and continuance in power, in the democratic set up, depends

largely upon promotion of exports and implementation of various welfare measures. These domestic constraints have made it imperative for the ruling elites to have good relations with those countries which not only provide a market for export commodities, but also have the capacity to provide generous aid for developmental purposes. However, this does not rule out the possibility for manoeuvrings, depending upon the perceptions and interests of the ruling elites.

In Sri Lanka, the dominant elite groups - both colonial and nationalists - are represented by the UNP and the SLFP respectively which have controlled alternately the state apparatus. The anti-Communist and pro-Western prejudices of the colonial elites and their concern for 'dependent capitalist' development resulted in good dispositions towards the West. This ideological productivity of the UNP forced them to follow the same trend in the economic sphere too. During the first term of the UNP, the island's trade interactions were mainly with the sterling and dollar countries. Besides they also encouraged inflow of private foreign capital.

However, because of the basic structural limitations of this economy, the colonial elites were compelled to make adjustment with their policy due to heavy slump in international rubber market and scarcity of essential commodities

like rice in domestic milieu. The result was a barter agreement between Sri Lanka and Communist China in 1952. The establishment of trade relationships with the Communist nations proved to be a sort of constraint on the colonial elites, in the sense, that economic and other benefits accruing from such interactions made it impossible for them to snap this tie, without inviting a disaster. At the same time, they tried to off-set the repercussions of such contacts by maintaining a distance in the political sphere, as it happened during the tenure of Dudley Senanayake (1965-70).

On the other hand, the nationalist elites, in order to assert Sri Lanka's political and economic independence, attempted to minimize the maximum reliance upon Western powers through diversification of political, military and economic relations. Hence after 1956, one finds diplomatic relations being established with more and more socialist countries. At the same time, lack of capital and technological skill compelled the nationalist elites to have continued relations with the West. They even sought help from these countries during the time of crises - both domestic and external.

Besides economic equilibrium, political stability and security of the Island have constituted the basic concerns of the ruling elites. The inherent limitations



emerging from the smallness of the island-state is a handicap for the ruling elites while coping with any systemic crisis like insurgency and subnationalist tendencies. Hence the colonial and nationalist elites have been forced to seek a remedy through their foreign policy. In the first place the colonial elites used the veneer of non-alignment to disguise their attachment to the West and also to ensure safety of the island against threat perceptions from India and the Communist states.

During the second tenure the colonial elites allowed some significant changes in the regional level interactions influenced by the external milieu. Ideologically being more closer to India than China, they viewed China as a possible threat and tried to play up India as a counterweight to China. However, this did not prevent them from co-operating with peripheral actors in order to contain India's predominance.

The nationalist elites, on the other hand, abrogated the defence arrangement with Britain and attempted to utilize the strategic location and other similar factors, to achieve their security objectives. At the international level, they tried to benefit from the East West rivalry and at the regional level, attempted to profit from the Sino-Indian power confrontation. This was made practicable by Mrs. Bandarnaike's policy of dynamic neutralism.

Though Sri Lanka's political stability depends to a large extent upon regional linkages, the colonial elites in their first term of office attained this objective by aligning with the West. As against this, the nationalist elites aimed at fostering intra-regional co-operation and friendship through the policy of non-alignment, which had a definite regional bias. This strategy proved to be a guarantee against systemic instability. As this strategy brought in more dividends, the colonial elites too adopted the same tactics during their second tenure.

The desire for 'status' has been no less an important foreign policy objective, but here again the two elite groups have projected some sort of variances. The colonial elites being concerned with the development of 'dependent capitalism' projected rather a low profile in international politics. Nevertheless they have not been totally oblivious to the quest for status and image-building of Sri Lanka, as it is bound to enhance the prospects of political kudos in the domestic sphere. It may be pointed out that the colonial elites in the first tenure consistently strove to make Sri Lanka's pressure felt in international sphere. They tried to achieve this by participating in various regional and Afro-Asian conferences against colonialism and imperialism like the New Delhi and

Bandung Conferences. Once the island had been pushed into the mainstream of non-aligned movement by the nationalist elites, the colonial elites, despite their ideological reservations, became the exponents of non-alignment fearing the repercussions their refusal might have had on the domestic politics. At the same time, they tried to remain closer to the West within the broad framework of non-alignment.

The nationalist elites being aspirants of a prominent place in the regional as well as international plane to maintain the island state's distinctiveness have pursued the policy of non-alignment with vigour and dynamism. With this intention they played prominent roles in the Hungarian and Suez crises and Sino-Indian border disputes to name a few instances. Besides, they have been more and more forthright in their condemnation of Western policies like colonialism, imperialism and racialism at various international conferences and the UN forum.

Despite their differences in ideology and social aspirations of the <sup>two</sup> sets of elites, a consensus could be arrived at, in terms of the roles concerned with the pursuit of status objective. Here we find both the elite groups professing commitment to anti-imperialism, anti-colonialism and anti-racialism, world peace and disarmament. Also, the

two elite groups have adjusted their social interests and ideology for the maintenance of systemic equilibrium.

A brief survey of Sri Lanka's foreign policy vindicates the fact that independence of the small states is severely constrained and the degree of constraint is proportionate to its degree of dependence. At the same time, the objectives of stability, security and status could be pursued by the ruling elites by making skilful manipulation of the various factors in the domestic and international spheres and the manner in which such strategies were pursued depended upon the perceptions of the ruling elites.

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**APPENDIX TABLES**

Appendix Table 1

THE SLFP PERIOD : 1956-1964

| S. No. | Source         | Date of Agreement | Amount in               |             | Purpose  |
|--------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--|
|        |                |                   | Foreign Currency        | Rupees /    |  |
| 1      | China          | 17.9.1958         | -                       | 50,000,000  | Purchase of Goods from China   |
|        |                | 25.10.1964        | -                       | 20,000,000  | Purchase of Farm equipments from China   |
| 2      | Czechoslovakia | 16.6.1956         | £ 1,641,000             | 22,140,000  | Purchase of capital goods for Textiles, tile, sugar etc. factories   |
| 3      | G.D.R.         | -                 | -                       | -           | -  |
| 4      | Poland         | 25.2.1958         | £ 2,850,000             | 38,000,000  | For financing foreign exchange cost of complete industrial plant and machinery for agreed development projects |
| 5      | U.S.S.R.       | 25.2.1958         | Rou- 27,000,000<br>bles | 142,830,000 | To prepare project reports and supply plant and machinery etc. through Soviet Organisation                     |
| 6      | Yugoslavia     | 8.9.1959          | 55,000,000              | 73,300,000  | Purchase of capital goods  |

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Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Foreign Aid (Colombo, 1963).

Appendix Table 2

## LOANS FROM WEST FOR PROJECTS : SLFP PERIOD - 1956-1964

| S. No. | Source                        | Date of Agreement | Amount in        |            | Purpose  |
|--------|-------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|--|
|        |                               |                   | Foreign Currency | Rupees     |  |
| 1      | Britain                       | 17.3.1961         | £ 2,735,000      | 36,457,599 | Purchase of telecommunication equipment & services in connection with the Greater Colombo Area Telephone Scheme        |
| 2      | Canada                        | 5.11.1958         | C\$ 2,000,000    | 9,685,802  | Purchase of 25,000 tons of wheat flour   |
|        |                               | 26.4.1963         | C\$10,800,000    | 47,520,000 | To finance the increased foreign exchange cost of supplies and services from Canadian contractors for various projects |
| 3.     | Federal Republic of Germany   | 19.7.1967         | DM 32,000,000    | 38,400,000 | To finance cement factories etc.   |
|        |                               | 19.7.1967         | 8,000,000        | 9,600,000  | Purchase of equipments for Colombo Port  |
| 4.     | U.S.A.                        | 14.5.1957         | \$ 2,500,000     | 11,904,762 | Developmental Purposes   |
|        |                               | 25.3.1959         | 2,187,042        | 10,410,320 | Financing Development Projects   |
|        |                               | 23.9.1959         | 5,418,402        | 25,791,596 | Financing Development Projects   |
|        |                               | 22.9.1961         | 1,119,214        | 5,327,453  | Financing Development Projects   |
| 5.     | On other schemes from the USA |                   | 2,118,981        | 15,325,155 | Varied purposes. But there was no inflow of aid/loan following nationalization.  |

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Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Foreign Aid (Colombo, 1969).

Appendix Table 3

LOANS FROM SOCIALIST COUNTRIES FOR PROJECTS -  
THE UNP PERIOD : 1965-1970

| S. No. | Source         | Date of Agreement  | Amount in        |            | Purpose                         |
|--------|----------------|--|------------------|------------|---------------------------------|
|        |                |  | Foreign Currency | Rupees     |                                 |
| 1      | China          | -  | -                | -          | -                               |
| 2      | Czechoslovakia | -  | -                | -          | -                               |
| 3      | G.D.R.         | 22.2.1965  | £ 15,000,000     | 25,000,000 | Purchase of plant and machinery |
| 4      | U.S.S.R.       | In case of the Soviet Union which supplied aid to Sri Lanka, due to lack of source actual figures could not be made available. |                  |            |                                 |

Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Foreign Aid (Colombo, 1969).



Appendix Table 4

LOANS FROM WEST FOR PROJECTS : UNP PERIOD - 1965-1970

| S. No. | Source                      | Date of Agreement | Amount in        |            | Purpose  |
|--------|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------|--|
|        |                             |                   | Foreign Currency | Rupees     |  |
| 1      | Canada                      | 23.3.1966         | C\$ 1,500,000    | 6,600,000  | To finance the construction of international airport at Katunayala |
|        |                             | 20.5.1968         | 750,000          | 4,125,000  | To finance construction of the Oya Hydro Electric Project          |
| 2      | Federal Republic of Germany | 22.3.1967         | DM 17,500,000    | 25,160,000 | Establishment of Paper Factory                                     |
|        |                             | 22.3.1967         | DM 4,000,000     | 5,920,000  | Establishment of Iron Foundary                                     |

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Source: Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs, Foreign Aid (Colombo, 1969).

Appendix Table 5

## LOANS FROM INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES FOR PROJECTS : SLFP PERIOD - 1956-1964

| S. No.                        | Source                 | Date of Agreement | Amount in        |             | Purpose  |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------|--|
|                               |                        |                   | Foreign Currency | Rupees      |  |
| 1                             | IBRD                   | 17.9.1958         | ₹ 7,400,000      | 35,150,000  | Thermal stage of Hydro Electric scheme                                     |
| 2                             | IBRD                   | 6.6.1961          | ₹ 15,000,000     | 71,400,000  | Second stage of Thermal Plant  |
| <u>JNP Period - 1965-1970</u> |                        |                   |                  |             |  |
| 1                             | IBRD                   | 22.11.1967        | ₹ 4,000,000      | 23,800,000  | Finance Foreign Exchange Costs of goods required for investment projects   |
| 2                             | IBRD                   | 19.6.1968         | ₹ 4,900,000      | 29,170,000  | Investment for Highway Maintenance and Development Project                 |
| 3                             | IBRD                   | 18.7.1969         | ₹ 8,000,000      | 47,600,000  | For financing development projects undertaken by private enterprises       |
| 4                             | IBRD                   | 18.7.1969         | ₹ 21,000,000     | 121,950,000 | For financing the second stage of the Oya Hydro Electric Project           |
| 5                             | IDA                    | 19.6.1968         | ₹ 2,000,000      | 11,900,000  | Financing a left irrigation project  |
|                               | IDA                    | 12.11.1968        | ₹ 4,900,000      | 29,170,000  | For financing a highway maintenance and development project                |
| 6                             | Asian Development Bank | 17.7.1968         | ₹ 2,000,000      | 11,900,000  | For financing foreign exchange cost of tea plantation modernization scheme |

Source: Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs, Ceylon, Foreign Aid (Colombo, 1969).

Appendix Table 6

## COUNTRYWISE BREAK-UP of IBRD ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA : 1965-1969

[ The donor countries agree to provide economic assistance under five programmes. Till 1969 four programmes were implemented ]

(Rs. in million)

| Source    | P r o g r a m m e |       |       |       |        | Total   | V* |
|-----------|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|---------|----|
|           | I                 | II    | III   | IV    |        |         |    |
| Australia | 6.91              | 4.69  | 5.24  | 5.85  | 22.59  | 6.6     |    |
| Britain   | 47.60             | 45.08 | 43.79 | 34.85 | 171.32 | 85.68   |    |
| Canada    | 14.71             | 11.74 | 16.71 | 11.00 | 54.16  | 21.95   |    |
| FRG       | 38.12             | 33.08 | 14.68 | 5.75  | 91.63  | 37.02   |    |
| France    | -                 | 36.00 | -     | 4.12  | 40.12  | 6.67    |    |
| India     | 12.66             | -     | 19.71 | -     | 32.37  | 39.68   |    |
| Japan     | 23.72             | 24.36 | 29.34 | 15.19 | 92.61  | -       |    |
| USA       | 53.38             | 78.95 | 82.19 | 4.85  | 219.37 | 29.75** |    |

\* This programme was to be received from 1969 onwards.

These loans include both food and commodity aids and development grants.

\*\* Besides this, the US contributed to food and PL-480 to the value of Rs. 89.2 to 119 millions.

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