THE SECURITY PROBLEM OF MICROSTATES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS :
A CASE STUDY OF SRI LANKA IN ITS GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSIONS

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
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SUBHRANSU SEKHAR MISRA

CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICS ORGANISATION & DISARMAMENT
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA
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Centre for International Politics,
Organisation & Disarmament
School of International Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Mehrauli Road,
New Delhi-110067.

C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled
THE SECURITY PROBLEM OF MICROSTATES IN INTERNATIONAL
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GEOPOLITICAL DIMENSIONS, submitted by Mr. SUBHRANSU
SEKHAR MISRA in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE, has not
been previously submitted for any other degree of this
or any other University. To the best of our knowledge,
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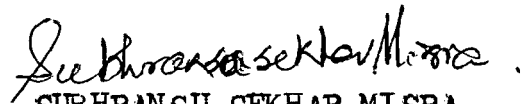
C O N T E N T S

P R E F A C E

The present work is an attempt to examine the
security problem of microstates in contemporary
international politics. Much work has been done in
the field of research, pertaining to the Super Powers
and their security and strategic interests in a global
perspective. But in a changing world, it is the
smaller states or microstates which need the serious
attention of the researchers, for its peculiar geogra-
phical nature and socio-economic, political and military
problems which beset the security and stability of these
small states.

To examine the magnitude and nature of the
security problem of microstates, the Sri Lankan case
has been taken up in the light of the recent developments
in South Asian Region. The Sri Lankan security problem
has been assessed in the context of domestic conflict in
Sri Lanka, which has assumed much importance in the
security and stability in the Sri Lankan perspective.

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SUBHRANSU SEKHAR MISRA
Centre for International
Politics, Organisation and
Disarmament,
School of International Studie
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067.

INTRODUCTION

One of the striking features of contemporary
international politics, has been the conspicuousness of
microstates in an era, marked by increasing military,
strategic and security concerns of all states. The microstates,
small in geographical size and population, are weak in economic
resources and military capability, for which their security
problem assumes much importance in independence and stability
of the state.

The problem of security is common to all the states,
big or small, strong or weak; in the world of conflict and
domination. For the microstates, 'security' is a multifaceted
problem in a varied nature of issues, ranging from physical,
military through the political and economic to ideological
ones, which determine the strength and viability of these
states. Internationally, it is the Major Powers or Super
Powers, who have the sufficient military, political and
economic strength to hold their sway over these microstates,
and influence the security problem of these small states in
their external settings. The regional conflict between the
Major Powers, arising out of their clash of economic, political
and military interests, threatens the position of the small
states in a particular region. In international sphere, the
Super Powers, find these microstates as significant areas,
for their military strength in organising their global

strategies and penetrating their interests into these "areas of conflict"in international politics.

On the otherhand, the microstates in their internal setting, possess peculiar domestic milieu in which the states are socially divided, politically fragile and economically backward in nature. In these states, some divisive tendencies arise due to the lack of unity and homogenity in the society which creates internal confusion within the state. So, the nature and magnitude of the security problem of the microstates are closely related to the structural performance of these lesser states.

The security problem of the microstates can be viewed in the patterns of their internal and external settings in the context of international politics. There is a close'linkage' between these two patterns which determines the internal stability and external security of the state. Primarily, it is the internal domestic setting in the microstates, which holds the key to the security question. Broadly, it is the national security problem which lies at the root of conflict and cooperation among the nations in the domain of international politics.

To study the nature of the microstates in international politics, there may be various categorisation

from different angles. But briefly defined the microstates
can be taken as sovereign states, too small in territory and
population, with a very weak economic, political and
military structure for which its security is vulnerable
in the broader international system. From external stand-
point its geo-strategic inplications and small defence
and technical backwardness; all account for the penetration
of Major Powers, which jeopardises the security and
stability of these small states. For example, from certain
geo-political dimensions, the states like Cyprus, Sri Lanka
Malaysia, have perennial security problem. Apart from
these, there are many small independent states in Asia,
Africa and Latin America for whom there is an impending
danger to their security and stability in the region.
So, in this light, the security problem of the microstates
is preponderant in nature, which is beset with many
internal socio-political and cultural factors that
determine the efficacy of these states in the broader
international system.

In the study of security problem, it is found
that there is a large and flourishing literature that
exists on the empirical side, dealing with the contemporary
security problems and issues. Most of this comes out of
the sub-field of strategic studies, for which security is
the core concept. But, when we search for a matching

conceptual literature on security of the microstates, very littile come to hand. In this context, one finds some dearth of materials for a clear and conceptual analysis of the security problem. Here, the security problem has been studied in the light of geo-political dimensions of the microstates in broader regional and international context.

The present study of security problem of microstates emphasises the national security problem in the complex area of international politics which is influenced by the national and regional factors. In this context, the Sri Lankan case has been taken up in the light of its security problem in its continuous nature in the process of internal conflict within the society. Again, with the recent upheavals in the internal development of Sri Lanka and in the South Asian Region, it carry deeper implications for India in matters of security and stability in the region. The Sri Lankan Case, presents a clear picture of security problem in a Third World microstate in geo-political dimensions. The Sri Lankan society since ancient times, has felt the threats of Security and stability in its internal setting, which has continued till today.

In this work, the first chapter deals with the security problem of the microstates in analysing the

security-perception of these microstates in presence of conflicts and confusion in the system of the states as a whole. It helps one to assess the status and problems of these states pertaining to their magnitude of security problem in broader regional context. In its security perspective, the security problem of microstates is determined by a 'linkage' between its internal and external settings which involve a host of socio-economic, political and geo-political factors. In this chapter, the nature of the microstates and their security concern and behaviour have been studied in the light of their security dilemma in international politics. The national security which is impending and determining for the efficacy of the states as a whole, has been studied in greater geo-political dimensions.

The second chapter takes up the Sri Lankan case for its security problem which deals with the domestic and geo-political aspects of Sri Lanka, which play a vital role in its search for order and security. The domestic socio-political milieu of Sri Lanka involving the factors of resources, socio-economic development, ethnicity, and nationalism, has been studied in their degree and nature.

The third chapter deals with the regional and international framework of Sri Lanka which focusses on the

Sri Lankan geo-political configuration in South Asia and Indian Ocean Region. In the light of growing conflict of Super Powers in the region and the consequent international environment of Sri Lanka, it occupies a strategic position in Indian Ocean which has serious military implications. After this, the fourth chapter examines the magnitude and nature of the security problem on basis of long history of Sri Lanka and the security arrangement in different times. In this context, the concern for security has become a continuous one since independence. So, this chapter deals with the security-management of Sri Lanka since its inception as an independent nation.

The fifth chapter deals with the Sri Lankan national security problem which is the main element of its security question. In the internal setting, the conflict of nationalities, arising out of socio-economic and racial-ethnic divergences, poses a serious threat to the internal stability and security of the state. Thus, it calls for a socio-political study of the security problem in Sri Lankan perspective in the light of the Sinhala-Tamil conflict in the society. This chapter takes up the historical details dating back to the ancient divisions in the society and it examines the internal threats in socio-economic-political nature in greater details. Finally, the sixth chapter deals with the regional dimensions of Sri Lankan security

which calls for the examination of India's role and stand in Sri Lankan affairs. It is seen, India has played an important role in the domestic politics of Sri Lanka, which is vital to its security.

Apart from these six chapters and conclusion, there are some maps at the end in appendice which help to study the geographical nature of Sri Lankan state and the socio-political milieu in the society.

Hence, the case study of Sri Lanka, rightly makes up the security problem of a microstate, dependent on a host of variables in socio-political phenomena that determine the security and stability of the society. In the world of Super Powers, the microstates' security problem assumes much importance in security and strategic perspective. So, a clear and analytical study of the security problem in historical and geo-political dimensions help the researcher to examine the security problem in greater details,

CHAPTER I

SECURITY PERCEPTION OF MICROSTATES IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

The international political system is a highly complex phenomenon which centres around the 'states' and their interaction in the system. In present times, with a varied nature of 'actors' in the international arena, the states continue to be the principal 'actors' in a global perspective. The modern states and modern international society are recent phenomenon, beginning with the emergence of new states in the aftermath of Second World War. In this context one significant development took place in form of decolonisation which transformed the whole of international system. There emerged a cluster of states which attained a new statehood in the regions of Asia and Africa. One characteristic feature of these states was their weak position in terms of military and economic strength and political power. The immediate problems which these states faced were purely those of national security and stability in view of the bipolarisation of the international system into two irreconcilable and antagonistic power blocks.

The present international system is hierarchical in order, beginning with two Super Powers at the top, great powers in the intermediate position and the 'Third World' countries at the base. In a changed environment, the Super Powers find the emergence of the microstate in

'Third World', as vital to their interests in economic, political and military matters. (The Third World countries with necessary geo-political import,have become the focus of Super Power attention in terms of their security and strategic importance. In the light of this shift of the Super Power conflict to the Third World, the nature and behaviour of small or microstates have assumed much importance in the broader international context. The state, however small it may be in geographical and political context, it draws the attention of Major Powers for its strategic and geo-political importance in the overall international situation. So, the study of the small states, particularly the microstates, in its security perspective has become significant in international politics.)

The international political system is characterised by a multitude of states with diverse socio-economic and political systems. The interactions among the states and their individual positions in the international arena are determined by different social, cultural and political factors operating within the state system. A study of international system is taken to be a study of the international society as a whole, constituting the states as different units. But the study of the states involves

its domestic socio-political-economic milieu which determines its security, military and strategic considerations. The emergence of the states, has seen a growing phenomenon of 'nationalism' and 'power' which have consolidated the system.

The state system comprising of certain categories have a common identity as a collective and organised group involving self-concious and national communities. Throughout its history, the human race, has been faced by certain problems resulting from its divisions into more or less self concious and organised groups. These groups have been and remain racial, religious, economic, social and political and they have tended to overlap in nature. In a nationalist fervour, race conciousness may and often does cut across national boundaries and surpasses economic solidarities of interests or feelings of class cohesion, which may transcend loyalities based upon religious beliefs. Moreover, intergroup relations between individual families to relations between the nuclear Super Powers of the present day, have almost invariably been characterised by friction and disputes and the desire to mitigate or eliminate, these have provided one of the strongest motives for the academic study of inter-group relations.[1] Such frictions and disputes have many sources, all groups tend to generate among their

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1. F.S. Northedge, <u>International Political System</u>, (London, 1976),pp.4-7.

members certain common interests, habits of thought, customs and internal loyalties, which may lead to antagonism with other similar groups. It has indeed been argued that the very existence of feeling of group conciousness demands and depends upon a degree of hostility towards the outsider or the out-group. If that's so, it is perhaps open to doubt, whether mankind will ever be free from intergroup tensions and conflict, no matter how effectively this may be contained within tolerable limits. Thus, one of the dominant forms of inter-group relationship in the twentieth century gives rise to continuous and universal concern that the sense of loyalties very between the organised groups resulting in inter-state conflict and insecurity in the state.

The social tensions within the state become so great as to prevent that state acting as a member of the world political system. In the part of the microstates of Asia and Africa the domestic socio-political milieu plays an important role in the process of nation-building in these lesser states. So, a micro-sociological study of these small states is widely concerned with its political apparatus and the corresponding socio-economic differences influence the political system within the state. The presence of multitude of states in contemporary international system, is the focus of enquiry is the same

age-old problem of organising relations between the
dominant social units of the day in all its complex
and heterogeneous phenomenon.

States constitute major components of the
international political system. Collusion and collision
among states determine the international order. State's
response to the international milieu is conditioned by
its striving to further its security interests. So,
national security has become central to the states in
view of the fact that international politics represents
"struggle for power" and where power of a state deter-
mines its security. Security implies broadly the ✓
maintenance of territorial integrity and sovereignty of
the state. It denotes the sum total of the vital intere-
sts of the states for which the states are continually
striving in international politics, either to pave the
way for successful wars or attempting to arrange their
affairs in such a way that their potential enemies will
be determined from war in the name of security.

The concept of security in international politics
can be formulated in a paradigm nature, interpreting in
terms of 'anarchy' and 'order' as two constant factors
in international system. The international political
system is the most important part of the environment of

states for the obvious reason that states are essentially
political constructs which determine the anarchy and
order in the system. The position of sovereign states
in international system with no overarching government
presents a picture of anarchy where the states are
conceded to be the prime source of threat to each other.
Here, the use of 'anarchy' implies an absence of
structural condition, where all the states live in
peace and amity. So, the study of security problem in a
pradigmatic formulationinvolves basic structure of relations
among these states which have many varieties and styles of
systems within it. So, the security problem from a
structural analysis can be expressed in certain levels
pertaining to the magnitude of social phenomenon in the
state. Broadly, the levels-of-analysis in security can
be broadly categorised into three levels, i.e. individual
level, state level and international system level. These
three level of analyses which make up the study of
international security regime, are convenient shorting
device but not strict categorisation from any point.

Extensive grey areas exist in the universe of
sub-state and transnational organisations which lie
between the individual and the state and in the universe
of multistate and non-state collectivities which lie

between states and the international system as a whole.[2]
Broadly, the three levels of individual, state and
international system provide a set of analysis for the
nature of international political system. In this light,
the studies by Kenneth Waltz, John Ruggie, Robert Giplin
and Barry Buzan have taken up the security problem in a
system level analysis. Broadly, all theorists on
national security, reach at a conclusion that the idea of
the state comprising its territory and its institutions
would have to be well-developed and stable, regardless of
its relative power as a state in the international system.

Coming to the nature of the state, a certain
distinction is found between the types of states in
nation-state category. So, to distinguish between a
nation and a state, the state can be widely defined as an
organisation of people for the purpose of participation in
international system. But the nation is a more exclusive
association of people, united by a common social, cultural
and psychological interests which are expressed in
homogenous and collective identities. Since the French
Revolution and adoption of principle of national self-

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2.   Barry Buzan, People,States and Fear (Brighton, 1983),
      p.14.

determination, there is a tendency for state boundaries
to be identical with national boundaries or to put it
another way for the political map of the world to corres-
pond to the national and ethnical map. Thus, the system
of states as it has been affected by the principle of
national self-determination it is a pertinent paint to
study the nature of the inter state political system
which determines the international system as a whole.

The nature of the states in the international
system can be divided into various categories in terms of
geographical, political, military and economic settings.
But for a more clear analysis, a general classification
in the degree of power which aggregates the state interests,
can be taken into consideration and thus the states can be
classified into big, small or intermediate in nature. In
the international order, it is pertinent to point to the
fact that how far and in what way a state's membership of
a particular class or category affects its position and
behaviour in the international order. The study of states
can be taken up in various typologies like geographical
location magnitude of political and military power, economic
pattern and so on. The simplest and popular method of
classification is by geographical regions, which is the

basis of area-expertise for the international and strategic analysis.. For example, a range of common problems and behavioural similarities peculiar to the states in a region exist in the E.E.C. area, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Central America, the Middle East or Africa and although to a lesser extent also in the Far East of South-East Asia. The regional similarities can be found in different forms like economic and political associations like EEC, OAU, SAARC and others. Such area-similarities apply, however, primarily to area-politics and in application to global politics, other sources of similarity are generally sought. The traditional division used to be into the 'Great Powers' and other states, occasionaly subdivided into Small and Middle Powers. After the Second World War, with the process of decolonisation, the additional category of small states have come into the picture as these undeveloped colonial states emerged independent and the smallest units became known as microstate in international politics.

There is no general agreement on the criteria to define a microstate and hence, there is a considerable amount of confusion about the definition of different classes of states.[3] But roughly speaking, from geographical,

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3. For details, see Jacques Rapport, Ernest Muteba and Joseph J. Theratil, Small States & Territories: Status & Problems, A UNITAR Study (New York, 1971), pp.183-202.

socio-economic and political reasons and consideration
of the corresponding military power and security, the
states can be broadly divided into big, intermediary and
small or microstates. In this category, the set of small
states has a range of common problems for their 'miniature'
position which makes them vulnerable to Big Power dominat-
ion. In this perspective, the microstates with lesser degree
of socio-economic and political stability, have become the
"areas of influence" for the Big Powers in their expansionist
and aggressive military policies.

In the classification of states, it is not easy to
define a state as a microstate with a legal and political
set-up, however small it may be considered from spatial
and aerial domination. In the process of deconomisation,
and break-up of empires, many small territories and
segmented states were born and represented in the august
body of UN. The existence of the United Nations and the
constructive role of these microstates in the UN agencies
have made them, the focus of attention. The small states
of Asia, Africa and Latin America distinct in character,
constitute the underdeveloped and weak states of the
world in terms of military, political and economic strength
in international sphere. For example, states like
Indonesia, Malayasia, Singapore, Laos, Sri Lanka,

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cyprus, Chad, Mali, Niger, Ivory Coast,
Madgascar, Upper Volta, Lebanon, Guatemala, Nicaragua,
Costa Rica, Honduras, Trinidad and Jamaica etc. may roughly
be considered as microstates with lesser degree of political,
military, and economic strength, compared to other states
of the world.

From a geo-political perspective the microstates
have a tiny geographical region and least of politico-
military strength in the context of military and strategic
set-up in regional setting. Smallness is a comparative
not absolute idea. It is a kind of variable; other variables
are population, area, GNP, energy consumption, legal status
etc. and the use of certain techniques such as hierarchical
clustering and analysis of variance in systems. A study
taken by UNITAR finds out the nature of these microstates
and its status and problems in international politics.[4] It
finds the microstates having a degree of international
individuality in their interaction with regional or Super
Powers. These states play an important role in the
international system, in matters of socio-economic affairs
and political security patterns in a global perspective.
In this context, the principle of self-determination and
the right to independence among the states clashes with

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4.   Ibid.,

the principle of territorial integrity and affects the .
behaviour of the nation.   The problem of security and
stability being the main concern of these microstates
they are confrented with an uphill task of nation-
building and consolidating the external position by
adaptation to the overall system.

The set of problems faced by the microstates are
largely characterised by socio-economic, political,
cultural and military concerns which make-up the infra-
structural basis of the state.   In a changing order, the
shift from the status of a colonial society to a nation
independent state, carries the attendant colonial features
of political fragmentation, economic destitution, socio-
cultural differentation and military destabilisation.
In this context, there is a linkage of 'internal' and
'external' systems of the state which determines its
security and stability in broader international sphere.

In a changing geo-political scene, the new
independent microstates have assumed much importance in the
context of Super Power rivalry shifting to these strategic
areas in Third World.   The onset of 'Cold War' and Super
Powerssearch for "areas of influence" in their regional
penetration, have exacerbated the process of intra-
regional divergences and conflicts.   The microstates, for

their lack of manpower and resources to create a strong
defence system of their own, have become the clients of
Big Powers in regional power equations. Again, the
systemic regional divergences and internal conflicts
within these small territoral segmented societies,
have helped the Big Powers to pump their arms and
ammunitions to the region in escalating the intra-
regional conflict. In this light, the position of
small states vis-a-vis the Big Powers, has a veritable
importance in the international politics which calls
for a serious study of the security problem of these
microstates.

To examine the literature on microstates, one
is confronted with the serious problem of typology or
classification of the states in international politics.
The classification according to to the status and
power in traditional sense, falls into broadly categories
like Super Powers, Big Powers, Medium Powers, Small
Powers and a variety of others overlapping in nature.
The different typologies have been adopted by different
writers in dividing the states like core and peripheral,
strong and weak, developed and undeveloped and so on in
the context of international system. From a geographical
point of view the states being geographically disadvan-

taged in character with overlapping EEZ can be taken to
be a set of small states in its 'marginal' character
provided they are adjacent in their location. Otherwise,
some landlocked states and islands with insular position
which are too small in area can be considered as
microstates in the international system. The examples of
Brunei, Cyprus, Nepal, Guatemala, El Salvador, Uganda,
Maladives and above all Sri Lanka roughly correspond to
the idea of a microstate in its geographical configuration.
So, roughly speaking, states having a 'small' geographical
area with a small population, negligible GNP and lacking
in a full fledged national self defence, may be classified
as micro-states in military and strategic dimensions.

In the literature, on microstates it is found that
the role of microstates has assumed much importance in
international politics since the end of 1950s. Though,
during the 18th and 19th century, there was some good
research in this field which took a formal shape with the
starting of the geo-political school led by Frederich
Ratzel. During the 18th and 19th century, the interest
in microstates was manifested through the 50-year old
dissertation by Oscar Bernhard Capis and Eduard Siber who
had put a lot of labour in their research of microstates.
In this period, many authors find the microstates, absolute
and territorial sound in character. But they have not
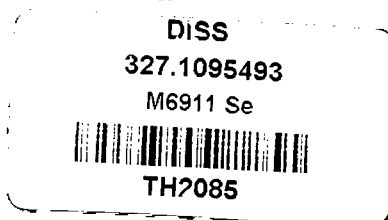
TH-2085
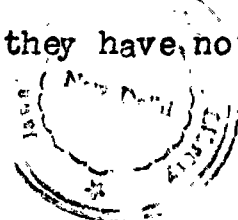
focussed on the security and military concerns of the small states. Montesquieu saw the 'viability problem' of the microstates solved by a confederation between the small states, whereas Arnold Herrmann Ludwig Heeren pointed to the balance of powers as a means of protecting these small states. But it is the geo-political school of Frederich Ratzel coming to existence at the end of 19th century, defined the nature of the states through the establishment of laws of growth. The Swedish political scientist and political geographer, Kijellen noted that the old states will continue to exist and furthermore new ones will continue and it will still generate the state system.

During the first world war, the belligerent power coming to plead the microstates and subsequently, the League of Nations representing the third world small states; it focussed on the study of microstates in international context. In this light Rappord's study in comparative analysis and Harre's study of different-iated state-system have added to the work and research on microstates. During the cold war, few if any studies on microstates were carried out and a renewed interest did not manifest itself until the end of 1950s with the studies of Annet Baker Fox which will be discussed in the following.

There are different approaches toward the definition of the microstates,which has been interpreted in a varied nature by many authors. There is no satisfactory definition in this context for two reasons, first the vagueness about the size and second the nature of the behaviour of the state which is an independent variable.[5] It is one of the most striking features of contemporary international politics that the conspicuousness of microstates has been marked by increasingly military disparity between Great and Small Power. Using the UN as a forum and force and claiming non-alignment as an important distinction and diplomatic innovation, microstates have risen to prominence if not power. Annet Baker Fox's pioneering work on five small states during the Second World War, has focused on the small states' problems in general. On the other hand, a group of authors avoid the entire problem of definition either because it seems irrelevent to them or because it seems impossible to solve. For certain reasons, Annet Baker Fox and David Vital find a strict definition unnecessary and irrelevant. Others have found the problem of size so complex that they argue that a common definition should not be sought in the context.

5. Niels Armsstrup, "The Perennial Problem of Small States, A Survey of Research Efforts", _Cooperation and Conflict_, no.3, 1976, pp.163-179.

The seminar on smaller territories run by
the Institute of Commonwealth Studies in 1962-64
concluded that it proved impossible for the seminar
to decide what smallness means with any precision.
It is a comparative not absolute idea, whatever scales
of magnitude are employed, seem arbitrary and it is
difficult to pick out on them where smallness begins
or ends. Similar observations can be found in the
report from Conference of International Economic
Association in 1957. As it is already discussed,
the UNITAR study of microstates, meaning small states
and territories measured by three variables of area,
population and GNP in a quantitive approach. Another
group of authors explains that the relationship invol-
ving the microstates and great powers can not be
explained by the size variable;but it depends on the
other variables like structure of international system,
the geographic position and the domestic political
system of the microstates.

In this context, the definition by Rothstein
is concerned with a limited category of small states
and powers those feel that they are potentially or
actually threatened by policies of great power. For
these states, he establishes one important factor that

the small powers are something more than or different from Great Powers writ small. Rothstein develops a definition with a psychological as well as material dimension which he writes, "A small power is a state which recognises that it can not obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes or development to do so; the small powers belief in its inability to rely on its own means must also be recognised by the other states, involved in international politics."[6] Rothstein points to three unique aspects of small power situation i.e. i) outside help is required ii) the state has a narrow margin of safety with little time ofor correcting mistakes, iii) the state's leaders see its weakness as essentially unalterable.

After Rothstein's 'security-capability' approach, David Vital takes up this approach in his book, "The Inequality of States." With apparent diffidence, he argues, "We recognise or find it convenient to posit that the world community is divided into certain nations, admittedly loose groups.[7] He then distinguishes three

6. R.L. Rothstein, Alliances and Small Power's (New York, 1964), pp.13-27.

7. David Vital, The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations (Oxford, 1967), pp.35-56.

groups, i.e. great, middle and small states drawing upon the lines of population. Vital concludes that it should perhaps be stressed that these definitions are put forward to make clear the identity of the subject of this study not with a view to the creation of a precise concept for manipulative analytical purposes. Vital finds the weakness as the most common, natural and pervasive view of self in small states. He spares no effort to show the great disparities in political, economic and military power and potential between the great and small. The security dilemma which is conditioned by the systemic role played by the states in international system, thus making security system-dominent and sub-system dominent. In the exercise of power of small and great powers, the non-aligned states are seen as an aberration to Rothstein and it is a paradigm to vital. In a brief comment, Liska also argues that small state sub-system would enjoy a maximum of practically attainable autonomy in a multi-polar global system, combining conflict with concert.[8]

The 'under-developed' nature of micro-states and its associated problems can be taken into consideration in terms of its national interest. Generally, the

8.   George Liska, _International Equilibrium: A Theoritical Essay on the Politics and Organisation of Security_ (Mass., 1957), p.232.

state interests fall into three categories like security, trade and normative interests. Of all the problems in a microstate, the security problem is of utmost importance, determining the stability and strength of the state in international system. In the international system today, no central authority exists that can enforce order and provide security. In the power constellation that instead exists, nations must be concerned about their security from being dominated, attacked or annihilated by other nations or groups. To attain security from such attacks, they are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the impact of the powers of others. This process in turn renders others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since, no one can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power rivalry ensures and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation begins.

The states in their drive for power and security, face certain challenges within and from outside the system. Much of the dilemma is that states can never be sure that the security measures of others are intended only for security and not for aggression. However, power accumulation can not achieve security because in such a race the states get both too much and too little power.

They get too much power in the sense that they gain the ability to carry out aggression but too little power because others being menaced, will increase their own arms and again reduce these states' security. Thus the process illustrates that a misperception of others intentions and behaviour leads to false definition of the situation, whereby it exacerbate the prevailing tension and discord. The state being pushed to organise its military capability, it finds the security dilemma, whereby it looks up at the other external factor that may consolidate its position. Thus from regional conflict, it escalates into an international one, involving Big Powers in the process. Another aspect of this security dilemma is the competition between defence and development spending, by which it weakens the national development and progress. The rising military expenditure and the intensive security preparation, destabilise the socio-economic development of the country, paving the way for internal division and instability.

While studying the importance of security in the international relations, it is found that the under-development of security as a concept in international relations is to be found in its use in the corresponding literature. By way of comparison, the literature on power

contains not only a mass of empirical work, also a well-developed body of theoritical writing. But when we turn to security, however a rather different situation obtains. While the term itself is in wide use, and appears to be accepted as a central organising concept by both practitioners and academics, the literature on it is very unbalanced. A large and flourishing literature exists on the empirical side dealing with the contemporary security problems and issues. Most of this comes out of the sub-field of Strategic Studies for which security is the core concept. The foreign, military, economic policies of states, the intersection of these policies in areas of change or dispute, and the general structure of relations which they create are all analysed in terms of national and international security. But the concept of security is seldom addressed in terms other than the policy interests of particular actors and groups and the discussion has a heavy military emphasis. Many disputes arise regarding the particularities of the security policy both within and between the states. The discussion is normally set within very limited temporal and conceptual frameworks and general motions like 'dominance' and 'stability' mark the limits of attempts to give enduring meaning to the idea of security.

But when we search for a matching conceptual literature on security, relatively little comes to hand and there is certainly nothing equivalent to a coherent school of thought like the Realists on power. The enthusiasm for collective security after First World War had some promise in this direction, but the failure of both the League of Nations and the United Nations to measure up to the task, has not surprisingly lessened interest in this whole approach. John Hertz was the first to introduce the idea of security dilemma in the early 1950s. Hertz's 'security dilemma' is a structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs, tend automatically to lead to rising insecurity for others, as each interprets its own measures as defensive and the measures of others as potentially threatening.[9]

The security dilemma idea is widely acknowledged in the literature but aside from some notable recent work by Robert Jervis, there has been almost no attempt to build on it. This is surprising because, as we shall see, the

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9. John H. Hertz, "Idealist Internationalism and the Security Dilemma", World Politics, vol.2, 1950, pp.157-80.

idea offers a weighty and sophisticated alternative to
the power struggle model of the Realists as a way of
interpreting the basic dynamics of international politics.
Probably, the best known conceptual piece on security
is Arnold Wolfers's chapter on national security in his
book 'Discord and Collaboration'. Wolfers's emphasis
on national security certainly reflected the dominant
orientation in the empirical literature and his essay
is a masterly introduction to the many-dimensioned
complexities of the concept.[10]

In addition to these core works,one can find only
a few other conceptual discussions of security. Hedley
Bull, Bernard Brodie, Frank Trager and Frank Simonie make
brief but useful contributions on the difficulties of
applying it. Hugh Macdonald attempts to tackle the
ambiguity of the concept but ends of defeated by his own
categories and withdraws from the struggle by dismissing
security as an 'inadequate' concept.[11] Robert Jervis
introduces the interesting idea of security regimes, which
draws attention from the state to the system level of
analysis. Gret Krell attempts a broad critique of excess-

10. For details, see Arnold Wolfers,'National Security
as an Ambiguous Symbol', Discord and Collaboration,
(Baltimore, 1962), Ch. 10.

11. Hugh Macdonald, "The Place of Strategy and the Idea
of Security" Millenium, 10:3, (1981), pp. 65-74.

ively military conceptions of security from a peace
research perspective and the literature on strategic
studies add to the definition of security. In contrast
with the strategic studies, Rechard Ashley takes up a
more holistic, linkage oriented, systemic view of the
security concept. He argues that technical rationality
is itself a principal factor exacerbating the security
dilemma. Ken Booth argues convincingly that the state-
bound, ethnocentric confines, within which Strategic
Studies pursues its analysis is seriously deficient in
relation to the character of the problem. Despite their
wholly different premises, both Ashley and Booth come to
similar conclusions, in Booth's words "those strategists
who do not attempt to be part of the solution will
undoubtedly become an increasingly important part of the
problem."[12]

Other authors like Leonard Beaton, Stanley Hoffmann,
L.B. Krause, Joseph Nye etc. have taken up the 'security'
issue in their study of state power and interest. Though,
initially the development of the 'security' concept was
not much significant, gradually it has grown in its nature
and study. The subject of security involves many topics

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12. Ken Booth, _Strategy and Ethnocentrism_ (London, 1979),
    pp.2-22.

such as deterrence, arms control and disarmament, crisis
management, alliances, military technology, strategic
build-up, arms racing and contemporary national security
problem and principles, which do not constitute its
principal focus. Instead, the whole of the concept
'security' revolves around its principal referent object,
'the state'. Since the state is an amorphous, multifaceted,
collective object; there are certain levels in the state
system as well as international system, which make-up the
security regime. So, the phenomenon of 'security' can be
studied on several levels, but broadly it is centred on
individuals, states and the international political system.
These three levels should be treated as a convenient
sorting device since extensive grey areas exists in the
domain of international politics.

The security problem in its traditional sense, is
concerned with the maintenance of national power and
independence in the international system. In modern times,
the problem of national security has assumed much importance
in the structural performance of the developing nations
which has a certain 'linkage' with the broader framework
in international system. So in this context, there is a
certain 'linkage' between the internal and external settings
of a microstate in its geo-political configuration. The

security problem of microstates is determined by
internal stability within the society which influences
its external security. For these small states, with
no significant economic or military power, there is
not much interaction at the international level,
whereas the national security has been the dominent
concern of the state in its regional and international
environment. Going back to the emergence of the nation
states in world system, there is a host of factors that
determine the security concern of a nation state.

The small states or microstates in the post-
colonial phase, are beset with many internal problems
of socio-economic political and cultural nature which
impinges the unity and stability in the society. Because
of the diverse character of the society, the nature of
security as a problem differs substantially from state
to state. But all states are to some extent vulnerable
to military and economic threats in external character.
Moreover, the internal components of the national security
can be attributed to different kinds of threats in
domestic socio-political milieu of the state. The multi-
layered nature of the state opens it to threats on many
levels, particular vulnerabilities depending upon the
unique structure and circumstances of the state concerned.

As it is already discussed, the national security
of a small state is beset with a host of interstate factors
which affect the viability and strength of the state in
regional set-up. From national perspective, the diverse
political society within the state, with multiethnic,
multi-religious, and multicultural differences poses an
impending threat to the overall security of the state.
The fragile socio-economic system and lack of stable
political institutions; the absence of integrative revo-
lution in society, results in domestically generated
threats to the security of the state. In these small
states, the integration problem as manifested in social
and political divisions threatens the large-scale political
net-work of the state. The integration problem is not
just concerning some social homogeneity but it is the
ability of a political unit to conduct the import and
necessary business without disaffecting larger bodies of
its constituents.

The focus then is upon the role of various internal
institutions such as government, economy, educational
system and religion which play an important role in
alienating or accomodating important parts of the populat-
ion; and it has an impact on international events and forces,
in the process. To examine the integrative process in

society, it is seen that the members of a social system
develop certain 'linkage' and cohesion, so that the
boundaries of the state-system persists over time and
the boundaries of subsystems become less consequential
in affecting the behaviour of members in a system. In
this process, members of the social system develop an
escalating sequence of contact, co-operation and consensus
and community. Hence, the racial ethnic groups in the
states of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the post-
colonial period, develop loyalty to primordial attachments
and assert their separate socio-cultural identity. It is
this crystallisation of a direct conflict between
primordial and civil sentiments that gives to the problems
variously called tribalism, parochialism, communialism and
so on, threatening the sovereignty and independence of the
state. Security and development are two sides of the coin
of nation-building and one cannot be had without the other.
Again, the leadership in developing societies have to carry
out their nation-building in an international environment
which is getting increasedly integrated. So, the political
adaptation of these small states to the international system,
is determined by the domestic socio-political set-up of the
state.

Nationalism has an important role to play in
integrating the segmented societies of the small states,

The post-colonial societies strive towards civil political community with various nationalities existing as disparate political groups. The division of society in racial-ethnic groups and socio-economic, political disaffection among these various groups, result in civil discontent and disorder in the society, as a whole. In this context, the cases of Cyprus, Phillipines, Zaire, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and many others provide the picture of typical segmented societies where the intra-state ethnic conflict has affected and endangered the security of the state.

The nationalist approach to the problem of social-communication within the state, can ensure unity and stability of the society. In this context, the interpretation of Karl Deutsch provide the basic tenets of security of a small state. He says that the patterns of socio-political changes that take place in the internal mechanism of the small state; indirectly determines the security perspective in a regional and broader specific interests.[13] Others like Singer, Kaus Knorr, Sidney Verba analyse the nature of nationalist and transnationalist phenomena in a global perspective. The states with a serious domestic security problem, are vulnerable to the 'external' domination where the perception

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13.   Karl W. Deutsch, _Tides Among Nations_ (New York; 1979), pp. 35-66

of security becomes ambiguous, contradictory and confused in nature. Thus the question of national security depends on the creation of a national consensus around national basic values in a society which is coherent, united and enjoys equilibrium among its forces.

There is a certain 'linkage' between the national security and the external position of the state in the international system. Because the co-operation on both the internal and international levels is the sine quanon of national security in a system dominated by nation-states. The position of state in the international system is determined by its sovereignty, territorial status and national power. The national security problem stressing the 'stability' and 'law and order' in domestic phenomenon, extends to the international system involving the relationship of states to one another. The international co-operation has always been an object of foreign policy of the developing countries, while a system's stability has been the concern of the national security theory.

Broadly speaking, the 'external' security is determine by the geographical configuration of the state. Again the nature of international milieu and the role of Big Powers in the area, contribute to the understanding

of the security dimensions of the state. In the
hierachical state-system, the military and security
position of the states can be determined in consideration
of the membership ind military alliances and their
participation in the regional political associations.
The integration and international organisations in
nature of alliances communittes in the international
sphere make-up the security regimes in international
relations. The various organisations like UN and its
allied organisations and other political movements like
NATO, WARSAW PACT, Non-alignment, etc. present a picture
of pluralistic security communities in international sphere.

The microstates at the lowest level of hierarchical
order need to assert their independence and autonomy in
external affairs. The world being split by the bipolar
power politics, the newly independent states have seen
their individual collective, political stature, lying in
a separate identity of organisation, whether it is
non-aligned status or a client status for a big power.
Now, after studying the security problem in international
politics in greater details, we come to the conclusion
that it is theoretically untenable and practically naive
to dissociate any region from the global security
environment. Again, it is seen that the regional security

is threatened by inter-state conflicts, tensions, wars
which are further exacerbated in the presence of inter-
state conflicts. In this light, the systemic divergences
in South Asia, coupled with its peculiar socio-cultural
disparities present a picture of regional insecurity and
domestic instability. In the South Asian system, the
strategic discord, discernible in the region as a
characterstic feature, has a very strong parallel in the
systemic divergences obtaining in the region.

In this context, the study of Sri Lankan security
problem provides a good case for the analysis of the
security problem of microstates in geo-political dimensions.
Sri Lanka has a significant geographical configuration as
a microstate in South Asia which is relevant to the study
of its security problem. In the study of Sri Lankan
security, the following factors can be taken into consider-
ation, i.e. ethnic strife, Indo-Sri Lankan relations, the
Super Powers in'nexus' and emerging power struggle in
Sri Lanka and the shattered economy etc. must be taken into
reckoning. In this light, the study of Sri Lankan security
problem assumes much importance in external and internal
dimensions.

CHAPTER II

DOMESTIC FRAMEWORK AND GEOPOLITICAL ASPECTS
OF SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is endowed with a natural geographical unity and historical events that have produced a composite of heterogeneous cultures and people dating back to the ancient times. The geographical fact that Sri Lanka is a small island of some 65,000 square kilometers in extent has tended to encourage among peoples who have inhabited it for centuries, a sense of identification with the island and of the separation from the nearby Indian subcontinent from which the island's peoples and culture emerged. This island-nation situated in the vast waters Indian Ocean, has certain geo-political significance in its peculiar domestic and international character.

Sri Lanka, a pear-shaped island with an area of 65,000 sq. kilometers is a compact land mass lying off the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent extending between latitudes 5°55' and 9°50' North and longitudes 79°42' and 81°52' East. It is separated from the subcontinent by a narrow strip of water, the Palk Straits which is just 30 kilometers wide between the narrowest points of Indo-Sri Lankan coastlines. This resplendent island of some 430 kilometers at its longest from North to South and 220 kilometers at its broadest from East to West has a total land area of 65,610 square kilometers including inland waters. Here the waters of Bay of Bengal, meet the Arabian Sea and both of them meet the vast waters of Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka

at this juncture of sea routes have become important for the
sea powers of Indian Ocean. The geographical insularity of
the island and its 'miniature' status have accounted for its
security and strategic concern in matters, domestic and
external as well.

The island's position in the Indian Ocean area gives
it a focal importance of sea-borne trade routes and strategic
naval calculations. The Indian subcontinent thrusts down
into the centre of the Indian Ocean for more than a thousand
miles from the northern shores of Sri Lanka and Sri Lanka
stands at a strategic speck in the Indian Ocean. During the
18th and 19th century it was an important place as a naval
port and had served the purpose of artificial harbour. It
has the most spacious natural protected harbour in the Central
Indian Ocean area. On the east coast, Trincomalee harbour runs
inland some thirteen kilometers and the anchorage is large
enough to shelter the full fleet of any of world's great
powers. In air routes, it serves as a connecting point between
continents. It's central position in geo-political signifi-
cance attributes to its future development as a strategic
point for the Super Powers. After Sri Lanka's independence
in 1948, no single Power commanded in the area without any
unified security in the Indian Ocean. Instead of a single
empire there were a congeries of succession states each with
weak defense and several with possibly competing interests.

Gradually, with the balkanization of the strategic area
in the Indian Ocean, the future role and needs of any one
Power in the area became commensurately uncertain.

At the focal point of sea and air routes, traversing
the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is a centre of attention, a
magnet of risks. For military build-up, Sri Lanka is a
necessary base for the Super Power's influence in the Indian
Ocean region. Its existence as an independent country of
great strategic worth has considerable liabilities towards
its neighbours, specifically India, which broadly comes under
the overall strategic defence area in the Indian Ocean region.
The security in the sub-continent is threatened by any
military build-up in the Indian Ocean region whether it is
Trincomalee or whatsoever inside Sri Lanka. The littoral
states concern for security and stability in the region is a
determinant factor in the military and strategic equation
of the countries.

From colonial period, the British Power has consolidated
its position in the area through its vast Asian empire and
subsequently through the institution of Commonwealth after
independence of the colonial countries. In case of Sri Lanka,
the British entered into a defense arrangement to continue
its influence in the area. Subsequently the military build-
up in Diego Garcia and the American presence in the Indian

Ocean area has filled the power-vaccum after the withdrawal of the British Power from the area. In this changing scenario, the military presence and strategic build-up of Big Powers have seriously undermined the regional security and stability in the area which is vital to the interests of the sub-continent. For Sri Lanka its tiny nature as a small island and its separation from a massive continental power, i.e. India, with a great potentiality and having a sizeable population of Tamil inhabitants with common racial-ethnic ties with those of the island; hold the key to its security perspective. In its regional setting, Sri Lankan geo-politics can be attributed to its strategic position in the Indian Ocean, corresponding with its Asian Position in the region.

From geographical considerations, the island conforming a southern continuation of the Deccan Plateau in India comprises a varied landscope of low and high lands, costal plains and a plateau of vast tracts. Relief of the land may generally be said to comprise a mountainous area in the South-Central part surrounded by an upland belt while the coastal plains cover the rest of the island. Though, narrower on the west-south and east, the coastal plain widens out to a vast tract towards north.[1] The high central massif is the main feature of the island's physical structure influencing the climate, fertility and population on the lower step of the central massif.

1.   A.J. Wilson, Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947-1973, (Macmillan, London, 1974) pp.16-18.

On either side of high plateau are two distinct areas of relatively low elevation and the south-western side is the wet zone of Sri Lanka with a growing plantation economy of coconut, rubber and tea. It is in the south-west that western urban influences are strongest. From here Colombo, with over half a million people exerts its irrestible pull on the rest of the island. Over half of Sri Lanka's population lives within seventy five miles of the capital. It is here that the pulse of the nation beats fastest and where the tides of ancient civilization and modern urban society mingle and flow.[2] The great low lands which lie to the north and the east in the Dry Zone are vast plains in which members of all religious communities are found among the inhabitants of its model settlements. In the coastal lands of east and west, the undulating low lands have extensive cultivation of rice, rubber and bamboo. Still further north in Jaffna peninsula, the scene gets changed with a cultivation of rice, tobbacco and a whole range of vegetables. The northern and eastern part of the island is densely populated by Tamil minority who are indigenous in character. But in the western and central areas the Indian Tamils occupy the tea and rubber plantations in the region.

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2. Zeylanicus, Ceylon between Orient and Occident (Colombo, 1967), pp. 14-15.

Sri Lanka is a multi-racial country of different peoples, cultures and religions where the majority Sinhalese form the main ethnic group with 10.9 million or 74 per cent of the total population. Sinhalese is their mother tongue, the official language of the country. The majority of the Sinhalese are Buddhists by religion and are mainly concentrated in the South West and Central parts of the island. The Tamils form the next major ethnic group with a population of 2.7 million or 18 per cent is enumerated at the 1981 population Census. This ethnic group comprises Sri Lanka Tamils and Indian Tamils. Both these sub-groups speak Tamil. The Sri Lanka Tamils numbered 1.9 million in 1981, while their Indian counterparts accounted for 0.8 million. About 80 per cent of the Tamils are Hindus by faith. There is a heavy concentration of Sri Lanka Tamils in the Jaffna District. Indian Tamils are descendants of those who worked in Tea and Rubber plantations, during the early years of the British occupation. Heavy concentrations of Indian Tamils occur in Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and Kegalle districts.

Sri Lanka Moors constitute the third major ethnic group with a population of approximately one million or 7.0 per cent of the total population. The Moors are descendants of early Arabs. With a business acumen the Moors have developed themselves as skilful traders dominating a fair proportion of the country's internal trade. A vast majority of Sri Lanka Moors have been concentrated in Colombo, Kandy,

Batticaloa, Amparai, Trincomalee, Kalutera, Galle,
Kurunegala, Puttalam and Kegalle districts. The Indian
Moors numbering a little over 27,000 are sparsely scatt-
ered with a major concentration in Colombo District.

Apart from these major communities there are other
small groups with distinctive ethnic identities, though
insignificant in their number. Burghers and Eurasians
descendants of the Europeans who intermarried and settled
here, constitute 0.26 per cent of the total population.
Many of them however, have since migrated to other countries
specially to Australia. The Malays form another 0.32 per
cent, while the heterogeneous group 'other' comprise a mere
29,000 or 0.19 per cent of the island's population.

Sri Lanka is predominantly an agricultural country
with 28% of GDP accounting from agriculture. It can be
broadly divided into two major sectors of plantation agricu-
lture and subsistence or peasant economy. The peasant
agriculture is meant for home consumption and characterised
by small holdings. The plantation factor is meant for export
market and concentrated on large holdings for commercial
purposes. In this economy, the cash crops like tea, rubber
and coconut form the major exports for foreign exchange.
The gradual fluctuating prices of these products and the vast
imports of industrial goods for domestic market have created

serious strains in the economy. Of its total 16.23 million acres of land in use 7.8% are used for paddy cultivation, 44.2% are woodlands, 12% are under tea and 45% under rubber; the rest land is used for coconuts etc. Agriculture and fishing are the primary sources of income for the coastal and wetland inhabitants. In minerals quartz, feldspar, mica, monozite, graphite and industries like cement, rubber, cotton, salt, copra contribute a moderate amount to the economy. Fishing and tourism are the two main sectors of the profitable business in the island. The "scarce" economy and the competing group interests within it have resulted in the detrioration of social order and cohesion within the state.

According to the Sri Lankan history, the ancient civilization of Sri Lanka was a Sinhalese Buddhist civilization who settled the Dry Zone area of the island first and accepted Buddhism. as their religion which dated back to its Indian origin. In the passage of time, the declining medieval kingdom re-established itself within the hill country in the sixteenth century and during the period of British rule, there occured a division of Sinhalese into up-country and low-country categories. These differences are now fast disappearing in the wake of efficient transportation and centralisation of administration in the independent Sri Lanka.

On the other hand the Sri Lankan Tamils are thickly populated in Jaffna peninsula, in the far northern extremity of the island in close proximity to the Indian mainland, separated by a stretch of water. The Tamils of Sri Lanka who have inhabited the island from ancient times have flourished in the wake of the British colonial administration. Though 'minority' in character, it has enjoyed the equal facilities in education and employment under the colonial administration. Setting a high premium on education, the Tamils have established fine schools and with good education, they have gone into all parts of the country as successful professional men, businessmen, officials and administrators of the government. They have accupied some of the top-positions in government departments and commercial establishments with a good amount of power and prestige. But in the aftermath of independence, the majority Sinhalese have started a major campaign of 'Sinhalese only' to uplift the Sinhalese masses for their relatives backwardness in socio-economic and societal positions.

In the change of time, the Tamil minority has been alienated from the mainstream by the governments implementation of one-sided policies favouring the Sinhalese in matters of education, language and employment. The language policy of government which has emphasised 'Sinhalese' as the sole official language, has created tension in the society. In

this context, the Tamil insistence on parity of status for Tamil with Sinhala, as the official language of Sri Lanka has further aggravated the communal antagonism between the two major communities of Sinhalese and Tamil. This linguistic rivalries between the two groups are really an expansion of more deep-seated economic fears sharpened by historical memories.

Historically seen, Sri Lanka had to undergo a longer colonial experience than any other country in Asia. The British attacked the country in 1795 and established a communication network in 1848, to make the Sri Lankan uplands more accessible. It also laid the military and political conditions for an economic transmutation of the island. The gradual introduction of coffee plantation and its flourishing business attracted entreprenurs from England who purchased land and vast forest tracts in Kandyan valley at minimal prices and converted it into large coffee plantations. So after the British occupation of lowlands and Kandyan valley area the native Sinhalese population found living difficult and it became frustrated with the British government for its occupation of the native land. Despite the pressure exerted by the British, the Kandyan Sinhalese refused to work in the British plantations for which the British had to draw the Tamil labourers from India as an alternative to solve the

labour problem. The export of Tamils from India and the creation of vast 'immeserized' Sinhalese masses divided the nation, allowing the British to manipulate and exacerbate the ethnic antagonism between the Tamil and Sinhalese in a classical strategy of 'divide and rule'. Such socioeconomic disparity in social and ethnic pattern has fundamentally determined the subsequent character of political activity in Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan society presents a varied nature of political and social distinctions through a regid stratification in matters like ethnic, religious and cultural behaviour of the people in the society. As religious traditions and values are closer to source of behaviour in Asia the primordial loyalties and its impact determine the process of modernisation and nation-building in the post colonial societies of the region. In this paralance, India and Sri Lanka have certain historical legacies dating back to ancient times. The historical connections betweeing India and Sri Lanka go back to some 2500 years or more, not taking the pre-historic connections into account. As historical anectdotes speak its first the people of Indian origin, who colonised Sri Lanka and ruled over it. It was the arrival of Prince Vijaya with his followers in 543 B.C. from some part of India that settled in the island

and became known as the Sinhalese people. The successive
Tamil invasions from South-India which began in the thirt-
eenth century led to the decay of the Sinhalese civilization.
The Sinhalese were driven back to the Southern and South-
western parts of the island, while the north and northeastern
region were settled by the Tamils. On the basis of these
historical anecdotes and epics, the Sinhalas claim themselves
to be the original settlers in the island. They view the
Tamils as the desendants from the Tamil invaders who had come
from India and inhabited the island.

The Tamils on the other hand, view history in an
entirely different perspective. They believe that North
India is far away from Sri Lanka. The inflow of peoples, as
the Sinhalas claim, from places like Bengal, Orissa and even
Madhya Pradesh to Sri Lanka would have been extremely cumbersome
apart from the fact that it could not have taken place in one
go. It would have been easier and more natural for the South
Indians to cross over to the island from the Indian mainland.
The Tamils claim that they were the first to inhabit Sri Lanka
and King Vijaya and the so-called Sinhalas came much later.
The Tamil name for Sri Lanka, 'Eelam', is mentioned even in the
pre-christian era of Tamil classics. Otherwise, the Tamil
'minority' claims that as the descendants from the Yakkhas
and Nagas, they are the original settlers of the island. It
completely discounts the Sinhalese charge that the present

Sri Lanka Tamils are the descendants of the Tamil invaders. Therefore, to call the Tamil outsiders as invaders and late-comers is nothing but a travesty of the facts, the Tamils of Sri Lanka argue. [3]

Sri Lanka has a plural society, a mosaic of self-aware communities, distinguished from one another along ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds. In the wake of Independence the absence of strong parties derived from disciplined organisation from clear-cut economic or revolutionary differences or from an intense struggle for Independence has made the Sri Lankan political life, closely bound up with communal and traditional differentiations. After the Independence, as the local political leaders have responded to the imperatives of representative politics, the social differences have often been played upon and accentuated under racial, ethnic divisions, It'll well be realised that in a plural society, like that of contemporary Sri Lanka with solidarity patterns based upon religion, language, ethnic identity, Itis hard to establish a national consensus on basic social and political goals. But an overwhelming number of middle-class Sri Lanka Tamils in the north and east look towards the Sinhalese south and the capital city of Colombo for economic gains and political ferment. This

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3.   V.P. Vaidik, Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka, India's Options (National, 1986), p.7.

inhibits the development of a separatism, that looks to South-India as an alternate focus of loyalty.

On the other hand, the Sinhalas are socially and politically divided and are not sure of their strength and cohasion, they tend to regard the non-Buddhist minorities especially the Tamils as a greater threat than they actually are. Again, the imaginary fear about India is the presence of Tamil multitudes in South-India sharing a common race and culture with the Sri Lanka Tamils is viewed as an external threat to the existence of Sinhalas in the island. The Sinhalas feel that they have no other place to go except Sri Lanka while the Tamils, with their 12.6 per cent of the Sri Lankan population who appear to be in minority are really a dominant community if one takes into account the 50 million people of Tamil Nadu, just thirty kilometers away, with whom they have special relationship and on whom they can fall back in an hour of crisis. History, as perceived by the Sinhalas, has helped bread a minority complex in them though they are the overwhelming majority in Sri Lanka with 74 per cent of the total population.

The concept of the 'nation-state' employees a homogneity, a unity of sentiments and a way of life that do not yet exist.[4]

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4. W. Howard Wriggins, Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation (Princeton, 1960), pp. 17-19.

In South-Asia, there are plural societies made up of a
congeries of distinctive and self-aware groups who are
differentiated by race, religion and language. In every
country there are large numbers of men and women who speak
different languages and live within different cultural
traditions. Racial conciousness is widespread and alert
awareness of racial differences adds to the divisions in
the society. In certain countries, caste stratification
and foreign immigrant communities provide other diversities.[5]
The principle of majority rule suggests that more numerous
have the right to have everything as they wish, but democratic
values emphasise the rights of minorities. This is compli-
cated when a growing group awareness encourages each ethnic
or cultural community to seek in its own past its unique
qualities - a search that only accentuates the separateness
of each country. In case of Sri Lanka the racial ethnic
conflict that has given rise to the Tamil demand for separatism,
has undermined the unity and stability of the nation. It has
also created conditions for the interference of regional and
extra-regional powers who have intensified their arms build-up
in the region.

Thus in the case of Sri Lanka, its internal domestic
setting determines its external behaviour and position in matters

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5. Ibid.

of military, strategic and security concerns. But in matters
of foreign policies and external behaviour, its geographical
configurations set limits to what its statesman can do. So
the domestic socio-economic and cultural factors and the
strategic, security considerations mutually reinforce each
other. For a microstate like Sri Lanka, there is no need for
a monolith pattern in divergence to attain greater security
but rather the emphasis should be on a rational, common socio-
political identification underlying the unity of all communities
and all people. In a broader international framework Sri Lanka's
regional Asian position and its world setting serve as the dual
balancing force, which seeks a 'middle path' as an independent
non-aligned nation. After the perusal of the above factors,
it is seen that there is a close linkage between Sri Lanka's
domestic and external milieu which determines the security
problem in its geo-political dimensions.

For Sri Lanka, its internal domestic politics holds the
key to its security problem in its peculiar geographical
configurations. The varied nature of socio-economic, political
and other factors in the society determine the efficacy and
stability of the state. In a plural society like Sri Lanka,
with too many divisions in society, the security problem is
beset with a host of internal threats in a varied nature.

CHAPTER III

SRI LANKA AND ITS INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

In a geographical configuration, the South Asian Region constituting the states of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives presents a sub-system of states in the broader consideration of the international state-system. All these states are tied to the South Asian sub-system on the grounds of a common civilisational heritage, ethnic, religious and linguistic affinities and existence of a common level of interaction determined by the very fact of geographical contiguity. There is another characteristic feature in the sub-system that lends a special Indo-centric attribute to the region. In this set-up there is a certain infra-structural linkages within the states that manifest in a systemic divergence and heterogeneous character.

The states of South Asian region have common socio-political phenomena in a peculiar domestic and international setting for which there is some degree of insecurity and instability in the region. Regional security in the Third World is becoming increasingly vulnerable and it is theoretically untenable and practically naive to dissociate any region of the Third World from the overall global security environment.[1] Again, the regional security is threatened by inter-state conflicts, tensions and wars in the region. These conflicts may be due to differing boundary claims, ideological incompatibility or irreconcilability of political and economic interests.

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1.   S.D. Muni, "Systemic Divergence and Regional Insecurity in South Asia", vol.3, no.1, Problems of Non-alignment, April-Sept. 1985, pp.

Further, the security of the individual states is threatened from the internal conflicts that arise from within the "national" set-up as a result of turmoil and disruption in the socio-political order of the state.

If one looks closely at the South Asian scene, one finds that the strategic discord discernible in the region as a characteristic feature has a very strong parallel in the systemic divergences obtaining in the region. In view of the region's geographical contiguity and socio-cultural identities existing across national boundaries, it is inevitable that its strategic discord and systemic divergence should mutually be related.

The South Asian states have a common colonial heritage due to the past dominance of British colonialism in direct or indirect nature. In the colonial period, the British had calculated the geo-strategic imperatives of the region in consideration of the Indian defence area as a significant strategic environment. The defence area, embracing the whole sub-continent and extending to the waters of Indian Ocean was the focal point of the British power in the region. The British naval power in its bid for supremacy in the Indian Ocean region took over the strategic points in the ocean and consolidated its position in the area. In its grand naval military strategy, Sri Lanka was a pivotal area, in terms of greater political, economic and strategic interests.

Before its independence, the British signed the Sri Lanka-
UK Defence Agreement in 1947 in connection with the taking
over of bases in Sri Lanka and harbour and airport transit
facilities for British power, even it had been extended to
Soviet and American ships. Thus the fear of big power rivalry,
with its attendant consequences exposed the Sri Lanka's nodal
position in the Indian Ocean. Another fundamental geographical
fact which confronts the tiny state is its separation by only
a few kilometers from a massive continental power, India. In
the changed context of international relations, the strategic
dilemmas in South Asia was that India conceived of her neighb-
ouring countries as lying within its defence perimeter and
being integral to the security interests of India, while India's
neighbours themselves regard India as the source of their own
insecurity against whom it is necessary to organise their own
security interests, sometimes even on extra-regional basis.
Thus the strategic position of India in this South-Asian sub-
system has a veritable importance in its broader regional
implications. For Sri Lanka, the quest for overseas market
for its export-import economy, was the compelling factor behind
the general political and military interests in the Indian
Ocean.

Under the British commonwealth the defence agreement with
U.K. had obligated the British to provide such military assist-
ance for the defence of Sri Lanka's territory, defence against

aggression and protection of essential communications in a
'mutual' defence plan. The Sri Lankan history provides the
fact that in the wake of independence, the country was in a
state of chaos and disorder and the country was in search of
a balance in the matters of its foreign policy. The conti-
nuation of alliance with the British guaranteed its security
in the region. Gradually with the onset of cold war and
super power rivalry in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka found
itself in the maritime penetration of foreign powers extending
to this 'third' geo-strategic area in the world. Again the
grand oceanic designs of Super Powers and its competing
strategic, commercial interests have led to a rapid arms
build-up of both conventional and nuclear arsenals threaten-
ing the peace and stability of the littoral states of the
Indian Ocean. After long years as a 'peaceful British lake',
the ocean came to be an arena of confrontation in sixties
and early seventies. Several developments in the area have
contributed to this transformation. According to the western
analysts, the British withdrawal from East of Suez, created
a 'power vaccum' in the area, necessitating other powers to
full the void in the region. The US policy of economic intere-
sts in the Persian Gulf and its diplomatic manoeuvring in
Middle-East in its strategic designs against Soviet Union,
sought to pursue an aggressive military strategy in deploying
arms and ammunitions from the Middle-East to the Indian Ocean
region.

The strategic significance of the ocean became more important to the west, particularly to USA after weapon system based on nuclear propulsion and SLBM was tested in developing the first and second strike capability for USA. The Soviet Union on the other hand, sought to neutralise the threat from the area, with its strong support to the nationalist and non-aligned states in the region. For US, its presence in North-sea, Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific and Mediterranean faced certain challenges from the Soviet power, but in the Indian Ocean, it was in a more favourable strategic position to counter any Soviet threat in the area. Other powers like China, France and Japan sought to substantiate their position and make their presence felt in the last decades. It has thus intensified the local conflict through the interference of the big powers in the region.

Local conflicts and regional rivalaries are used by the Big Powers to spread their presence to suit their strategic and local interests as well. In the case of USA, the loss of security in Persian Gulf, Middle-East, Afghanistan and Horn of Africa (Ethiopia), compelled it to consider the whole region as an 'Arc of Crisis' for its vital importance in matters of security and strategy in the region.[2] With this the American Administration called for a 'Rapid Deployment Force' and the theatre of operations shifted to Asia, embracing most of the areas of tensions in the Indian Ocean region.

2. Fred Holiday, Threat from the East? (Penguin, 1981), pp. 13-32.

Gradually, the Super Powers got seriously engaged
in establishing bases, acquiring naval, military power and
constituting regional military pacts in the South Asian
region. These powers went to the extent of pressure tactics
including financial inducements, offers of arms and equipments
and veiled threats to gain their military and political
objectives in the region. The gradual arms build-up in the
Indian Ocean region has unleashed a fierce arms race in the
littoral countries and in some countries the insurgency
of some groups has been manipulated by the outside powers in
ousting the unco-operative regimes. Little concern is shown
for the susceptibilities, sensitivities and aspirations of
these sovereign mini-, micro states, most of whom simply want
the power blocs to quit the area and leave them alone. These
littoral countries, relatively defenceless against the Super
Power encroachments have fallen prey to one power or the
other.

In addition to strategic and military interests, the
economic interests bound the Big Powers to establish their
military bases. The Indian Ocean area, with its valuable
resources for imports and markets, account for the Big Power
rivalry in economic matters. The western states and the U.S.
view the entire gamut of Soviet activity - military, political,
economic and diplomatic as a danger to its own interest and
it calls for an accompanying western build-up in the region.

The U.S. presence in the Indian Ocean region is seen
as tangible evidence of western interests in the area, as well
as an expression of its determination to prevent the Soviet
Union from becoming predominant in the region. The Joint-
US-British venture converting the islands of Diego Garcia
into American bases for strategic and military build-up, has
resulted in a theatre for nuclear rivalry in South Asia.
Politically, the littoral states constituting the Non-aligned
movement have seriously opposed the nuclear build-up in the
region, calling for a 'Zone of Peace' in South Asia. In this
context, a brief spell in the process of Cold War saw the
advent of 'Detente' in Strategic Arms Limitation Talks between
the USA and the Soviet Union. Again with the onset of New Cold
War the Soviet Union was found to possess enough naval capabi-
lity in the Indian Ocean at a par with the United States. This
action-reaction cycle has created an extremely unstable situat-
ion, where the regional powers like India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan
are threatened by its destabilising effect.

The intensive military build-up by US in Diego Garcia
matched by the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean has
posed serious threats to the Non-aligned countries in the
region. In this context, Sri Lanka has taken the lead in a
call for the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, free from the
Super Powers rivalry in the region.

In the sub-continent, the Indian security concerns are linked to the other littoral countries as India has strong ethnic, cultural and economic ties with the regional micro- and mini-states which look to India for assistance not only in economic and technical but also in security matters. India is the largest country in the region and as the leading nation of the Non-aligned movement, is quite anxious to assume an important role in the region. But the regional differences and the major powers' interference has denied it opportunity to play a constructive role in the region. India feels very strongly that the menacing military and naval presence of the Super Powers and their calculated interference in the internal affairs of the littoral and hinterland states, has a highly disruptive and destabilising effect on the over-all peace and security in the region.

On the other hand, the Sri Lankan endeavour in this respect is highly commendable for its leading role in propounding the idea of "Zone of Peace" at the very beginning and initiating it in UN and other international forums. The basic objective of Sri Lankan effort is manifested in its call for an end to imperialism and neo-colonialism and a complete disarmament in the area preventing the Big Power clash in the Indian Ocean region. It has called for the Afro-Asian solidarity and above all, to make it a movement by the Non-aligned nations. Sri Lanka feels that it can provide the necessary

leadership for the Non-aligned nations, in this context.
In this posture, as a Non-aligned country Sri Lanka raised
the issue of the Indian Ocean in the Non-aligned Meetings
in Cairo and Lusaka and in Commonwealth Meetings and General
Assembly of United Nations. First of all, in 1964, an idea
of Nuclear Free Zone in Indian Ocean was mooted in the Cairo
Conference of Non-aligned Nations who expressed their anxiety
over Indian Ocean issue. Subsequently in 1970, Lusaka
conference of Non-aligned states, the summit called upon all
states to respect the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace. In
1971, a Sri Lankan motion in the General Assembly of the United
Nations was adopted and in Resolution 2832 (XXVI) the Assembly
stated that 'the Indian Ocean within limits to be determined
together with the air space above and the ocean floor subjacent
thereto, is hereby designated for all times as a Zone of Peace'.[3]

The resolution was intended to eliminate, reduce,
restrict or halt the further expansion of military presence
and eliminating from the Indian Ocean, all bases, military
installations and logistic supply facilities; the disposition
of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any
manifestation of great power military presence in the Indian
Ocean conceived in the context of great power rivalry. Again

3. Resolution 2823 (XXVI), General Assembly Documents,
United Nations.

in 1974, the General Assembly called upon the great powers
to refrain from increasing their military presence in the
Indian Ocean region and requested the littoral and hinterland
states to consult with a view to convening a conference on
the Indian Ocean and invited all states, especially the great
powers to co-operate with the Committee (Resolution 4259-A
(XXIX).

The basic aims and objectives in these resolutions
reflect the Sri Lankan wish to strengthen the sovereignty
and independence of the Indian Ocean region states against
the hegemonic drives and struggles of the major military powers
in South-Asia. A Peace Zone could within its limit, eliminate
those manifestation and correspondingly enhance the sovereignty
and political independence of states therein.. The growing
dissatisfaction with the concept of balance of power, as a
basis of international peace and security and therefore the
wish to opt designated parts of the world out of this applica-
tion of the concept and its imperatives has guided the declara-
tion. More so, in the name of 'detente' and 'disarmament' for
international security, the Non-aligned nations' political
slogan materialised in the Peace Zone concept. The littoral
and hinterland states held a meeting in July, 1979 and adopted
without a vote, principles of agreement for implementing the
1971 Declaration dealing with the limitations of the Zone, the
elimination of the great powers' military presence there, the

denuclearisation of the ocean, the non-use of force, regional co-operation and the free use of the ocean by vessels of all nations. Another significant step forward was taken when the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 34/80-B of 11 December, 1979, containing the decision to convene a conference on the Indian Ocean which had been under discussion for several years.

The Assembly selected Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka as the venue of the conference to be held in 1981. The resolution also contained a provision for the enlargement of the membership of the adhoc committee from twenty-three to forty-six to include those permanent members of the Security Council and major maritime users of the Indian Ocean that were not already members. The enlarged Committee was entrusted with the task of undertaking the preparatory work for the Indian Ocean conference. But contrary to all expectations the US and its western allies have not taken any initiative for this conference in the wake of Afghanistan crisis. They maintained that the situation changed drastically with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and that there could be no meaningful progress untill that invasion has been reversed. On the other hand, the Soviets have consistently supported the "Zone of Peace" proposal and expressed its readiness to resume bilateral negotiations with the United States on the reduction of military forces including nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean region.

The Non-aligned states have consistently extended
their unanimous support for the declaration of the Indian
Ocean as Zone of Peace. During the seventh conference of
Heads of Governments of Non-aligned countries in New Delhi
in March '83, the meeting affirmed its full support towards
the attainment of objectives of 1971 Declaration and urged all
great powers and major mari-time users to participate in
conference in a constructive spirit and to start reducing
their military presence in the Indian Ocean region. Subsequently,
Sri Lanka introduced a draft resolution on behalf of Non-
aligned nations for the holding of Colombo Conference in 1984.
But this move in UN was opposed by US and its allies for
which it was postponed for the next year amidst a lot of
confusion.

Thus the attempts and moves for a 'Peace Zone' in the
area have been met with opposition from the Big Powers in
their bid for expansionist and acquisitive designs in the
area. But in such state of affairs, Sri Lanka stands for
peace and security in the region and it has expressed it
through bilateral and multilateral dialogues and conferences.
As one with the Non-aligned Nations, it has championed the
aims and objectives of peace and security in the area in an
attempt to reduce the tensions and conflicts in the inter-
national waters of Indian Ocean. It has taken note of the
measure to resolve the security problem in the Indian Ocean,

by the closer interaction of the regional states in a
political and military prespective.

It has been suggested that the major powers have
never taken the idea of Zone of Peace seriously and that
so long as they have the power to enforce their wishes,
they will not be willing to relinquish the bases, facilities,
assumed supplies of oil and other vital materials and
markets for their lucrative arms industry which they have
established in the region. To whatever extent, this is in
fact the case, the states of the Indian Ocean area should do
well to try to establish greater unity and co-operation
among themselves and devise ways and means for achieving
collective self-reliance. The security of the region
presupposes a constant effort to bring about mutual under-
standing among the littoral countries to solve their intra-
regional political problems and any sort of ethnic, lingui-
stic conflicts in the region.

In the light of the above analysis, the role of
Sri Lanka in this South Asian region asumes a veritable
importance. The recent diplomatic moves to bring about
a South-Asian Regional Cooperation may be taken as a good
beginning for the regional states. It calls for the greater
co-operation among the regional states in common pursuit of
socio-economic, political and cultural interests. In this
context, Sri Lanka has an important role in the matters of
security and stability in the area.

CHAPTER IV

SRI LANKA AND ITS SECURITY-MANAGEMENT

In all the nascent independent states of Asia and
Africa, the concern for 'security' and 'stability' is a
common one, varying in the degree of socio-economic and
political structure of the states. In this context, the
micro-states of Asia and Africa share certain common phenomena
like post colonial societies, low political culture and a
fragile internal system that determine the external position
of the states in the international arena. In these states
there is a close 'linkage' between the internal and external
settings which holds the key to the security and stability
of the state. In such a perspective, the Sri Lankan quest
for 'security' and 'order' is a recurrent one, dating back to
the ancient times. Its very nature of geographical insularity
and miniature phenomenon makes it wary of its 'independence'
and 'stability' in times of crisis and change.

To view the security question from a specific structural
point, the overwhelming view of the majority holds good in
this context. The 'majority' group or community who dominates
the political scene takes up the nationalists slogans to raise
its interests in terms of socio-economic and political rights
and previleges in proportion to their number in the society.
Thus it calls for the awakening of the primordial sentiments
in a nationalist fervour. Such reflections in the Sri Lankan
Society are obvious, as the long history of colonial rule resulted
in the benign neglect of the majority in proportion to their

demographic concentration in the society. The majority
demand for more previliges and concessions in socio-
economic and cultural matters, has alienated the minority
in the society who has looked upto some other society of
similar racial, ethnic nature. In case of Sri Lanka, the
deep-seated socio-economic rivalries among the Sinhalas
and the Tamils culminating in violent Sinhalese nationalism
have seriously affected the stability in the society.

The Tamil-Sinhala conflict can be viewed in a broader
historical and sociological perspective. The major cause of
the mutual distrust and conflict among these racial-ethnic
groups is that the Sinhalas though majority in number, have
never been allowed to avail the opportunities in proportion
to their population. They complain that the Sri Lankan
Tamils and Indian Tamils who constitute a 'majority' among
the 'minorities' look to the neighbouring mainland, India
for their socio-political fostering and thus pose a serious
threat to the Sinhalas in their existence in the island.

In this domestic socio-political milieu, the nature
and magnitude of the security question can be examined in
reference to the historical heritage in the society. Dating
back to the historical legends it brings home the point that
the first population drawn from the Indian main land settled
in the island in successive waves. Subsequently, the Tamil

invasion saw the exodus of Tamil masses from the South India particularly Tamil Nadu. Gradually, the Tamils became known as the minority people in Sri Lanka compared to its presence in India.

Historically seen, the Tamil invaders successive invasions generated unity and solidarity among the Sinhalas who tried to maintain a conflict with the Tamils in the society. The Chola conquest of Northern Sinhalese kingdom and its subsequent domination over the natives for a long time, left an impact of racial discrimination and distrust of Indians. Gradually the idea of an all-island sovereignty with a notion that Sri Lanka is for the Sinhalese was emphasised and the minority Tamils were discriminated in society. In changing times, with the spread of Buddhism and presence of other races, beliefs etc.,it called for group solidarity and racial unity among the Sinhalas. It gave rise to a multi-ethnic society distilled into a plural category of social differences where tension became a common feature. Broadly seen the interaction of varied ethnic groups and different culture did arouse some divisive tendancies with the clash of interests and it weakened the central power as a result of the 'weak defence' and 'parochialism' among the Sinhalas. The British empire took over Sri Lanka for its geographical and strategic implications.

The security problem, however complex and critical
it may be, the determinant factors can be denoted by a
host of socio-economic, cultural and political variants
within the state. The Sri Lankan internal pattern of poli-
tics and populace are closely linked with the 'external
setting' which determines the degree of security and
stability in the region. Its a common feature that in the
South-Asian sub-system the states tend to look their positions
of security and 'peace' from a global and regional point of
view, ignoring the important domestic factors which play a
crucial role in shaping the destiny of the nation. Because
the internal as well as external settings are determined by
certain domestic compulsions, socio-economic and cultural
divergences and other less stable factors of political regimes,
policies and national defence of the state. Broadly, these
elements of 'security' aspect may be categorised under the
domestic factors i.e. socio-economic differentiation,
nationalism, ethnic-cultural divergences and character of
political regimes and policies which make up the structural
matrix of the state.

But in its external phenomenon, the security problem
is governed by the factors of geographical situation, regional
and international framework and the military build-up with
related foreign policies, all account for the external
position of a country in the international framework. So the

Sri Lankan quest for security and stability is governed
by certain geo-political compulsions, of military and
strategic nature in the external setting of the country.
For Sri Lanka, the Indian Ocean Region as a major strategic
area, has an important role to play in its military and
security affairs. To study the magnitude and nature of the
security problem, the internal domestic milieu of Sri Lankan
should be taken into consideration in the light of socio-
political structure within the society.

The microstates of Asia and Africa, attaining
Independence from the colonial rule, face the problem of
'nation-building' in its varied character. The national
security question is associated with the problem of'nation-
building' in the society which is conditioned by a host of
socio-economic and political factors within the society.
The society beset with myriad groups or communities of ethnic,
cultural distinctions give a picture of 'flux' in the domestic
politics of a country. The presence of racial, ethnic groups
in the society is marked by an awakening of primordial
sentiments. The groups call for the primordial loyalties
to their indigenous culture and tradition which tend to
conflict with the general civic life in the society. The
society lacking a common identity and unity, is crystallised
into serious divisions and there develops a fissiparous
tendency among the heterogeneous elements in the society.

Again the lack of an 'integration' in terms of socio-
economic and cultural cohesim in the society results in
strong divergences which weaken its unity and stability
encouraging external interference from outside forces.

The socio-economic disparities in the Sri Lankan
society are seen on the lines of groups and communities
in majority and minority character. The 'majority' group
of Sinhalas claim that their neglect during the long British
period resulted in their backward status in the society
compared to the minority groups. They claim that they are
entitled to have more privileges and rights in proportionate to
their number in the society. So they demand a proportionate
share in the industry and employment sectors.[1] It is argued
that the economic cause of the Tamils in Sri Lanka holding a
large share in jobs and economy, disproportionate to their
population, might lead to their consolidation in the society,
at the expense of majority. So the 'majority' call for
'Sinhalas only' as put forward by Buddhist elites, entertain
certain fears amongthe minority Tamils. The political styles
and patterns of government conduct are influenced by the
pressures from the Sinhalese Buddhists. The populist slogans
afford a short-cut to electoral success and in its impliment-
ation it is faced with stiff resistance from the minority
Tamils.

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1. V.P. Vaidik, Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka, India's Options,
   (New Delhi, 1986), pp.68-85.

From economic standpoint, there are some internal constraints in the society like the pattern of 'dual economy' which affects a large number of people in general. The existence of plantation agriculture based on export crops like tea, rubber and coconuts constitutes the chief source of foreign exchange from British times. But the neglect of traditional sector of cultivation, has made it a 'dependent' economy, following a pattern of western oriented policies in the first decade of its independence. Another noticeable feature of the economy after independence is the increasing dependence on foreign sources of finance for economic development which has seen serious social and political problems at home. The 'scarce' economy and strong competition among the groups in the society has exacerbated the social conflict. On the other hand, the country's close ties with the western capitalist countries and its dependence from international monetory institutions like World Bank, IMF etc. has subjected it to complete western influence, time and again. During the 60's the economy confronted with a serious foreign exchange crises, felt a high rate of un-employment, rising cost of living and acute food shortages in the country.

For all these economic problems, the country severely dependent upon the foreign western countries, followed an 'open-door' economic policy where the western multinational companies dominated the economy and had their share in it.

In this context, the pattern of capitalist economy of
Sri Lanka has resulted in gross inequalities among the
people in the society. Closely, related with these
economic disparities, the social and ethnic rivalries
are the outcome of disparities in education and employment,
religion and culture, language and tradition. For the
lack of nationalist sentiments like political movements
or Independence struggle, the society is divided in racial
linguistic divergences. The new nationalism after 'Independence'
was a divided one with majority Sinhalese 'chauvinism' over-
riding the Tamil communalism reflected on the basis of
language and race. The Sinhalese insistence on 'Sinhalas
only' as monopolised by militant Buddhists, has launched a
virulent attack on Christians, and Tamils and criticised the
English educated political elites for not taking coercive
action against the minorities. All these bickerings in
socio-economic and political spheres have percolated into
serious divisions in the society and the heterogeneous
character of society has increased by the political groupings
of the different communities. The prominent internal problem
of Sri Lanka has a direct bearing on mutual understanding and
peace between the countries of the region. The future of the
large Indian minorities in the island and the Sinhalese rese-
ntment towards these people, arises partly from the fear of
tangible development, viz. the lowering of the living standards
of the 'majority' people by an alien community. Otherwise it
arises from the intangible and imaginary fears about India
which is a large power, situated nearby.

Now coming to the political aspect of the national security, it is found that in the formulation of foreign policy and defence arrangements, the role of different parties has played a major role in the security management of the state. The Sri Lankan Independence was one of the "smooth transition of power", a negotiated one after which the British economic holdings continued under the westernised United National Party (UNP). In the Commonwealth status, the country's foreign powers were brought into the executive power of the Prime Minister; so the personal character of Prime Minister played an important role in the making of the foreign policy. Despite some divergences among the political parties, there was a fundamental agreement on the issues of colonialism, disarmament and 'neutrality' in foreign policy matters. But the difference of opinion was in the case of relationship with the western and communist countries and nationalisation of foreign companies. But a pertinent problem exists as to the definition of national interests in terms of foreign policies. The UNP and SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) broadly differ on the issue of mutual defence agreement with the United Kingdom.

After Independence, Sri Lanka joined the Commonwealth of nations in an independent manner and the UNP-led government followed a policy of alliance with the British Power in all matters. But the SLFP government on the other hand, reversed

the policy of 'till' towards the British Power. In this context, the security perception is viewed in different perspectives under different political regimes. But there is a common perception that the Sri Lankan security problem is viewed in a regional and external setting, taking note of the geo-political compulsions of the state in the regional set-up. As it is already discussed in the previous chapters, the geographical setting of Sri Lanka, assumes serious strategic dimensions, the concern for security becomes a national problem. For its key position in the vast waters of Indian Ocean, completely detached from the land mass of the sub-continent, it has serious strategic interests in terms of its external security and order in the region. In its bid for security, it is governed by a policy of alliance with some Big Power like British, as its guardian of security-interests in the region. The objective as reflected in the speech of D. S. Senanayake, the first Prime Minister of Independent Sri Lanka in a broadcast over the BBC in 1951 is in the following words :

> "My own country (Ceylon) Sri Lanka is the smallest single entity in the vast region of South-East Asia ... A world of peace is therefore her first and foremost need, the world's goodwill next and then some timely and appropriate assistance" [2]

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2. D. S. Senanayake, ('Speech delivered over theBBC", The Ceylon Historical Journal, vol.5, 1957, p.114.

The Sri Lankan security perspective in strategic and political imperatives has been expressed by a Minister, J.R. Jayawardene in his address to the International Law Association on December, 1954. In the course of his address, he said that, "....there has never been absent also the realism which arises from our geographical and strategic position in the Indian Ocean...... A realistic appreciation of our position in South-East Asia, has made us enter into a military alliance with the United Kingdom."

The national security problem in its magnitude and character is beset by the regional and external interaction of Big Power military and strategic calculations. The cold war phenamenon largely prevalent in Asia and Africa with division of the world into two camps, have aroused fears of national security and sovereignty in the mini-microstates of the South Asian region. In Sri Lankan context, it is seen that it was free from the influence of Big Powers in the first decade of its independence, but gradually, the presence of Super Powers in the region corresponding to their military build-up, has made Sri Lanka wary of its security and stability.

After the withdrawal of the British Power from the sub-continent the independent states of India and Pakistan were in turmoil of partition and in case of Burma insurrection had destabilised the nation. In such a tense period of

regional insecurity, Sri Lankan quest for a 'balanced
foreign policy' coincided with its British commonwealth
status and the policy of 'alliance' with the British was
taken as a guarantee of security. As there was no strife
and struggle during the Sri Lankan Independence period,
the power elite sought to embrace the British power as their
guardion of regional security in matters of military and
strategic interests. Again, the common experiences during
the second World War, like the Japanese invasion and British
shielding of Sri Lanka and the subsequent British commitment
to transfer of power and the belief in parliamentary
institutions, democratic culture, other ideals reinforced
the Sri Lankan faith in the British power. In order to have
more allies in economic, political spares, the Sri Lankans saw
the British as the guarantee of all facilities.

But in the regional context the fear of India, was a
major consideration in Sri Lanka's foreign policy which had
seen the foreboding presence of Indian Tamils as portents of
danger for the country. Otherwise, if a chauvinist government
comes to power in New Delhi and seeks to buttress a weak
domestic position by engaging in foreign war, the imminent
threat for Sri Lanka is obvious, in the nature of external
threat. Sri Lanka, the island of great significance for rival
powers in search of air and naval facilities, acquires immense
strategic importance as a focal point in the Indian Ocean area.
After the American arms build-up in Diego Garcia, and the

subsequent Russian presence in the area with fleets of
supply ships for their fighting vessels, capable of staying
in the area has intensified the military build-up in the
region. China, on the other hand after losing its influence in
Indo-China it has sought to have access to this Indian Ocean
region. The search for military bases in Sri Lanka was the
major cause of security concern for the independent govern-
ment which considered the Big Power presence and military
build-up as a threat to its security in the region. Despite
repeated governmental affirmation that bases in the island,   ·
would not be leased to foreign powers, there had been reports
that the Chinese in March, 1971 for instance, and the Soviets
in May of the same year had made requests for base facilities
in the great natural harbour of Trincomalee.[3]   The government
had to issue a categorical denial against any such requests
and it reiterated its non-alignment policy and denial of
bases to foreign powers.

From a geographical stand point, the situation of the
island is unique for a distance of nine thousand miles south
of Sri Lanka, there is no patch of land until one hits the
Antarctic. The sea distances between land are also very great.
From Capetown to Singapore, it is 5,631 nautical miles and

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3.   A.J. Wilson, Politics in Sri Lanka, 1947-1973, ~~██████~~,
     (London, 1974) p.270.

from Capetown to Calcutta 5,480 nautical miles and from Suez to Jakarta 5,510 nautical miles. The scarcity of natural harbours like a few good harbours in this ocean area, makes the Sri Lankan harbours of Trincomalee, Galle and Colombo, vital to the search for military power.

In its strategic position in Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka chose to follow a 'middle path' in its foreign policies as a compromise in regional and international framework. The 'Defence Treaty' with the British government brought mutual obligations of defence and security with the British installations in Trincomalee harbour and there was an increase in the numerical strength of Sri Lankan army, naval and aerial forces. The Indian power was viewed either as an alternative defence associate or a veritable threat to its security. There was little choice for an independent line of action, for Sri Lanka since it had serious economic and military compulsions in the nature of domestic discord and disorder in the society. The country's defence preparedness and nature of security was not serious enough in anticipation of any danger.

Sri Lanka does not have any military tradition, worth speaking up, in the sense of her armed forces being battle-hungry or anxious to meet external aggression or domestic insurrection.[4] But the abortive coup attempt of 1962 and the

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4. Ibid., p. 272.

suspected coup of Buddhist army officers in 1966-67 had no serious designs of full-fledged seizure of power or army takeover. In effect, the island's armed forces are mainly organised for purposes of domestic force-working such as controlling communal unrest or industrial turbulence in times of crises, curbing the influx of illicit immigrants from the South Indian coast and other smuggling activities. In these operations, the role of army and police is important in maintaining the internal security order in the country. The attitude of political statesman in their formulation of policies in matters of external concern, reflects in a sense their involvement in domestic politics. The domestic politics is inter-linked with its domestic milieu which determines the external position. The preponderant position of regional powers and extra-regional powers has an important place in the security aspect of Sri Lanka.

In this context, the Indian question occupies a significant place in the security dimensions of the Indian Ocean region. The Indian concept of 'subcontinental strategic area' involving Sri Lanka makes it (Sri Lanka) distrustful of India and it asserts its military strength through some alliance with the foreign power. On the other hand, practically as it is, India plays an important role in the security of Sri Lanka in the geographical configuration of the region. To dispel all doubts from India's side,

Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru had expressed :
"The difficulty of a place like (Ceylon) Sri Lanka more
than others," he said is the fear that Ceylon has of
India .... Here's a great big continent lying astride
north of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and they are, I'm sorry, I
think unreasonably, just afraid of being swamped or
swallowed by India or the Indian people. "

In such an impending nature of its security, the
Sri Lankan quest for peace and order in the region ends
up with some political alliance with some Big Powers for
economic and military gains. So the real politik in
Sri Lanka's foreign policy is determined by its economic
circumstances, coupled with military requirements. The
attitude of the government towards membership of the
Commonwealth, UN and its related agencies to other western
countries are all in the last analysis manifested in terms
of national interest.

For a more comprehensive view of security perspective
the security management from British time provides the pattern
of defence and foreign policies adopted in the post-Independenc
phase. In the light of its close relations with British power,
the magnitude and character of security has assumed much
importance since the colonial period. During the British
period the Crown colony was under the direct administration
of Britain like India and there was a centralised administ-

ration in the island under the office of a Governor. So
the power of the alien administration was 'entrenched' in
a despotic manner, very little control by the distant
authority of the Queen. The British who brought the whole
island under their colonial administration in 1815 in a
full-fledged manner, continued to rule over it till 1947.
During these long decades of colonial rule, the British
had designed a good communication network and extensive
roads and railroads were constructed to facilitate the
economy and transport. The port-cities and main trading
centres were well-connected for a smooth economic and
political administration. The ports of Colombo, Trincomalee,
Jaffna and Mannar had good communication facilities and the
railway system covering the principal towns of Kandy,
Jaffna, Matana, Kurunegala, Negambo, Ratnapura and Kalutara
had served the economic as well the strategic interests of
the British Power. Trincomalee was considered to be a
major strategic point, where the British had consolidated
their position during the inter-war period.

With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939,
Sri Lanka was brought into the war by the British Power and
as a result, the country was affected as partial black-out
was imposed and other military measures were taken by the
British. Naval activity at Colombo and Trincomalee was
considerable and the British had strengthened its military

preparedness in the area. The entry of Japan into the war
and the subsequent fall of Burma, Malayasia, Singapore and
Dutch East Indies, was a signal to Sri Lanka in its strategic
implications. In such an emergency, the British took some
active military measures by bringing some weak divisions of
the Indian Army and some other Australian divisions to the
region. The Royal Airforce Units were sent to the island to
reenforce the British strength. Simultaneously, the Sri
Lankan Defence Force was mobilised and doubled in strength.
The hasty construction of air-fields and air-strips and other
prompt military measures were in tune with the war-time
arrangements which were intended for the security of the island.

During the war, the Japanese had launched two aerial
attacks on Colombo harbour and Trincomalee which did little
damage to some British ships in the area. But gradually,
the danger of Japanese invasion disappeared as the American
naval presence in Pacific proved a victory for the Allies
and a defeat for Japan. The British stationing of some
100,000 soldiers and airmen in Sri Lanka in addition to
coming and going of many thousands of naval personnel, had
consolidated the military position of the island. The
British garrison in small units had swelled into a strong
force in the period of war and the British policies during
the war had the over-all support of the Sri Lankans for

the security and stability of the island. In 1944, the
headquarters of Lord Louis Mountbatten South-East Asia
Command was established in Kandy, and in this respect,
Sri Lanka's strategic importance in the Allies war effort
was underscored. It served as the bridgehead for the
destruction of Japanese power and a vital link in the
supply line to the Soviet Union via the Persian Gulf.
In this period of war and turmoil of Sri Lankan support
for the British and the Allied Powers was in tune with its
call for Independence and self-determination in the political
affairs of the country. The British power, in order to
placate the nationalist elements and to show some kind of
recognition of the co-operation and support given by Sri
Lanka; it ordered for the institution of a commission to
recommend the Independence and administrative reforms for
the island. The commission as it is known as Soulbury
Commission recommended for no early Independence and rather
prescribed a constitution under which the foreign policies
were retained by the British power.

In the gradual stages of granting Independence, the
British tried to woo the Sri Lankan elites who had sought for
Independence and national self-determination. So, well before
the Independence, the British had ensured its defence interests
with an agreement with the interim government. Finally, it
granted full Independence when it found a 'favourable'

national elite to take over in Colombo from the colonial power. Thus prior to formal Independence the government of Sri Lanka under a dominion status had reached an agreement concerning its defence and security interests which had called upon the British power to guarantee the same, in exchange for some powers in military and strategic terms. Because the island had lacked the power to manage its foreign affairs in defence and military interests, it entered into an alliance with the British in this context. The main political party, United National Party under D.S. Senanayake who became the Prime Minister in the Independent Sri Lanka, collaborated with the British idea of 'mutual defence agreements'. So the British signed three agreements on 11 November 1947 which explicitly give recognition to Sri Lanka's Independence. The agreements also contain certain defence and military clauses which contained the pro-British attitude of the Senanayake government. The agreements, signed by the government of Sri Lanka and United Kingdom, was in a Defence and External Affairs Agreement which read as follows:

> ..."Whereas (Ceylon) Sri Lanka has reached the stage in constitutional development at which she is ready to assume the status of a fully responsible member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, in no way subordinate in any respect of domestic or external affairs, freely associated and united by common allegianc to the crown."[5]

5. Lucy M. Jacob, Sri Lanka: From Dominion to Republic (New Delhi, 1973), pp.68-85.

The Defence Agreement contained five articles and according to the second of these, Sri Lanka had to provide all the necessary facilities to the government of United Kingdom to maintain British naval, air and land forces in Sri Lanka as required for 'mutual defence'. This article gave the British the right to run their military establishments in the island as they had been run during the colonial days. The wording of the second article is as follows; "The Government of (Ceylon) Sri Lanka will grant to the government of the United Kingdom all the necessary facilities for the objects mentioned in Article 1 as may be mutually agreed. These facilities will include the use of naval and air bases and ports and military establishments and the use of telecommunications facilities and the right of service courts and authorities to exercise such control and jurisdiction over members of the said forces as they exercise at present."[6]

The UNP policy of agreements with British was under attack from many political quarters and D.S. Senanayake was dubbed as the traitor of Asia. Some Sri Lankan leaders argued that there was no need for Sri Lanka to enter into a defence agreement because she had no enemy to be afraid of and that

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6. Ibid.

the Defence Agreement was mostly in the interest of
British. But from all security and defence considerations,
the Defence Agreement though 'voluntary' in nature, it
rightly served the interests of Sri Lankan security after
Independence. The faith in Commonwealth system and British
power, as the guaranter of defence and security, had made
Sri Lanka to toe the western line and the foreign policies
were directed in the same line.

Under the UNP rule from 1948 to 1956, the govern-
ment had followed the western line of political and military
interests in its foreign policy. From 1950 onwards,
Sri Lanka became closer to USA, and the British installations
in Trincomalee and Katunayake reenforced the western presence
in the island. But gradually under Dudley Senanayake and
other leaders,Sri Lanka was interested in a policy of 'non-
alignment and friendship with all the neighbouring countries
in the region. The Regional meetings of Bandung and Colombo
created a new sense of solidarity among the weak states of
Asia and Africa with whom Sri Lanka expressed its unity and
integrity. During this period from 1948 to 1956, it did not
join any military organisation such as the NATO or SEATO, but
its foreign policy was tilted towards the west. The strong
belief in British power and the military presence in the area,
had dispelled all the fears from Sri Lankan people. Under the
UNP administration, the leaders like D.S. Senanayake and

others had realised that the British power as the guardian
of Sri Lanka's security, could continue after independence
without any shift in its relations.

The UNP rule till 1955 saw no drastic change in the
foreign policy of Sri Lanka, different from the pre-Indepe-
ndence period. But in 1956, with coming of the Sri Lanka
Freedom Party (SLFP) into power, the island followed a new
policy in its military and strategic affairs. The SLFP,
laid by S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike, first proclaimed the policy of
'Non-alignment' and for the best interests of security and
peace, it considered neutralism as the chief cornerstone of
its foreign policy. He vociferously pleaded for noninvolve-
ment with the Big Powers and emphasised on the regional
unity and stability in a mutual interaction with the neighbours.
In reviewing the past policies of UNP government, the SLFP
government found fault with all the Defence Agreements and
called for its re-examination. So Bandarnaike pleaded for
a 'preventive diplomacy' to bridge the gap between the power
blocks and he believed in neutrality in foreign policies
with a view to promoting the national interests of Sri Lanka.
After the Suez Crisis in 1956, the British power was given
a raw deal by the Bandarnaike government which curtailed the
British position in the island. It is in this context, the
British had to transfer its military and naval bases in the
island to the Sri Lankan government in 1957. It was

considered as a symbolic gesture in completing the island's
independence from British rule in defence and military matters.
On the other hand, the Sri Lanka's policy of 'Non-alignment'
and cordial relations with its neighbours strengthened its
independence and security in the region.

In matter of defence and security, the Bandamaike
Government saw the danger of 'cold war' to the Indian Ocean
region and a policy of 'non-involvement' in Big Power conflict
was construed as a safe policy in military and security matter.
The government argued that the British Defence Agreement had
not afforded the country any credible assurance of security
nor had it ensured her neutrality in potential confrontation
between the rival powers in the cold war. Rather it felt that,
the Srilankan involvement could lead to a disaster for its
wishes and interest in the region. But regarding the common-
wealth status, Bandamaike Government asserted its ties with
the British power and chose to emphasise the commonwealth's
potential for development into a 'viable third force' distinct
from the two main power blocks. Bandamaike repeatedly emphasise
the point that is neutralism should not be construed as being
directed against the west, more than once he declared that
their shared democratic way of life drew Sri Lanka closer to
United States and other western countries.

After the SLFP rule, the UNP Government has
followed a pro-western line in its foreign policies and
defence and economic policies. The westward tilt in
Sri Lankan foreign policy began to show up right from the
beginning of the laissez faire economic policy adopted by
the Jayewardene Government in 1977. But in recent years,
the Jayewardene Government has sought the help of Major
Powers to ensure the security of the island against the
Tamil militants' insurgency.

The policies like revival of the Defence Agreement
of 1947 with Great Britain, the Trincomalee Tank Farm Deal,
an agreement to expand the scope of Voice of America (VOA)
in Sri Lanka, collaboration with the Mossad and the SAS and
galloping defence expenditure are some of the major steps
and trends that have affected the security environment in
South Asian Region, in general and India in particular.
The Indian Government has been ernestly advocating the cause
for making in the Indian Ocean a Zone of Peace. But lately
the Sri Lankan policies towards the western countries have
been soft and its opposition to the Indian view, has serious
security implication for South Asia.

CHAPTER V

NATIONAL SECURITY PROBLEM OF SRI LANKA

As it is discussed in the previous chapters,
the security problem of microstates like Sri Lanka has
many facets in its 'internal' and 'external' character, of
which the internal security is set by the combination
of social, ethnic and political factor that make up the
structural matrix of the state. The domestic socio-
political milieu determines the magnitude and nature of
security problem corresponding to the degree of internal
stability and cohesion in society. The internal setting
in its socio-political pattern within the society, has a
necessary 'linkage' with its 'external' setting in
regional and international environment. In this context,
the geo-political dimensions of a state in broader
security complex, determine its efficacy in its regional
and international framework in a common security and
strategic perspective.

Primarily, it is the national security problem in
its internal setting which determines the overall strength
and position of a state. Presently, the national security
phenomenon has been taken up in social science research,
which has been tightly linked to both the properties of
the international system and attributes of the national
actors, within the state. National security problem varies
in its nature from the conflictive events like crisis,
war or their threat on the international level, to domestic

crises that challenge the behaviour of the states and
the status of its ruling elites. However, although the
decision makers' concern about security of the state goes
back to the emergence of the nation-state, the analysts
concern and investigation into national security is more
recent. From a non-strategic point of view, the security
can be defined as the preservation of 'vital national
values' as the core of the national security policy. It
is that part of government policy, having as its objective
the creation of national and international political
conditions favourable to the protection and extension of
vital values against existing and potential adversaries.

One of the problems in the security concern is the
definition of 'vital values' in the context of national
security policy of the state. If the objective of national
security policy is the creation of national consensus
around the national basic values, there is an implicit
assumption that the society is coherent, united, and
enjoys equilibrium among its forces. But in a highly
stratified society dominated by a ruling elite, consensus
may be unattainable. In this light, the conflict of values
in society on racial ethnic divergences affect the national
cohesion, resulting in the majority minority complex which
undermines the unity and stability of the state. In this
paralance, the Sri Lankan security problem can be studied
in an analytical manner, taking note of the historical and

socio-political developments in the society.

In the South Asian region, it is widely marked that the presence of plural societies with serious racial-ethnic divisions transcend the national frontiers blurring the picture of a contiguous and homogeneous society at home. In these post-colonial societies, with the emergent nationalism, the racial, ethnic divergences are sharpened to a point and it tend to have 'conflictual loyalties' from the masses. Such racial, ethnic group conflict is a direct result of the exploitative colonialism in the nature of uneven development, relative deprivation of certain groups converging with ethnic diversities. In the colonial phase, the group-conflict remains submerged due to the elite system in politics and absence of a common pursuit in socio-economic affairs.[1] But in the later phase with advent of mass politics and the political process, the various groups adopt and use linguistic and religious motives in racial-ethnic fervour. In its independent status, these post colonial societies tend to have a conflict of interests among the majority group and others, for the majority dominance in the society. On the other hand, the minority groups in society are coerced, who express their group solidarity on racial-ethnic lines.

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1.   Clifford Geertz (ed.), Old Societies and New States (New York ,1963), pp 105-57

The solidarity within the ethnic groups is based on bonds of common language beliefs and notions of common descent, and religion in the geographic space. In a pluralistic society, where many such groups co-exist, competition for resources usually lead to conflict. Indeed many researchers claim that ethnicity is the most prominent factor is what Dahl identified as "conflictive pluralism"[2]. In Sri Lanka, the separate ethnic identity between the two groups in conflict, i.e. the majority Sinhala group and the minority Tamil group, is based on certain linguistic, religious and cultural differences. The geographic dimension of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka is of singular importance since the demand for separation by the Sri Lankan Tamil group, explicitly threatens the unity of the multi-ethnic state and calls for the need of a stable society without any social cleavages on geographical lines. The spatial dimension in any ethnic conflict is rooted in the phenomenon of geographic concentration of distinct ethnic groups. There is an increasing tendency for such groups to cling to common neighbourhood, cities, rural areas or regions. Saul B. Cohen, an eminent political geographer has in fact argued that race, religion and culture are more important operational forces in the politics of space at all geographic scales than economics and that it forms an essential

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2. R. Dahl, 'Pluralism Revisited' in S. Ehrlich and G. Wootton (eds.) Three Faces, (Despres, 1980), pp.20-23.

basis for linking people with territory. This ethno-
spatial aspect brings into focus, a new dimension to the
study of spatial inequalities resulting from an unequal
distribution of resources, especially in the Less Developed
countries (LDCs) where resources are more limited. Equity
issues both in terms of class and space have become increas-
ingly important in formulating plans and strategies for
resource allocations. The introduction of an ethno-spatial
dimension in the political economy of a country may lead to
alternative situation of imbalance or dissatisfaction. In
Sri Lankan society, the economic disparities among the comm-
unities have resulted in political polarisation along the
racial-ethnic lines and the 'minority' groups have been
threatened in the process.

The Sri Lankan society, like any other Asian political
society, with diverse socio-economic and cultural patterns
saw the smooth transition of power from colonial rule to the
nationalist elite. In the wake of its independence, there was
a serious communal and political upheaval in the neighbouring
states of India, Burma & Pakistan. But Sri Lanka did not see
any partition, insurrection or instability in the newly
independent status. But gradually, with the rapid socio-
economic changes and cumulative challenges of participation,
distribution and integration in the society resulted in the
rise of racial-ethnic nationalism which brought inter-group

cleavages into the open. At the same time, the political
mobilisation, articulation and aggregation of group
interests have resulted in the group demand for more
autonomy and rights in the society. Due to the gap between
governmental policies and performances in the socio-economic
area, it is perceived 'critical' for the sustenance of group
autonomy. The minority ethnic leaderships demand for autonomy
exacerbated the tensions within the society.

In this light, a striking religious and linguistic
congruence has been the hallmark of group differentiation
amongst the two largest ethnic groups of Sri Lanka, i.e.
the Sinhalas and Tamils. More than ninety per cent of the
Sinhala-speaking people are Buddhist whereas most of the
Tamil-speaking people are Hindus. The Moors, the second
largest minority after the Tamil Hindus, are all Muslims
with Tamil as their language.

Notwithstanding, such distinctiveness in linguistic
and religious terms, Sinhalese and Tamil social structures
do have certain areas of religio-cultural commonality.
This can be seen in the similarities of their respective
caste-systems. In the Sinhalese Buddhist pantheon, its the
Hindu gods which hold significant position and the Hindu
goddess, Pattini at Katarguma has national recognition.
These features reflect the process of integration and

combination underlying the two-way interaction between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, the genesis of which can be traced back to the period preceding the advent of the western colonial powers. During the colonial period, religio cultural revivalist movements strengthened the group solidarities among the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims. However, such assertions and manifestations of group distinctiveness though operating as parallel streams, had converged in its attack against the Christian Missionaries.

Significantly enough, though the revivalist movements were initiated by learned religious dignitaries, they were supported and financed by the English-educated non-Christian middle class of entrepreneurs and professionals who perceived themselves as discriminated against compared with the Christian Sri Lankans in the process of government.[3] Thus it was this stratum of the Sri Lankan middle class which dominated the reformist movement from the beginning of the twentieth century. It was multi-communal in its composition and relatively cosmopolitan in outlook, with English forming a common bond between the leaders of various ethnic groups. The high water mark of Sinhalese-Tamil elite cohesiveness was the election of a Tamil, Sir Ponnambalam Ramnathan from the constituency of

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3. V. Kumari, Jayawardene, The Rise of the Labour Movement in Ceylon (Durnhaim, N. C. 1972),pp.39-64.

the western educated Sri Lankans in 1912 elections.

Prior to independence, such Sinhalese Tamil elite cohesion, however, seems to have come under heavy strain in the 1920s when universal adult franchise was introduced in the island. Underlining the implications of majoritarian rule, it was detrimental to the interests of the minority group elites to whom the arithmetic of numbers was far too clear. On the other hand, the controversy concerning the grant of the electoral franchise to the 'Indian Tamils' and the statements of some of the Sinhalese leaders reflected not only Sinhalese doubts about the national loyalty of the Tamil segment of the population but was also indicative of their resentment towards the Tamils in economic terms[4]. On the other hand, the boycott of the first State Council elections by a major segment of the Tamils and their demand for equal representation through petition and memoranda to colonial office manifested the gradual political mobilisation of the Tamils.

However, after independence inter -ethnic rivalry remained limited mainly to the domain of the political 'notables', who while espousing the cause of their respective ethnic groups seemed to have a close affinity for each other

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4. Ceylon State Council, Indo-Ceylon Relations Exploratory Conference, December 1940, sessional paper 8 of 1941, (Colombo, 1941) pp. 8-9.

and some sort of mutual understanding due to their similar
educational background, social status and mode of living.
Despite certain disputes, the minority elite continued to
have an adequate share in power alongwith the political
notables of the majority community due to their eminent
position in the bureaucratic and other professional services.
The continued use of English in official matters and the
convergence of their economic interests facilitated an
equilibrium which helped in managing inter-ethnic rivalry.
Again, this was reflected in the constitution which was
modelled on the recommendations of the Soulbury Commission
and included certain provisions to safeguard the special
interests of minorities. But gradually, with the introdu-
ction of mass politics and the demise of English as the
official language, inter-ethnic competition moved from the
phase of rivalry to that of overt conflict, the sources of
which were religio-political but with strong economic
undertones.

Viewed in the context of real socio-economic issues,
the majority Sinhalese had the Symbols of Buddhism, The
Sinhala language and historical traditions enshrined mainly
in the chronicles written by the Buddhist monks. In the
first few years of independence, however certain Buddhist
religious organizations and monks were deeply concerned with
the onslaught of an alien Christian religion and its values

on Buddhist cultural traditions and sought the support of
government to rectify the situation by appointing a
commission to go into the causes of erosion of Buddhism
and suggest remedies. So the emergence of Buddhist
nationalism through the revival of cultural traditions etc.
provided an explanation for the socio-economic backwardness
of the majority community in contrast to the minority people.
It insisted on giving the Sinhala language and tradition an
exclusive status in the society. As it is discussed in
earlier chapters the historical facts say that there has
been a mutual conflict among the Sinhalese and Tamils from
ancient times which continued even after Independence and it
resulted in serious conflict in the socio-economic affairs
of the state. In the Independent state, the majority
communities deep-seated socio-economic anxieties were
expressed through the emergence of Sinhalese nationalism
which emphasised the majority rights and privileges at the
expense of the Tamil minority in the society. In this context,
the political parties tried to promote the interests of the
majority and gradually, it took a realistic shape with the
birth of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).

In the religious context, the major target of the
Sinhalese Buddhist revivalists was catholicism. However,
they insisted equally on giving the Sinhala language an
exclusive official status. It was in this respect that the

Sinhalese and Tamil group interests clashed with each other for a variety of reasons, subjective as well as objective. Subjectively the selectivity of historical myths and symbols tended to turn the hero of one group into the foe of another, their victories and defeats overlapped in similar fashion. Coupled with this,was the factor of the similarity and close linguistic interaction of Sri Lanka Tamils with those of Tamil Nadu, leading to the self perception of the Sinhaleseas a linguistic minority 'in the shadow of India'.[5] Further, the preponderance of Tamil minority in public services and economic sectors, had aroused resentment among the Sinhalese who pleaded for 'Sinhala only'. 'The fact', argued Bandamaike in 1955m 'that in the towns and villages in business houses and boutiques most of the work is in the hands of Tamil speaking people will inevitably result in a fear and I don't think an unjustified fear, of the inexorable shrinking of the Sinhalese language.[6] Since 1955, though Buddhism has been an important symbol for the Sinhalese assertion of its group differentiation, it has been around the issue of language that the Sinhala Tamil

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5. W. Howard Wriggins, _Ceylon: Dilemmas of a New Nation_ (Princeton, 1960), p.252.

6. Ceylon Deptt. of Information, _Towards a New Era: Selected speeches of S.W.R.D. Bandamaike Made in the Legislature of Ceylon,(1931-59),_(Colombo, 1961)p.42.

confrontations have concentrated. It was this language
issue which sparked off the major conflict among the
Sinhalas & Tamils. Previously the Tamils were divided
into two groups of Sri Lanka Tamils and Indian Tamils
due to the promulgation of Citizenship Act just after
Independence. The disenfranchisement of Indian Tamils
was a major issue for the Tamils and Tamil Congress split
into groups and thus the Federal Party was born, in the
interests of the estate workers. The Tamils as divided
they were further alienated by the Sinhalese government
which was carried on the wave of ethnic chauvinism. The
citizenship Act of 1948 which had made the procedure of
acquiring citizenship cumbersome, divided the Tamils into
two groups of Sri Lanka Tamils and the Indian Tamils. The
Tamils' political party, the Tamil Congress split and the
Federal Party was born and this drifted away the Indian
Tamils from the Sri Lankan Tamils.

The grant of official status to the Sinhala language
alone, was obvious which held the prospect of providing
a steadily increasing number of Sinhalese educated middle-
class better chances for employment and promotion in public
and other governmental services. In a scarce-resource
economy like that of Sri Lanka, with the state the largest
employer, the language issue was infused with hard rationale,
political and economic calculations. Thus the slogan of

'Sinhala only' was first raised in 1952 elections by the
Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) which really meant for the
change of language medium from English to Sinhala. Although
the official position of the party was to give near priority
to Tamil language, subsequently it reversed its earlier
stand and espoused Sinhala as the sole official language.
The demand started picking up real momentum in 1954. This
was the year when preparation for celebrations of the 25th
Centenary of Buddha Jayanti were in full swing and the
Sinhala-Buddhist resurgence was at its zenith. Ina cultural
fervour, the government had reached the conclusion that
'Sinhala' should be made the sole language of the nation.
The extent to which the considerations of popular support
and the introduction of mass-politics gave this issue
centrality was evident from the reversal of SLFP's stand on
it and the chain of events that followed.

In the background, the Swabhasa movement created an
'uproar' among the Tamils and their reaction to it was very
harsh. The Tamils under the leadership of the Federal Party
raised the banner of 'Tamil only' and pleaded for the total
boycott of 'Sinhala' language in the Tamil area. They
demanded for the full official status of their language as
they had no sympathy on Sinhalese argument for doing away
with English and replacing it with 'Sinhala' as the sole

official language. The SLFP and UNP's adoption of
'Sinhala' as only official language saw an awakening
of Sinhalese chauvinism for the general elections of
1956 showed the cleavages clearly. The Sinhalese people
voted for the new party, SLFP which swept the elections
and roused the aspirations of the Sinhalese on a good
scale. Similarly with the landslide victory of the
Federal Party, the Tamils announced their intention to
fight for a federal system and their rejection of all
kinds of possible domination by the Sinhalas. The
Tamil Congress was eclipsed by the thumping victory of
Federal Party which became the chief spokesman of the
Tamils. Armed with this massive popular backing, the
Federal Party held a convention demanding certain rights
for the Tamils.

At its convention at Trincomalee in August, 1956,
The Federal Party made four specific demands on the
Bandaraike Government: (1) replacement of the Soulbury
Constitution by one which guaranteed the federal system,
(2) parity in status between the Sinhala and Tamil
languages, (3) restoration of citizenship to the Indian
Tamils and (4) immediate cessation of the colonisation of
the traditional Tamil homeland with Sinhalas. The
Trincomalee convention threatened to launch direct action

by non-violent means if the above demands were not met within a year.[7] The government was threatened with direct action because the protestations and even riots in the months of May and June 1956, had not persuaded it to withdraw or tone down the 'Sinhala only', Act. The Bandarnaike government to fulfill its election promise its language policy was interpreted as a safe choice in lieu of English in official matters. But the language issue resulted in mutual boycott and it culminated in serious communal clashes in Gal Oya Valley and Batticaloa and spread to other parts of the country.

Language thus assumed centrality in Sinhalese Tamil politics, presumably because it was as effective as a symbol of tradition for assertion of group-distinctiveness as it was a harbinger for socio-economic benefits in modern times. The use of language as a core symbol of political identity had much potential as a factor integrating the community but it had its own limits, particularly in situations where there was non-congruence of language symbols with other religions. This is evident from the pattern of political interaction between the Tamil speaking but religiously different groups of Tamils and Moors. Besides even amongst these groups which had religio-lingui-

7.   A. Jeyratnam Wilson, Politics in Sri Lanka 1947-1973, (London, 1974) pp.165-170.

stic congruence, horizontal and vertical cleavages based
on caste and class minimized its effectiveness. This is
manifested in the intermittent character of the alliance
pattern between the leadership of the Sri Lanka Tamils
and the Indian Tamils. The basic referent for such
alliances when they did take place, was not the religio-
linguistic affinity but the common politico-economic
grievances of both in relation to the majority group
dominated Colombo government. That such alliances were
for a limited purpose only was also evident from the non-
endorsement of the secessionist demand by the Indian
Tamil leadership, which owing to its close and intertwined
demographic and economic linkages with the majority commu-
nity could not afford to subscribe to the Tamil nationalism
which envisaged the partition of the country.

The 'language issue' thus sparked a violent upheaval
in the society with the Tamils vehemently opposing it.
To diffuse the ethnic tension, the then Prime Minister
Bandarnaike signed a pact with the Federal Party leader,
Mr. Chelvanayakam granting concessions to Tamils. The
Prime Minister, though expressed his inability to discuss
for federal system, agreed to the recognition of 'Tamil' as
the language of national minority of Sri Lanka and it be
made the language of administration in the Northern and

Eastern provinces. The Prime Minister conceded the demand
for establishing regional councils in the North and East
which would have "powers over specified subjects including
agriculture, co-operatives, lands and development colonisa-
tion, education, health, industries and fisheries, housing
and social services, electricity, water schemes and roads.
The most remarkable feature of this agreement was over the
colonisation schemes. It was agreed that in the matter of
colonisation schemes, the powers of the regional councils
should include the power to select allottees to whom lands
within their area of authority shall be alienated and also
power to select personnel to be employed for work on such
schemes.

The Bandamaike-Chelvanayakam Pact (B-C Pact) was an
ideal solution to the problem, but it could not succeed due
to the violent opposition by the rightwing Sinhalas in the
SLFP. The various Sinhalese sects and organizations termed
this Pact as 'an act of treachery against the Sinhala nation'
and the first step towards setting up of a separate state.
In the face of such violent pressure from the Sinhalese
majority, the Bandamaike government abrogated the Pact
unilaterally to get rid of demonstrations and oppositions
from all sides. An ethnic riot followed in this breach of
agreement and there was communal violent in many parts leading
to the subsequent declaration of a state of emergency in 1958.

The government under the cover of Emergency passed an
Act which legalised the reasonable use of Tamil for
prescribed purposes like educational instruction and
public service examination. The concessions were no doubt
substantial but the bill was passed when the Tamil Members
of Parliament were absent. So the Act did not carry on
an air of legitimacy. Moreover to implement the act, it
was necessary for the Prime Minister to promulgate
regulations. The Tamils pointed out that the major issues
like regional forming of councils and stopping of
colonisation were not in the Act.

Thus the unabating communal conflict after 1956,
created the potential for a growth of separatist sentiment
among the Tamils and many Sinhalas have been apprehensive
that the real Tamil political objective is separation.
After the promulgation of Language Act, there was a degree
of political instability for some time, and gradually the
Tamils felt by passed and elienated in society and started
leaving Sri Lanka in search of better pastures at this
time. Such an intereggnum made a Sinhala diplomat-author
to express his views in the following words:

> "During the S.W.R.D. Bandarnaike Administration,
> not only was the official Language Act of 1956
> enacted and implemented but all manners of
> discriminations were directed at the Tamil
> people. Many public servants were deprived of
> their promotions and many more were discrimina-
> ted against, in the process of recruitment.
> In the Sirimavo Bandarnaike Administration

which followed such discrimination, was even
more pronounced. This resulted in the Tamil
community suffering from an acute sense of
insecurity and made to feel unwanted in the
land of their birth. The human reaction to
the naked discrimination directed against the
Tamil people was indeed tragic from the view-
point of Sri Lanka."8

Subsequently, in the General Elections of 1965, with no
party getting an absolute majority; the UNP's emergence of
single largest party, rallied for the support from the Tamil
Federal Party. The Federal Party as the third party, entered
into an agreement with the Dudley Senanayake Government, and
collaborated with it. The UNP's earlier anti-Tamil stand was
taken as a counter-measure to offset the popularity of SLFP
among the Sinhala voters. Since, the UNP was more sympath-
etic to the Tamil problem than the SLFP, it was expected that
it would resolve the Tamil problem in a co-operative manner.
Again, the dialogue between the UNP and the Federal Party was
going on even before the elections. Immediately after the
elections, a pact was signed between D. S. Senanayake and
Chelvanayakam. This pact, better known as S-C Pact was
another landmark in the Sri Lankan history and ironically its
basis was provided by the earlier B-C Pact. Though the pact
ommitted any reference to provincial or regional councils,
it did assure the Tamils about the formation of the District
Councils, giving concrete shape to the Tamil language special
provision Act and restricting the colonisation of Tamil areas

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8. T.D.S.A. Dissanayaka, <u>The Agony of Sri Lanka</u>, (Colombo,
1984) p.9.

by Sinhalese. In no way, did the S-C Pact challenge
the basis of the Sinhala only Act of 1958,but it passed
the regulations to grant special status to Tamil in 1966.
The only complaint of Chelvanayakam was that those
regulations did not confer on the Tamil-speaking people
in the seven Sinhala provinces, their full language rights.

The 1966 regulations made Tamil virtually the
official language of the Northern and Eastern provinces.
The D.S. Senanayake Government appeared to be keen to
implement its assurance regarding the devolution of powers
to the District Councils. Of course, there was no provision
for provincial or regional councils but the proposed
district councils were to operate under the direct control
and supervision of the Central Government. The Sinhalese
chauvinist elements in the government put up a strong
opposition to all the concessions and priveleges to the
Tamils and finally Senanayake Government was forced to
abrogate the pact with Chelvanayakam. The Federal Party
pulled out of the coalition though it continued to support
the government from outside. Despite the formal breaking
of links between the Sinhala and Tamil collaborative
politics, the overall atmosphere of goodwill and ethnic
relaxation was too evident to be overlooked.[9]

9. V.P. Vaidik, Ethnic Crisis in Sri Lanka India's
    Options (New Delhi, 1986) p.33.

In the subsequent 1970 Elections, the SLFP
and its leftist allies came to power and in the meantime,
there was no ethnic tension in the political process.
There was a proposal to evolve a new constitution and the
Federal Party voted in favour to benefit their constitu-
ency. Though they co-operated first, they found to
their chargin that the SLFP was determined to incorporate
in the Republican Constitution, many measures that were
meant to take away from Tamils even the rights they already
had. Moreover, the Indian Tamils had no representation
in the Constituent Assembly, a political anomaly that was
protested against by the Ceylon Workers Congress, the main
organisation of the upcountry plantation Tamil workers.

The members of the Federal Party in its opposition
to official language and state religion moved certain
amendments to the new constitution. The Tamil organizations
demanded that (i) Tamil should be recognized by the
constitution as an official language along with Sinhala
(ii) Buddhism should not be declared as the sole state
religion and that Sri Lanka should be a secular state
(iii) there should be a specific provision in the
constitution to outlow the caste-system and (iv) that the
traditionally maintained distinction between the Sri Lanka
Tamils and the plantation Tamils of Indian origin should

be dispensed with. But the 1972 Constitution, disregar-
ding the Tamil demands did not provide any parity between
the two languages and all alternative proposals by the
Federal Party were rejected. Now, in opposition to the
new Constitution all the Tamil parties like the Federal
Party, the Tamil Congress, the Ceylon Workers' Congress
and the United Front of Eelan Tamils formed a Tamil United
Front (TUF) to fight for the freedom, dignity and rights
of the Tamil people.

The Constitution of 1972 introduced a new and
jarring religious factor to widen the already existing
linguistic schism. The prominent position given to
Buddhism and citizenship issue, had caused a sense of
insecurity among the Tamils. The Tamils saw the new
constitutional provisions as decrees to turn them into second
class citizens in their own land. Hinduism which is
another common factor uniting the Indian and indigenous
Tamils, was thought to have been relegated to second
place in Sri Lanka. The Tamils of Indian origin were
specially sour about the way they were sidetracked in the
matter of protecting their citizenship rights by a stipula-
tion which makes a subtle distinction between citizens by
descent and citizens by registration. By declaring that
no law of the National State Assembly should deprive a
citizen by descent of the status of citizen of Sri Lanka

the 1972 constitution cast a shadow on all those Indian Tamils who had or were trying to acquire citizenship by registration.[10]

The Tamil United Front challenged the new constitution from outside and made six demands on the government. The Federal Party leader, Mr. Chelvanayakam resigned his parliamentary seat in an effort to challenge government allegations that his party did not truely represent the aspirations of the Tamil people. The Tamil leaders subsequent election to the Parliament vindicated the Tamil demand for constitutional changes. In October 1972, the Tamil United Front launched a non-violent struggle to achieve its objectives and coinciding with the first anniversary of the new constitution in May 1973 decided that the rights of the T amils could not be regained except within the framework of a separate Tamil state. Subsequently, the Tamil United Front in its Vaddukodai Conference passed the resolution as follows -

> "We are hereby committed to the restoration and reconstitution of the free, sovereign, secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam based on the right of self-determination inherent to every nation. This has become inevitable to safeguard the very existence of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka."[11]

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10.   Ibid., p.37.

11.   Ibid., p.39.

With the passing of this resolution, the Tamil United
Front turned into Tamil United Liberation Front and
it carved out the plan for creation of the Tamil Eelam.
The demand for a separate nation enjoyed popular support
in the North and East but almost a million plantation
workers represented by the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC)
were hardly interested in it. However, the proud Tamils
of Jaffna who had considered themselves as the most
authentic repository of Tamil culture for several centuries,
now started looking to their northern brothers in Tamil
Nadu for sympathy and help. The Eelam resolution imparted
an international dimension to the Tamil problem of
Sri Lanka.

The idea of a separate state for Tamils had not
entered into the minds of the Tamil leaders until the
Kankasanthurai by-election. It was during the emotive
election compaign itself that the audiences raised the
question of a separate state. Though, C. Suntheralingam
had been advocating the cause of Eelam since 1956, his
party was too inconsequential to attract the people's
attention to this slogan. But when the people themselves
raised the cry for Eelam, the TULF leadership had to
articulate it into a resolution.

The strategy of peaceful collision and collusion
pursued by the Tamil leadership seemed to have paid little

dividend to the Tamils in concrete terms. The Tamils
not only had to face the wrath of the Sinhala mobs, but
also the increasing state terrorism, perpetrated by the
government. The government policy of restrictive
admission to the university, discrimination in recruit-
ment to government jobs and Sinhala colonisation of Tamil
areas has created an army of unemployed and frustrated
Tamil young men. "Plunged into the despair of unemployed
existence, frustrated with the possibility of higher
education, angered by the imposition of an alien language
the Tamil youth realised that the redemption to their
plight lay in revolutionary politics ....."[12]

The political violence of the Tamil youth began to
explode on the political scene in the early seventies but
it took organised forms of revolutionary resistance in the
later stages. It became a frightening political reality
to both the peace-loving conservative Tamil leadership and
to the oppressive Sinhala regimes. The Tamil people's
sympathy for the violent activities of the terrorists and
the governments security measures were in contrast to each
other which had destabilized the situation in the country.
The Tamil terrorists had started attacks on some prominent

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12.   A. S. Balsingham, Liberation Tigers and Tamil Eelam
       Freedom Struggle (Madras, 1983) p.23.

pro-government politicians. The demand for Tamil Eelam was taking shape at various levels with the popular support. As the police swooped down mercilessly on the terrorists and their supposed supporters, the people's anger against the government and its security policies as a whole grew stronger day-by-day. In the wake of police brutality towards Tamil terrorists, the Tamils were driven to regard a separate Tamil State as the only solution to the ethnic problem. By the mid-seventies, the Tamil guerilla movements started taking formal shape like Prabhakaran's 'Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam" (LTTE) and the adoration of Tamil terrorists in the northern area left no option for the Tamil political parties but to a resolution for establishing the Tamil Eelam.

An atmosphere of extremism and intolerance had also intruded into Sri Lankan politics in the early years of seventies, with the JVP insurrection and governmental harsh measures against it. Like the Sinhala youth of JVP, the Tamil youth also took recourse to violence and the government believed it could tackle the Tamil violence as swiftly as it had the Sinhala violence. The introduction of the 1972 constitution, saw the widespread disenchantment among the Tamils who held huge demonstrations and destroyed the government properties. The stringent attitude of government

towards the expression of dissent in general compelled the TULF Party and other organisations to demand for a separate state.

The Tamil demand for separatism from mere regional autonomy was a result of 'confrontationist' politics in Sri Lanka. The ethnic Tamil minorities concentration in the north of the country and its geographical proximity to the Indian mainland, made the internal tensions more acute. In this context it is found that certain ingredients like ethnic cohesion and a common identity in the Tamil community helped generate a separatist movement. The perceived threat to the Tamils' ethnic identity from political, economic, social and cultural matters and a sense of relative deprivation aroused a sense of 'insecurity' which culminated in the demand for 'a separate state'.

From Sri Lankan national security aspect, it poses a serious threat to their polity of majority Sinhalese who looks the existence of a great resorvoir of Tamils across the narrowseas, having common racial-ethnic ties with their brethem in the island. It is the powerful sense of Tamil ethnic identity and a deep sense of sympathy from the Indian Tamils in the neighbouring country, has fostered and nurtured the Tamil separatist ideas.

Separatist agitation, whether in Sri Lanka or in
the Basque country in Spain, in Corsica or Ogaden in
Ethiopia, or Ulster in U.K. and in Phillipines or nearer
home in Indian Punjab; leads to a radicalisation of the
political process in the affected region or regions. In
all these states, the minorities grivances and demands
are seen as a serious threat to the unity and stability of
the country where the government is backed by the force of
majority political support and carry out its repressive
measures by terrorising and alienating the minorities from
the national mainstream. In order to counter the political
and military struggle of the separatists, the government
takes to the path of 'state terrorism'. When the state
resorts to such activity, consequently it proves self-defeating
and instead of eliminating the menace,it unwittingly feeds
terrorism. In Sri Lankan case, the government repressive
measures towards the Tamils, have resulted in militancy and
terrorism from the minority.

In Sri Lankan society, the majority minority
complex developed in the socio-economic setting, aligned
with the fears of racial ethnic domination resulted in the
mutual distrust and antagonism in the society. This could
have been curbed in the early years of uprising, but the
'scarce' economy and the competing group interests in

society and the character of electoral politics obstructed
the evolution of a free, equal and secular society. The
majority 'upsurge'in society on the lines of racial ethnic
differences created fears among the Tamils who had no
other means except political violence to achieve their
objectives. Thus the Sinhala chauvinism was met with the
Tamil communalism which called for an idea of'separatism'.
In this context, an external factor that counted for the
minority upsurge, is the presence of Tamil multitudes in
the Indian mainland which emboldened the forces of separa-
tion and liberation in the island.

The Tamil idea of 'separatism' started in the wake
of 1977 elections and its outcome reinforced the idea of
the Tamil demand for a separate state. The TULF manifesto
sought a mandate from the northern and eastern provinces
to set up 'an independent sovereign state of Tamil Eelam'.
After the victory in elections, the TULF defined the bound-
aries of Tamil Eelam in terms of territory consisting the
Northern and Eastern provinces. Despite its overwhelming
Tamil vote for a separate state, the TULF did not precipi-
tate the struggle to attain its declared objective. It was
only meant for a starting point in the prolonged negotiat-
ions with the Sinhalas. The TULF used it to blunt the
criticism from the Tamil militants. The UNP government in

power under Jayawerdene tried to co-opt the Tamils into a broad Sinhala-Buddhist system. But the Bandamaike government during its last phase had also tried to assuage the TULF by initiating serious discussions for mutual co-operation with Chelvanayakam which had failed ultimately. With Chelvanayakam's demise and the SLFP's defeat in the elections, a new opportunity beckoned to the UNP to pik up the old threads. On the other hand the TULF in its newly acquired status of largest opposition party appeared to have realised the need for a sagacious attitude towards the Jayawardene government and sought to achieve its objectives through negotiations. But following the serious communal riots and conflict, the TULF concluded that the right to self determination is the only solution to their problem. It brought the Tamil issue to international focus and appealed to India for political intervention in this matter. The TULF chief, A. Amirthalingam approached and conveyed the Tamil grievances to many European nations and international organizations. On the other hand, the Jayawardene government took to strong military measures to counter the growing militancy among the minority Tamils.

The Jayawardene government embarked upon a three-pronged strategy to face the Tamil challenge. First whatever concession it could bestow upon the Tamils, it tried tried to enshrine them partly in the constitution and a

part of them were granted through parliamentary resolutions and executive orders without bothering to seek the support of the TULF. Secondly, a 'wedge' was successfully introduced between the Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils and Thirdly, the government unleashed a reign of terror against the Tamils. Among the concessions granted to the Tamils, the provision of some kind of parity to the Tamil language in education and administration alleviated the fears of the Tamils. The other important dispensation was concerned with the law of citizenship which made it very simple for the 'stateless people' in allowing them certain concessions. In response to these measures the leader of the Indian Tamil Estate workers, Mr. Thondman accepted a post in the cabinet and thus extracted the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) from the TULF. Thus Jayawardene gave a serious blow to the Tamil unity and its demand for Eelam, by dividing the Tamils through his political machinations.

In the meantime, the Tamil militant organizations started taking a 'confrontationist' policy to face the military repression of the government. The presence of ruthless army in Jaffna and the promulgation of Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) resulted in arrest and torture of many Tamil youths. The terrorists act of violence was aimed at three kinds of people, namely leaders of the ruling party and Tamil leaders who sided with the government in

opposing their demands, army and police personnel and informers. Again the hostility of the Tamil people towards the government increased with the unrestrained use of the powers to search, detain and interrogate. The atrocities committed by the army and police have been investigated by the representatives of Amnesty International and International Commission of Jurists and have been criticised severely.[13] In this context there was an important link of the security forces in the government repression and genocide of Tamils in the Jaffna peninsula, for the Sri Lankan army being dominated by communal Sinhalas. In the process the security forces were sucked into the vortex of Jaffna's turbulent politics and they were seen to be the part of the Sinhalese chauvinists to keep the Tamils down.

Once the phenomenon of youth unrest and violence came to dominate the political scene in the north, the police force found that the boundary between the routine business of maintaining law and order on the one hand and political activity on the other became increasingly blurred.

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13. Virginia A. Leary, Ethnic Conflict and Violence in Sri Lanka: Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka in July-August 1981 on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists; Report of an Amnesty, International Mission to Sri-Lanka - 31 January-9 February 1982.

The Tamil officers in the police force faced an impossibly difficult conflict of loyalties between their commitment to their duties and their own ethnic identity. The result was that more Sinhalese officers were sent to the north for the government regarded Tamil officers as either unreliable or ineffective. Thus the police force in the north and the security forces in general became overwhelmingly Sinhalese in ethnic composition which widened the gulf between the army and the people. The security forces were perceived as a Sinhalese army of occupation because they turned violent in their frustration at their inability to control the situation.

By the time, the activities of the terrorests were taken to be that of well-trained and well organized groups fighting for the Tamil Eelam. Instead of one broad front, half a dozen separate organisations had sprung up like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) led by V. Prabhakaran, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) by Uma Maheswaran, the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) by Thangadorai and Kuttimani, the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of students (EROS) by Eliatharby Ratnasabhapathy and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) by K. Padmanabha under the overall leadership of General Union of Eelam Students (GUES).

All these Tamil militant organizations vied with
each other in undertaking daring missions to avenge the
humiliations suffered by the Tamil people. Subsequently,
in the 1981 DDC elections, there was a lot of violence and
rioting from the terrorists and the Sri Lankan police
carried out strong military operations against the Tamils.
But after 1977, the year of 1981 was an important year of
ethnic violence and its outcome proved to be a cementing
force between the Jaffna Tamils and the plantation Tamils
of Indian origin. The Sinhala mobs made no distinction
among the Tamils while unleashing their reign of terror.
The National Council of the CWC issued a long statement
condemning the atrocities perpetrated on the helpless workers
in the plantation and it made serious aspersions on the
government. In the following elections of 1983, the terr-
orists disrupted the elections in Jaffna Peninsula and
there was widespread violence and mayhem. Despite a state
of emergency, the situation worsened and finally it culmi-
nated in the bloody riots of July.

The July Riots resulted in the serious divisions
and communal clashes between the Sinhalese and Tamils, and
which took a heavy toll of life and property. It was for
the first time felt that Buddhism and Hinduism cannot
co-exist in Sri Lanka. What marked off the riots of July
1983 from those of the 1958 violence, was the role of the

security forces in creating violence and terror against
the Tamils. The breakdown in law enforcement in the early
days of the riots had no precedent in the past; it took
the government nearly a week to reestablish its authority
to quell the violence. The security forces were totally
indifferent and sided with the Sinhalas and attacked upon
the Tamils. Thus the country's political struc ture was
shaken to its foundations and there was a widespread
reaction to the upheaval in Sri Lanka. The Indian govern-
ment expressed its deep shock and concern over the
developments in Sri Lanka and it intensified its efforts
for a mediation to end the conflict. Though, previously
India had played a 'mediatry' role in the ethnic issue of
Sri Lanka,, now it came out with a constructive role to put
an end to the ethnic conflict in the island-nation. As
it will be discussed in the next chapter, India's role
in the region and its relations with the neighbours, have
an important role to play in its mediation efforts in the
regional conflicts. In this light, it has played a
constructive role in the mediation efforts after the events
of 1983 violence.

From the discussion above, the problem of national
security of Sri Lanka, is to be perceived in structural-
political matrix of the society. The search for new
identities in society and the resulting political polari-

sation on distinct racial ethnic lines, presents a
confusing picture of national unity and solidarity within
the state. The impending threats in nature of socio-
political, commual and racial divisions exacerbate the
conflict within the society, which weakens the security
and strength of the state.

Thus the security problem can not be considered
apart from the internal structure of the state.Because
the view from within explodes the superficial image of the
state as a coherent object of security. A strong state
defines itself from within and fills the gap between its
neighbours with a solid presence. But a microstate like
Sri Lanka for its weak military power, may be defined more
as a gap between its neighbours, with little of political
substance underlying the facade of internationally recognised
statehood. Hence, behaviour within the state can be
understood better in terms of individual and sub-group
security than in terms of policies relating to national
security. In case of Sri Lanka, the national security
question can be viewed in the relationship existing in the
society where the lack of unity and homogenity has threatened
its internal security.

CHAPTER VI

SRI LANKAN SECURITY AND ITS REGIONAL DIMENSIONS

In the geo-political configuration of South Asia, India occupies a preponderant position in economic, political and strategic matters of the region. The South Asian Region in compact nature, the states of the region share a common racial, ethnic character which provides a certain 'nexus' between India and its regional neighbours. In the regional power equation, India has substantial leverage to influence the domestic developments taking place in its neighbouring countries and these countries too have a considerable influence in Indian political developments. So, there is some sort of 'linkage' between what happens in Bangladesh and the happenings in Assam or Tripura or for that matter between Pakistan and Punjab or Kashmir, so also Nepal in its contiguous Indian states and Sri Lanka in T amil Nadu. Besides another important factor that needs to be taken into consideration in managing the intra-regional security is the imparative to retain the political stability of the region instead of allowing it to drift to a situation where it will be dominated by the Major Powers. The linkages between internal political processes and external conflictual behaviour of states offer interesting insights in the study of international conflict.[1] So, in this context one has to evaluate the

1. S. D. Muni, "South Asia," in Conflict and Intervention in the Third World, (edited by) Mohammed Ayoob, (London, 1980), p.42.

Indian attitude to the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict and the
Sri Lankan responses to the compulsions underlying the
Indian approach.

India has a very important role in the domestic
politics of Sri Lanka, for the close racial, ethnic ties
of its own people with those of Sri Lanka. Again in terms
of security and defence, the overall region in the sub-
continent is considered to be the Indian defence area
where India presents a monolith pattern in the subcontinent.
For Sri Lanka, its miniature existence and dependence status
put some limitation on its search for an independent and
secured position in the region.

In the matters of domestic politics, the continuing
racial-ethnic conflict between the Sinhalas and Tamils,
has destabilised the situation in Sri Lanka. The Tamil
connection with India in its security perspective, the
'Indian Factor' assumed much importance as a political
variable thwarting the stability of the island-nation. On
the other hand, with a continuous influx of Sri Lankan
refugees into Tamil Nadu since the 1983 July violence, it
has created problems for the Indian government. The
Government of India has voiced its concern, time and again
over the ethnic conflict in a humanitarian gesture and
called for a peaceful solution to the problem. The presence

of Tamil multitude in South India with close ethnic ties
in Sri Lanka has contributed to the pressure under which
the Indian government is made to act and voice its concern
for the ethnic tension in Sri Lanka. In this context,
India's role has been one of peaceful and constructive in
its search for a solution to the ethnic problem.

As it has been discussed in the last chapter, after
the July 1983 riots, the situation became so violent that
it called upon a process of reconciliation to ease the
internal crisis and bring peace and stability in the island.
When the government representing the 'majority' Sinhalas
was condemned as authoritarian and Chauvinist by the
minority Tamils. Because the relations between the Tamils
and Sinhalas was so acrimonious in nature, there was no hope
for a resumption of a dialogue between the two. It was
only the Indian government's move that initiated a dialogue
between the warring parties in the conflict. Though, India
has been a part and parcel of the Sri Lankan political
developments for a long time, it assumed an important role
in its direct mediation in the present ethnic conflict.
In the past, India has signed some agreements and pacts
with Sri Lanka in relation to the granting of citizenship
to the Indian Tamils working in the tea plantations and
other areas. The pact, better known as Sastri-Sirimavo Pact

provided for the repartiation over a fifteen year period
of 525,000 Indian residents in Sri Lanka to India, along
with their natural increase and the absorption of
300,000 as citizens of Sri Lanka, the future of the
remaining 150,000 was to be negotiated later by the two
countries. Since then, India has kept a close eye on the
developemnts in Sri Lanka, particularly the conditions of
Tamils in socio-political affairs in society. In its
effort to diffuse the situation, India has always taken a
constructive role in the terms of mediation and rapport
between the conflecting groups.

In the aftermath of July, 1983 riots, the events took
a new turn with a serious deterioration in social order
resulting from the violent ethnic riots and clashes in
society. In such a climate of hostility and violence, India's
mediatory role helped for the initiation of new dialogue
between the Tamils and Sinhalas. It is the effort of the
Indian government that the Indian special envoy, Mr. G.
Parthasarathy visited Sri Lanka in the months of August and
November. The Indian mission brought some new hopes and changes
in the attitude of the Jayewerdene government.

The leaders of the TULF started saying by November
1983 that they were ready to negotiate with the Government
if it promised to provide at least two fundamental guarantees,
one to secure "the safety of the lives and properties of

Tamils in the island", the other to maintain "the integrity
of our territory."[2] On the other hand, Jayewardene
presented his own framework to solve the Tamil problem by
asking the TULF to renounce their demand for Eelam and
assuring it in turn of further devolution of power to Zonal
concils which were to be constituted by the merger of the
District Development Councils into the Provincial Councils.
He suggested that this scheme be applied to the entire
island after a referendum. Trincomalee was to be administ-
ered by the Centre.[3]

During the Commonwealth Conference in November 1983,
Jayewardene met Indira Gandhi twice, revised his earlier
proposals and expressed his willingness to invite the TULF
to the All Party Conference.[4] The TULF leader Amirthalingam
appreciated the mediatory role played by India and the
acceptance of the good offices of India by the Government of
Sri Lanka. It was because of the India factor, which had
"brought about a fundamental change in the whole situation",
he said that the TULF had decided to enter into negotiations
with the Colombo Government.[5] With Parthasarathi's third
visit the remaining obstacles were cleared at the beginning
of January 1984. Almost all the major political parties,
including the SLFP and the representatives of the Buddhist

2. Indian Express, 25 November 1983.
3. Hindustan Times, 11 November 1983.
4. Hindu, 1 December 1983.
5. Ibid, 3 December 1983.

Mahasangha, Hindus, Christians and Muslims, attended the
All Party Conference in Colombo on 10 January 1984. But
in the wake of the All Party Conference, the Sinhala
chauvinism manifested in its anti-Tamil propaganda and the
APC meetings in January, February and March bore no results
except that they discussed the modalities for conducting
the discussions.

The points of discussion on the basis of Annexure' C'
where the devolution of powers can be obtained by construc-
ting regional councils with administrative powers was agreed
upon at the mediation of India. In the meanwhile, there
started an anti-India tirade and compaign which got into
a full swing with allegations of terrorist training camps
in Tamil Nadu. Though the All Party meetings resulted
in a dead lock, the dialogue did not breakdown completely
because the TULF continued to be associated with the APC
meetings. The visits of National Security Minister, Lalith
Athulathamudali, in April and of Jayewardene in June-July
to New Delhi paved the way for new proposals which replaced
the discredited Annexure C with an offer for the institution
of a second chamber in Parliament. This proposed offer
was discussed at length with Indira Gandhi by Jayewardene
during his stay in New Delhi.

Jayewardene's visit to New Delhi, instead of bringing
any reconciliation between the Sinhala and Tamil opinions gave
a mild jolt to Indo-Sri Lanka relations. In his press

conference, Jayewardene said that the "Tamil problem is not a problem, it is a national disaster as you have in India of Kashmir, of Punjab and of Ulster in Britain. We will have to live with it for the decades to come."[6]

The All Party Conferences held its meetings and it discussed about the provision of a second chamber to which the TULF made its objections. In the escalating violence and army excesses there was no accord on any specific matter. The TULF leader Mr. A. Amrithlingam made it clear that his party was not asking for any council, regional or provincial; what it was looking for was a viable alternative to the mandate for a separate state at the 1977 elections. It was the responsibility of the Government and Sinhala leadership to discuss this alternative seriously. He warned of a Cyprus-like situation if the talkes dragged on indefinitely.[7] With the talks dragging on endlessly, the TULF's popularity and political standing has steadily declined with the 'guerillas' of the Tamil militants, gaining more sympathy and support among the Tamils. The Tamil militants have taken to strong terrorist tactice like attacking police stations, looting banks and blowing up army

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6. V.P. Vaidik, "Sri Lanka: Travails of a Divided Nation", Strategic Analysis, August, 1984, p.417.

7. Times of India, 31 August 1984.

convoys and tried to gain international publicity.

The Government of Sri Lanka complained of military training being imparted to the militants in Tamilnadu by some retired officers of the Indian Army. A restricted zone was also created in the territorial waters of Sri Lanka in April 1984 to keep a strict vigil on the militant's movements from across the Gulf of Mannar. Almost two dozen ships were deployed to cover the 140 miles of the zone of surveillance.[8] The Government recruited through the Americans, agents of the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad, to train the S ri Lankans to combat the militants. The Army also hired mercenaries from the British commando organisation, the SAS, to tackle the 'Tigers'.[9]

By the middle of 1984, the militants had become a political force to be reckoned with. Though they were not associated with any Sinhala-Tamil negotiations, they were in a position to decide the fate of any solution from outside. As a government publication put it:

> "Their militant methods have cost scores of
> lives and millions of rupees. It almost seems
> that their role is to block any settlement
> of the island's major problems than to assist

8. Statesman, 27 April, 1984.
9. Times of India, 25 June, 1984.

in their solution, and to perpetuation (sic)
disputes than in their settlement. The
movement's very existence as a favoured ally
of the TULF puts every Tamil offer or posture
of peace in doubt, under suspicion."[10]

How the problem of terrorism has affected the
Sinhala - Tamil relationship as a whole has been described
by the National Security Minister, Lalith Athulathmudali,
who added an implict warning. While reporting to
Parliament on his visit to India, he said:

"In dealing with a security problem created in
Jaffna, we must not forget the Tamil people,
who live elsewhere. The terrorist would like
this to be forgotton and his course of action is
in total disregard of the fate of those Tamils
who live amongst us."[11]

Meanwhile, India preferred a more constructive
role in acting as a restraint on Tamilnadu, quite apart
from being a source of reassurance to the TULF at a moment
of acute distress to that political group. The Indian
initiative was partly responsible for commencement of
discussions between the government of Sri Lanka and the
TULF and in pursuading the latter to participate in the

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10. For a detailed government version of the activities
of the militants, see, Tamil Terrorists: A Record of
Murder and Robbdry and Mission of Violence (both
pamphlets published by the Ministry of State,
publication undated)

11. Lalith Athulathmudali, My Recent Visit to India (Colombo,
1984), p.9.

All Party Conferences which began sittings in January,
1984. The proposals for devolution which emerged at
the All Party Conferences had the support of the Indian
Government who took up the position that something
wider in scope and territorial limits than the District
Development Councils (DDCs) was required to get the
more moderate sections of Tamil opinion. Particularly,
the TULF had to move decisively away from separatism
as a political goal. As we have seen before this Conference
made little headway in regardto the crucial issue of
devolution although much progress was made in regard to
other issues.

India's own political problems were saturated
to a point in the wake of Sikh terrorism in Punjab and
the rise of a political movement in Assam. The Prime
Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her party was embroiled
in a political turmoil at home, so she could not be able
to manoeuvre on the Tamil issue in Sri Lanka. The pressure
from Tamil Nadu and the elections in offing, made the
government to act in a positive manner. Thus, India
expressed its deep concern and hope for an early settlement
of the issue. The Sri Lanka government,on the other hand,
carried out a campaign of villification by proclaiming the
Tamil Nadu connection in the Jaffna terrorism by the Tamil

militants. It stated that the existence of military
training camps, if not bases for Sri Lankan Tamil
separatists, had encouraged the Tamils to operate
from Tamil Nadu in regular incursions to the island.
It said that Tamil Nadu government had generally
turned a blind eye to these activities. In reaction,
the Tamil Nadu and Indian government consistently
denied the existence of terrorist camps and sought to
meet the Sri Lankan protests with the charges of human
rights violations in Sri Lanka attributing these quite
emphatically to the lack of discipline in the security
forces. The international magazines and journals were
quoted by Indian authorities, in expressing the Sri
Lankan Army as one of the most indisciplined armies
of the world.

For Sri Lanka, the problem of security was
a continuous one with the pressure from the terrorists
mounting and their attacks becoming more daring.In scope
and effectiveness, the Sri Lankan government responded
with a new institutional structure as well as new policies
of which the most significant were the establishment of
National security in March 1984, to co-ordinate the
activities of the security forces and the police in
organizing counter-insurgency measures and the concept

of a surveillance zone covering most of the north and north-western coastal region introduced by this Ministry in the last week of November, 1984.

With stringent security measures, the security forces carried out a big operation against the Tamil 'guerillas' operating from the Jaffna and Mannar areas. In these operations, the civillian population was subjected to attack and violence. The attacks and murder of civillians made the Tamils in north to flee to India. So many Tamils entered into India as refugees from the island. At the plight of Tamils, the Indian government was urged to intervene in the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, there was some sort of a political instability in India, with the death of Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi and the ensuing Sikh violence in the state of Punjab. Subsequently, the new government under Mr. Rajiv Gandhi made some good gestures by initiating some diplomatic moves in the negotiations between the Tamils and the Sri Lankan Government. The visit of Lalith Athulathmudali to New Delhi in February, 1985 was taken as a good response from the Sri Lankan side. In all the forthcoming All Party Conferences in 1985 and thereafter, differences still remained on whether the northern and eastern provinces should be joined together as sought by TULF, on whether Provincial Ministers should be drawn only

from the proposed upper chamber, whether law and order
should be a provincial subject and whether land settlement
policy should be dealt with at the national and provincial
level.

Though, the Indian initiative eased the negotia-
tion process to some extent, there was no concrete
agreement as to the above issues of political importance.
With the escalation of violence and gradual Sinhala
colonisation of the Tamil areas, the Tamil civillians
were made the target of Army attacks and brutalities.
The proposal of settlement of some 30,000 Sinhalas of
armed civilians in Tamil areas to alter the strategic
situation, worsened the situation. The presence of some
5,000 strong Sinhalese army with arms and ammunitions
created a havoc in the social life of Tamils. The
atrocities of security forces were committed upon the
innocent civillians and there was a virtual state of
continuous massacre of Tamils. The Tamils driven from
the island in shock and terror reached India with untold
sufferings in their plight from their land. They expressed
the inhuman and bruatal activities of the Sri Lankan Army
in committing violence and terror against the Tamils.

Such barbaric acts were condemned in the large
international forums like United Nations and International
Court of Justice. The United Nations Commission on Human

Rights (UNCHR) condemned the Sri Lanka government's killing of Tamils and violation of human rights. In this context, India drew attention to the fact that a climate of confrontation had been built up following the repture in the dialogue between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamils; it urged the Sri Lankan government to resume the negotiations with the Tamils for a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem. The UNCHR and ICJ condemning the Sri Lanka government's action, took note of the Indian stand and urged the Sri Lankan government for an early solution.

Gradually, there was more violence in the island, with summary executions, murders, arson and rapes; there was a large flow of refugees to Tamil Nadu from the northern areas of Sri Lanka. Since June, 1983, some 60,000 Tamils have crossed the border and arrived in Tamil Nadu till the end of December, 1984. After the colonisation programme in Mannar, Jaffna, Talaimannar and Kankesanturai and the intensified army operations in these areas made the civilian Tamil population unsafe and they started leaving for India. The innocent Tamil youths were captured and tortured by the Sinhalese army on the pretext of complicity with Tamil militants, the Tigers and they were brutally killed by the security forces. The Tamil people found the Sinhalese army ruthless in its

attitude to exterminate the Tamils, in reprisals against the terrorist attacks. The terrorist bombings and mining of the army conoys had resulted in the security forces reprisal through the massacre of innocent Tamil people, old and young. The Jayewardene government unleashed a reign of terror on the Jaffna Tamils to liquidate their racial, ethnic identity in the island. It sought arms and ammunitions from countries like Britain, China, Pakistan and Jordan in its drive against the Tamils. It appealed to the western countries for their military support to Sri Lanka.[13]

In such a tense situation, India felt the brunt of the situation in Sri Lanka with the large influx of refugees from the island. It was shocked and provoked by the state of affairs in Sri Lanka and it sought to initiate fresh discussions to ease the situation. It appealed both sides to reach an agreement for a peaceful solution to the Tamil problem. The Indian envoy, Mr. Ramesh Bhandari visited Colombo and had talks with the Sri Lankan President for an early settlement of the issue of Tamil problem. So, a process of bilateral discussion was suggested to be the best way for mutual expression of views for an early settlement. Thereafter the Tamil political groups and the Sri Lankan government decided to meet in the capital of Bhutan, Thimpu to seek a solution to the conflict.

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13. _Times_, published from London 23 June, 1985.

The Thimpu Talks began with the participation
of TULF and other Tamil militant organisations and the
Sri Lankan government, in which India played a mediat-
ory role to bring an accord between these parties. The
Sri Lankan government was represented by the delegation
led by the President's brother and personal advisor,
Hector W. Jayewardene. On the other hand, all the six
Tamil militant organisations were represented by the
Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF) and the TULF also
participated in the discussions. The Tamils put forth
their four-principles of demand for the consideration of
the Sri Lankan government. It included the recognition
of the Tamils of Sri Lanka as distinct nationality,
respect for the traditional homeland, right to self-
determination and citizenship rights for all Tamils
including those of Indian origin.[14]

In this first round of Thimpu Talks in July,
certain improvements were seen from the both sides in
the perception and approach to the problem and issues.
The two sides agreed once again to meet for a second
round of talks in August, 1985. Meanwhile, the Tamils'
four-point demand was not taken seriously by the Sri

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14. Hindu, 14 July, 1985.

Lanka government who rejected the demand with some explanations. It pointed out that the demands are wholly unacceptable to the government because it is the negation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. On the other hand, it forwarded certain proposals and hoped for an exchange of views on the matter. Subsequently, in the second round of Thinpu Talks the Tamils maintained their same four demands and finally called off their talks in violation of the ceasefire agreement by the Sri Lanka government. So, the second round of Thimpu Talks came to an abrupt end with the Tamil side staging a walk-out against the massacre of Tamils in Vanuviya and Trincomalee. India also expressed its concern over the violation of the ceasefire agreement and it asked the Sri Lankan government to create the climate for a mutual dialogue and agreement between the Tamils and the government.

After the failure of Thimpu Talks, the Sri Lankan government put the blame squarely on the Tamils for its hard line approach and demand for separation. On the other hand, the Tamil militants viewed the Thimpu Talks as a tactical exercise by the Sri Lankan government and they found that Sri Lankan government had made political capital out of it. Meanwhile, Jayewardene made

the best use of this situation by getting time for military preparations against the Tamils. The Indian involvement in the so-called peace process was distanced from its traditional areas of goodwill in Sri Lankan domestic politics, namely the Tamils and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). So, the Indian government's enthusiasm to display its sincereity in the negotiation process was curtailed and it got trapped into the Sri Lankan game. Because the attitude of Sri Lankan government in response to the Indian position, has been one of a mixed feelings with a greater degree of disbelief and discord.

In the regional power-equation, Sri Lanka has become more close to the western allies in the region like Pakistan, in questioning the Indian political stand and diplomatic moves in the regional political developments. Taking exception of a factual statement by an Indian Minister, the Jayewardene government even tried to sabotage the third SAARC Ministerial meeting, held in Thimpu.

Coming to the problem of regional security in South Asia, the Sri Lankan search for western support in military and strategic terms and its international political mobilisation, have adversely affected the

peace and stability in the region. The Sri Lankan
government tried to mobilise western and others'support
in military and political terms to confront and meet
the terrorism and violence of the Tamil militants.
So, it sent its Ministers to seek arms and ammunitions
and military help from the western countries like U.K.,
U.S., West Germany, Italy and Portugal. The U.S.
Administration allowed the purchase of arms by Sri Lanka
and it was perhaps on the suggestions of the US Govern-
ment that President Jayewardene had enlisted the co-
operation of the Israeli intelligence agency, the Mossad,
for training armed forces and containing the activities of
the militants. The western support to the Jayewardene
government was also clearly evident in the United Nations
where an adverse resolution on Human Rights issue in
Sri Lanka was being discouraged. Again the American
arms build-up in Pakistan and the US Defence Secretary,
Mr. Weinberger's visit were matters of serious concern
to India as it saw the complicity of Big Powers in Sri
Lankan politics.

All these political developments take us to India's
present predicament in the Sri Lankan conflict. Since
India had sought for a 'political solution to the ethnic
T amil problem, the changing tone of Jayewardene Government
created doubts and uncertainities for India over the matter.

The Jayewardene Government has made it clear that the
problem could be solved when the Tamils are agreed to
soften their stand and follow a moderate policy in
consonance with the Sri Lanka Government's proposals.
In actual terms, the Jayewardene Government has sought
for a military solution to the Tamil problem in the
island. Because the pattern of violence in Sri Lanka
clearly suggest that state terror has been let loose
on the Tamils. The Jayewardene gov ernment sounds
confident that it would completely erodicate Tamil
terrorism which is their synonym for 'ethnic problem'.
The Jayewardene Government can do so with impunity
because it has the effective support of the west,
particularly USA and UK and other countries like Pakistan
and China. It's not too for off the mark to say that a
lingering internal war in the strategically located
Indian Ocean island is not incompatible with the perce-
ived strategic interests of US, Pakistan and China. It
keeps India disturbed and Sri Lanka dependent upon them.

As long as this internal war continues, the
extra regional powers can consolidate their strategic
interests in the area. It may be recalled here that US
had objected to the possibility of District Councils

combining themselves into a larger Provincial Council
as proposed in Annexure 'C' (Howard Shaffer's statement
in US Congressional Subcommittees in August, 1984).[15]
Any such larger units would have the prospects of
Trincomalee being incorporated in the Eastern Provincial
Council and if Tamils are given police and administrative
control of it, strategic use of the harbour town may
create problems. This consideration is prominent even
behind the Security Minister, Athulathmudali's plan to
settle some 200,000 Sinhalese well trained in arms, in
the Tamil dominated eastern region. Who knows if there
is any link between the external strategic interests in
Trincomalee and the regid official Sri Lankan position
not to accept the merging of the eastern and north-eastern
regions of the island as Tamil homelands.

In this context, India has deep stakes in the
peaceful settlement of the ethnic issue in Sri Lanka.
Economic burden imposed by the refugees is only one aspect
of the adverse consequences of the Sri Lankan crisis on
India. Again, the political repercussions of Tamil issue
inside Tamil Nadu and also on the federal polity of India
are no less significant. Above all, the consolidation of
adverse extra-regional strategic interests in Sri Lanka
is a matter of grave concern. But what can India do to

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15. _Indian Express_, 16 March1985.

bring about a cessation of hostilities and instill in
the Jayewardene Government a sincerity of purpose for poli-
tical solution? Hard options are certainly ruled out
because the creation of a Tamil state is not in India's
perceived interests. Sri Lanka's territorial integrity,
political independence and non-alignment are absolutely
essential for a stable and peaceful subcontinent.

President Jayewardene and his close advisers know
well that an interventionist option is out for India.
That's why they can conveniently accuse India of harbour-
ing interventionist motives and get away with it.
Jayewardene even branded a phoney counter-threat recently
that the exercise of any military option by India would
automatically result in the elimination of Tamils living
in Sinhala areas.

There are not many viable economic options either
for India to work upon. Our bilateral economic relations
with Sri Lanka are not such that President Jayewardene
would be persuaded to take Indian suggestions seriously.
The use of economic diplomacy in the ethnic issue by
India can even invite reprisals on considerable Indian
investment in the island. At the international level, the
solid western support is a powerful deterrent against even
the human rights issue to be raised in the United Nations

Commission. The Sri Lankan case can not be compared with Afghanistan or Kampuchea type of a take-over by Indian initiative. Again, the Bangladesh issue was markedly different and India has very little option in the present context. Though the Tamils have often been tempted to invite the Indian intervention in the island-republic, practically it is not that easy as it seems to be.

In view of these adverse realities, use of strong words alone would do no good for India, if it's not prepared to take follow-up action. There's an urgent need for the Indian government to evolve an effective consensus on Sri Lankan policy which sadly stands scattered and eroded due to conflecting perceptions and competing personalities. India should move fast to restore its credibility with Tamil groups and other Sri Lanka political parties like SLFP in the search ofor a solution to the ethnic problem. And unless some effective option is in sight, let us disengage outselves from any peace move which has been turned into a force by the Jayewardene Government.

This would at least liberate us from the position of being an unwilling and unwitting agent of Sinhala chauvinism against the Tamil militant groups. India's declared disengagement from the peace moves would also be an unambiguous voice of evidence for the international

community which can decide for itself whether it wants to
continue to support the Jayewardene Government in the face
of internal ethnic war. If not, let President Jayewardene
use his rich political experience to create a camouflage
of political settlements to cover his state terrorism to
ease the conscience of its western mentors and their
allies.

CONCLUSION

In the present international system, states are excedingly dissimilar as objects of security. Because of the diversity of states, the nature of security as a problem necessarily differs from state to state. All states are to some degree vulnerable to military and economic threats and many also suffer from a fundamental, political insecurity. The different components of the state appear vulnerable to different kinds of threat which makes the security problem in many dimensions rather just a matter of military defence. The multi-layered nature of the state opens it to threats on many levels, particular vulnerabilities depending on the unique structure and circumstances of the state concerned. In this context, the security problem of microstates assumes much importance for the states' high level of concern with domestically generated threats to the security of the state in a broader geo-political dimension. In the contemporary world, all the states are in search of military build-up and strategic advantages to strengthen their power and security in international sphere. Hence, the microstates' concern for security has been much more from the fear of being dominated, attack or annihilated by states or groups. So, the microstates, weak in political and military strength, are wary of their independence and security in a world dominated by greater powers.

As it is discussed in the previous chapters, the security problem of microstates like Sri Lanka has a host of domestic and external factors which determine the magnitude and degree of the threats to the security of a small state. There is no doubt that cooperation on both the internal and international level is the sine quanon of security in a system dominated by nation states. While the internal setting or the domestic socio-political milieu determines the states' stability,its external setting influences the security and foreign policies of a microstate like Sri Lanka. Primarily, it is the internal setting in the process of nation-building in a microstate, which accounts for the problem of national security in socio-political perspective.

It is the internal cohesion and cooperation within the society which form the basis of national security in a microstate, determined by the varied socio-political factors in society. In case of Sri Lanka, the security problem arises out of inter-state conflict of nationalities which affects the overall stability of the state. The conflict in broader racial-ethnic terms, is sharpened to regional dimensions for the impending external factors within the society. So, the Sri Lankan

security perception can be viewed on the lines of
racial-ethnic divisions which beget the majority-
minority conflict in the society, weakening the
fundamental structure of the state. In this context,
the internal conflict among the Sinhalas and Tamils
in Sri Lankan Society and its spill-over effect of
the ethnic problem correspond to the Indian factor
in the Sri Lankan politics, which holds the key to its
security question.

Sri Lankan case study provides the fact that
its domestic socio-economic framework plays an important
role in determining the nature and magnitude of its
security problem. As it is discussed in the preceding
chapters, the regional and international framework of
Sri Lanka, have an important role to play in the context
of security and stability in the region. For Sri Lanka,
the security problem can be viewed in its policy perspective
in matters of military and defence which determine the
security of the small island. Since independence, the
security problem has become a continuous one for which
the country has entered into defence agreements and
military alliances with foreign governments. In recent
times, the Sri Lankan foreign policies have manifested
itspro-western line which has resulted in concern and

and apprehension for the nighbouring countries, especially India. For its lack of manpower and resources, the weak defence of Sri Lanka and its small security forces, help determine the security problem. But it is the weakening of the internal socio-political structure, in the conflict of nationalities within society; the security problem can be viewed in the serious internal problem where the Sinhalas and Tamils are locked in a serious conflict.

For Sri Lanka, it is the Tamil problem which poses a serious threat to its security in matters of socio-political and cultural unity in the society. In the present ethnic crisis, it is seen that the Sri Lanka government has followed aggressive policies against the Tamils who are demanding for more autonomy and more powers in the society. But, the government backed by the majority Sinhalas has carried out a compaign to alienate the Tamils from the national mainstream. In this context, the government policies in socio-economic and cultural matters espouse the Sinhala chauvinism which has intensified the group divisions in society. The Tamils on the other hand, being alienated and deprived in society, have taken to political violence to claim their rights and privileges in society. So, the mutual distrust and antagonism among the Sinhalas and Tamils, have percolated into

serious divisions in society, which has resulted in
the minority Tamil demand for separatism and self-
determination in Sri Lankan society.

These fissiparous tendencies within the state,
are due to the lack of common consensus on basic
socio-economic and political issues in the society,
which undermines the security and stability of the
state. The Tamil problem has become serious with the
Tamils demanding for a separate state and the
gov ernment inturn has unleashed its military force
and terror on the minority tamils. The Tamil militants
have taken to warpath and escalated violence in resp-
onse to the attack, the Sri Lankan government has unleashed
in its drive against the Tamil militants. To curve the
violence and attacks of the Tamil militants, the
government has asked foreigh military powers to help it
solve the ethnic problem through the use of force and
terror.

Separatism has an ugly face and even the Tamil
extremists are aware of this. The government of Sri Lanka
will never concede the demand for a separate state. The
only way in which it can be achieved is by an armed
struggle and it is doubtful whether even the extremists
are prepared to pay such a heavy price. They do possess

arms and the source from which they get arms are also known.
The encouragement and support which they get from the Tamils
in Tamilnadu have deepened the Sri Lanka crisis. India's
efforts to bring about an amicable settlement of the
ethnic conflict have been misunderstood in Colombo mainly
because of the Tamilnadu politicians' overenthusiasm to
help the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Colombo is unhappy because
it has proof that terrorists are being trained in Tamilnadu.
It is not difficult to send arms from Tamilnadu. It is not
difficult to send arms from Tamilnadu to terrorists in
Sri Lanka.

The Jayewardene Government has sought western
military help from countries like United Kingdom, Israel,
South Africa, China, and above all U.S.A., to crush the
Tamil militants in the ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka. It
has stockpiled arms and ammunition from the western
countries and has started a massive compaign against the
Tamils. As it is reported, the presence of British
Intellengence Group, SAS and the Israeli Intelligence,
Mossad in the island has marked the government's terrorist
policies towards the Tamils. It has formulated the
programme of 'colonisation' for the northern and eastern
provinces where the government wants to settle armed
Sinhalas to outnumber the Tamils in those areas. In this
operation, it has carried out extensive army operations in

Jaffna peninsula, by aerial bombings, strafing and shooting from the naval gunboats.

On the other hand, the Tamil militants have raised a guerilla warfare against the government which has broken the security system and law and order situation in northern areas of Sri Lanka. The Tamils have repulsed the attacks by the Sri Lankan security forces and have carried out extensive attacks, jail breaks and terrorist violence in northern and eastern provinces. They have carried out massacre of Sinhalas in retaliation to Government attacks on civilian Tamils. Though the Tamil militants are divided into many groups and organisations, they are all against the Sri Lankan government in the military conflict in north.

To examine the Indian stand on Sri Lankan problem, Indian Government has rightly voiced its concern and anguish over the ethnic crisis in Sri Lanka. It has called for a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem, in the basic framework of the Sri Lankan constitution. India feels that political instability in Sri Lanka could lead to outside interference and military presence in the region which has necessary implications for India's security and stability in the region. So, India has vociferously supported the cause for a united and stable Sri Lanka. It does not support the Tamil idea of a separate state and it has maintained

its position for a political solution to the ethnic
problem. The Indian Government has offered its good
offices in mediating between the Tamils and Government
of Sri Lanka, to find out ways and means to solve the
ethnic problem within the Sri Lankan perspective.

To examine the Tamil demand for regional autonomy
in Northern and Eastern provinces, which is the crux of
the problem, it should be studied carefully in the light of
the political developments in the recent past. In this
context, the policy of 'colonisation' of Tamil areas by
Sinhala peasants, has been a focal point in the ethnic
tension in Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese call it a simple
policy of distribution of land and land settlement while
the Tamils smell a conspiracy in it to swamp their
homeland with Sinhala settlers and to reduce their position
ultimately into that of a 'minority' in their own homeland.

The edge of Tamil problems regarding language,
university admissions, employment and colonisation could
have been blunted if successive governments in Colombo
had genuinely worked for the devolution of power granting
certain rights to the Tamils in their areas. The journey
from B-C Pact of 1957 to the idea of district development
councils of the 1980s, has seen many broken promises,
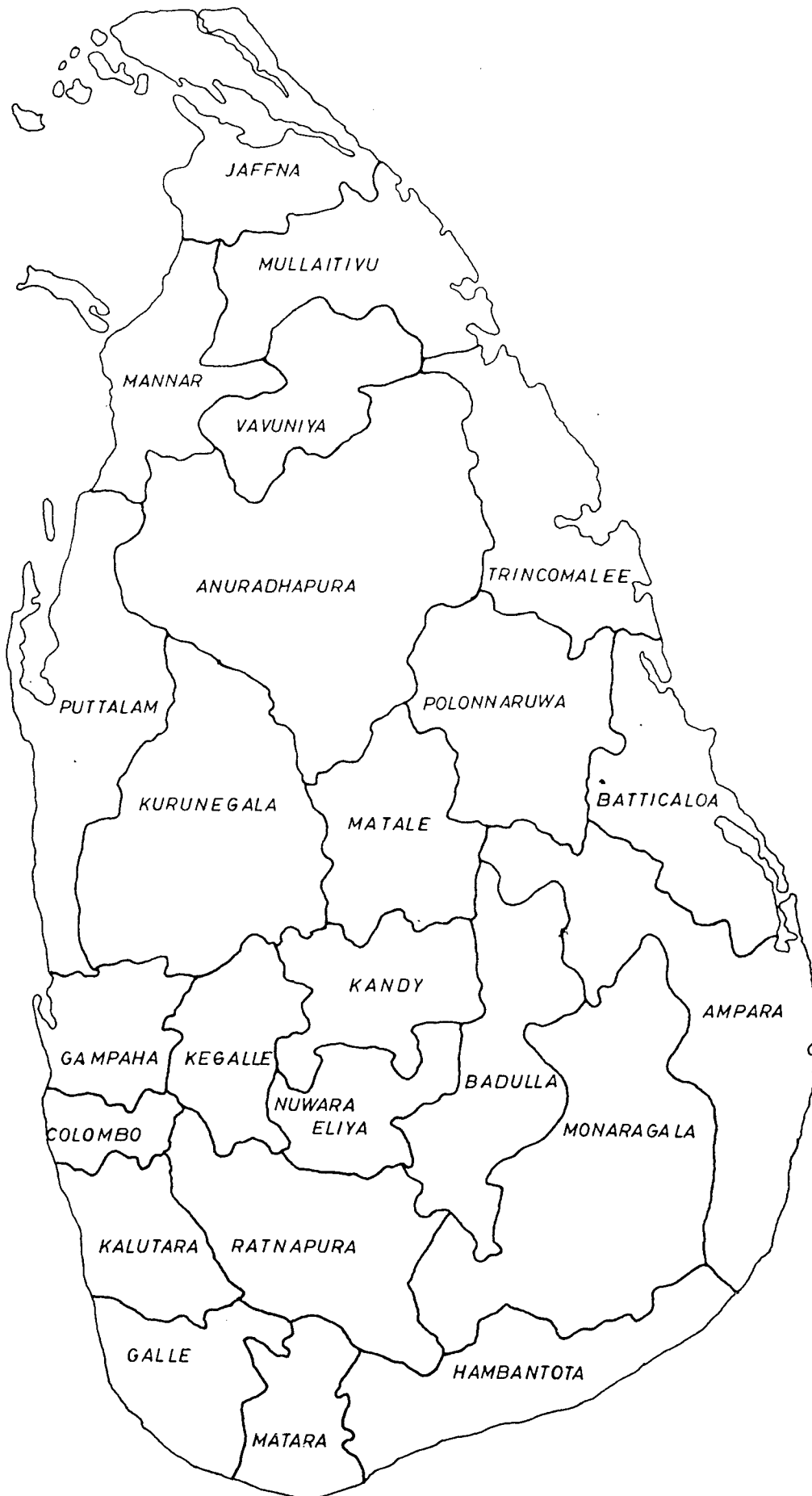constitutional deceptions and racial ethnic shauvinism and

political expediency. The DDC Act itself was an exercise
in deception. The structure, powers and functions of the
DDCs and their financial viability were framed in such a
way that decentralisation turned out to be a mere facade.
The DDCs have been exclusively in the hands of the President.
After the failure of inadequacy of the DDCs as a means of
devolving power was realised even by the Jayewardene
Government, which has come up with the proposal for a second
chamber in the interest of minorities in devolution of power.
But, the proposal for a second chamber is very vague for the
confusion of powers exists with different set-up. The
government has come up with new proposal in changing times,
after the failure of Thimpu Talks. Lately it has proposed
for the establishment of autonomous areas on the lines of
Indian union territories with devolution of power from the
centre. But the Tamils have not agreed to any kind of
these proposals for the reason that it lacks the basic aims
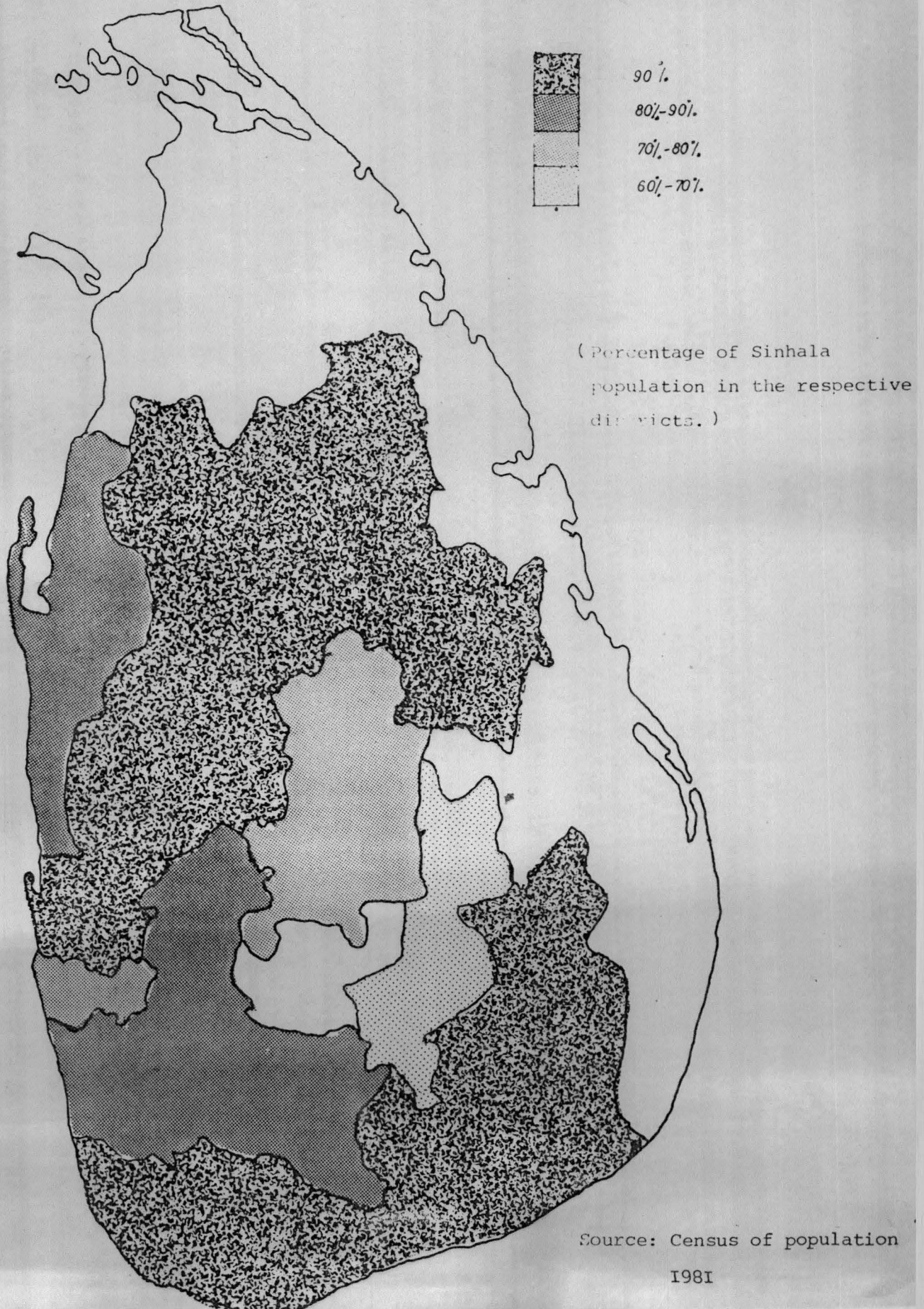and objectives of the Tamil community.

The recent Sri Lankan foreign policy postures
directly impinges upon the security environment of South Asia
in general and India in particular. The revival of the
Defence agreement of 1947 with Great Britain, the Trincomalee
Tank Farm, Deal, an agreement to expand the scope of Voice of
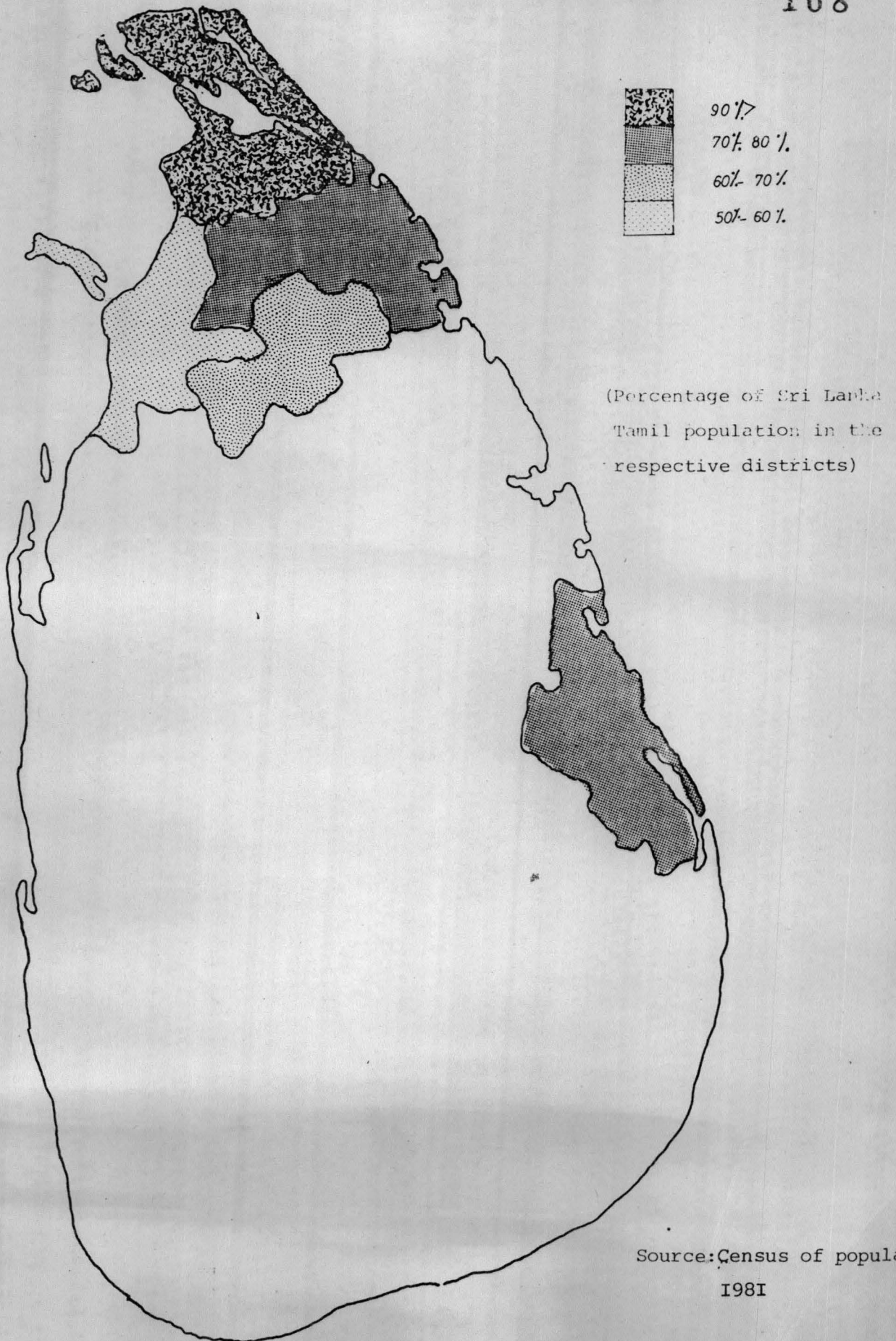America (VOA) in Sri Lanka, collaboration with the Mossad and

the SAS and galloping defence expenditure are some of
the major steps and trends which have been creating
disharmony between the Indian and Sri Lankan perspectives
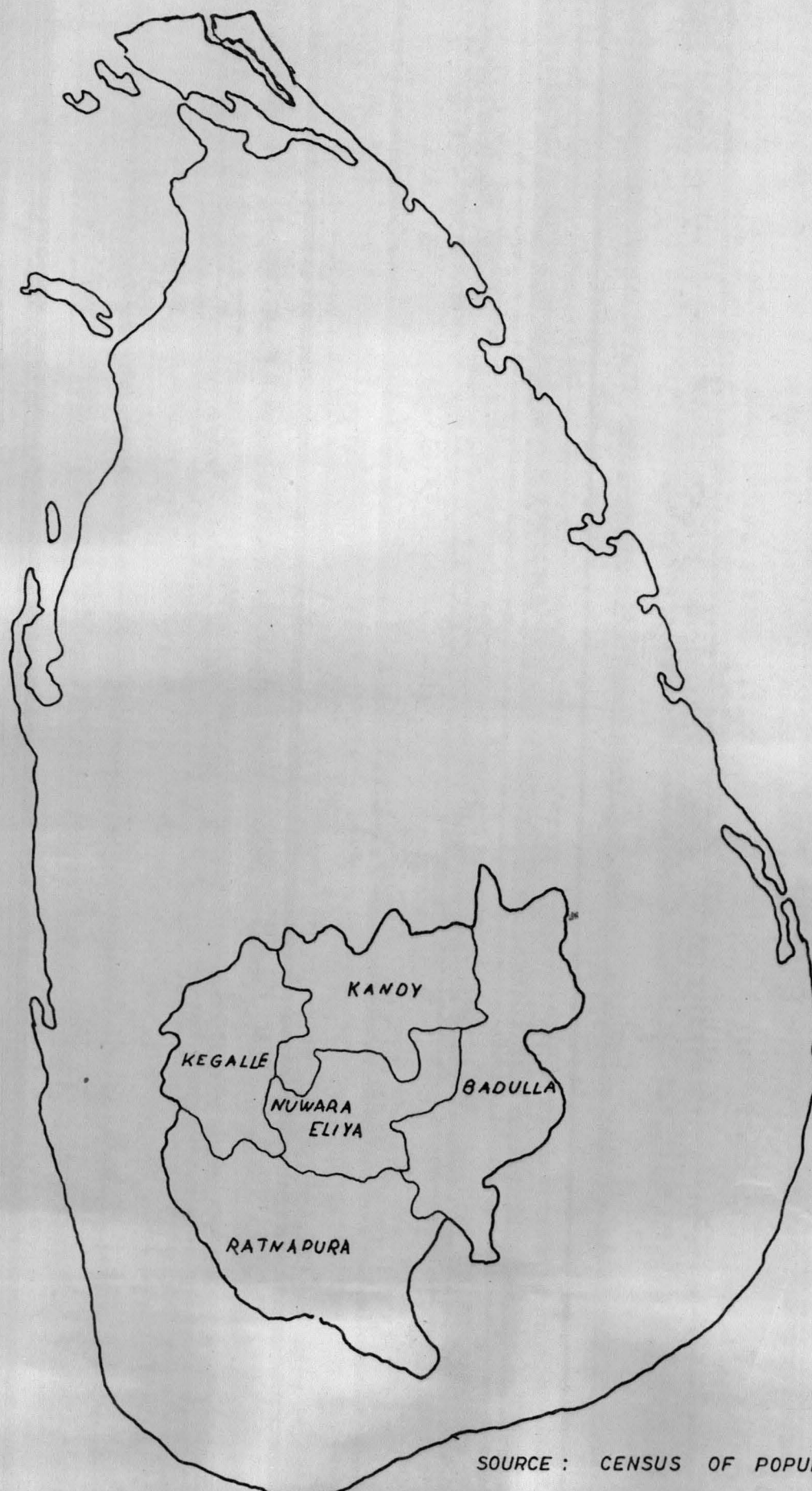on the security of the South Asia.

The security problem of Sri Lanka which is viewed
in the context of national unity and stability, depends on
the mutual cooperation and participation among the
Sinhalas and Tamils. The Government should take a
realistic view of the problem associated with the Tamil
separatism which threatens the security and stability of
the island. So, the government should take resort to a
political solution to the ethnic question, giving a fair
deal to the Tamils. Thus, the security problem in Sri Lanka
depends on the internal unity and stability which has larger
geo-political dimensions.

APPENDICES

JAFFNA

MULLAITIVU

MANNAR

VAVUNIYA

ANURADHAPURA

TRINCOMALEE

PUTTALAM

POLONNARUWA

KURUNEGALA

MATALE

BATTICALOA

KANDY

AMPARA

GAMPAHA

KEGALLE

BADULLA

NUWARA
ELIYA

COLOMBO

MONARAGALA

KALUTARA

RATNAPURA

GALLE

HAMBANTOTA

MATARA

90 %.

80% - 90%.

70% - 80%.

60% - 70%.

(Percentage of Sinhala
population in the respective
districts.)

Source: Census of population

1981

90 % >
70 % 80 %.
60 % 70 %
50 % 60 %.

(Percentage of Sri Lanka
Tamil population in the
respective districts)

Source: Census of population,
1981

KANDY

KEGALLE

NUWARA
ELIYA

BADULLA

RATNAPURA

SOURCE :   CENSUS   OF   POPULATION   1981

2000	>	
900	2000	
500	600	
400	500	
300	400	
200	300	
200	100	
< 100		

Source: Census of population = 1981

89 >
85 - 89
80 - 84
75 - 79
70 - 44

MEDIAN INCOME LEVELS 1978/79

(in rupees for one month)

☐	Less than Rs. 350.
▨	351 499
▧	500 >

ZONE III

ZONE II

ZONE IV

ZONE V

ZONE I
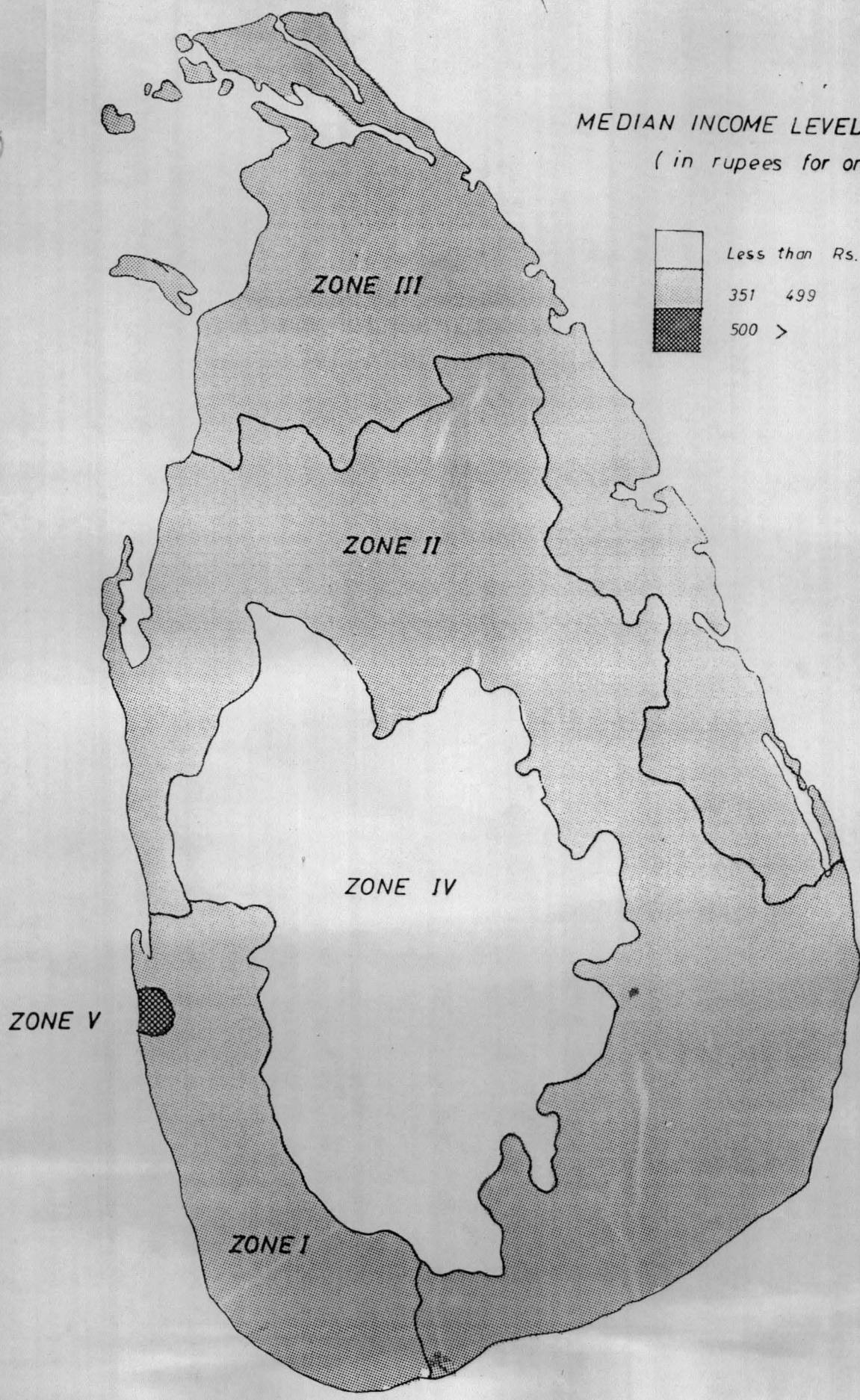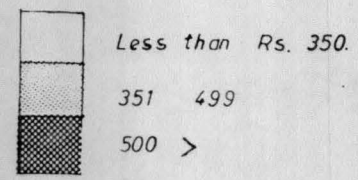
Source: Consumer Finance Survey,
1978/79.

174

MEDIAN INCOME LEVELS 1981/1982

(in rupees for one month)

Less than 500

500 - 700

700 - 900

900 >
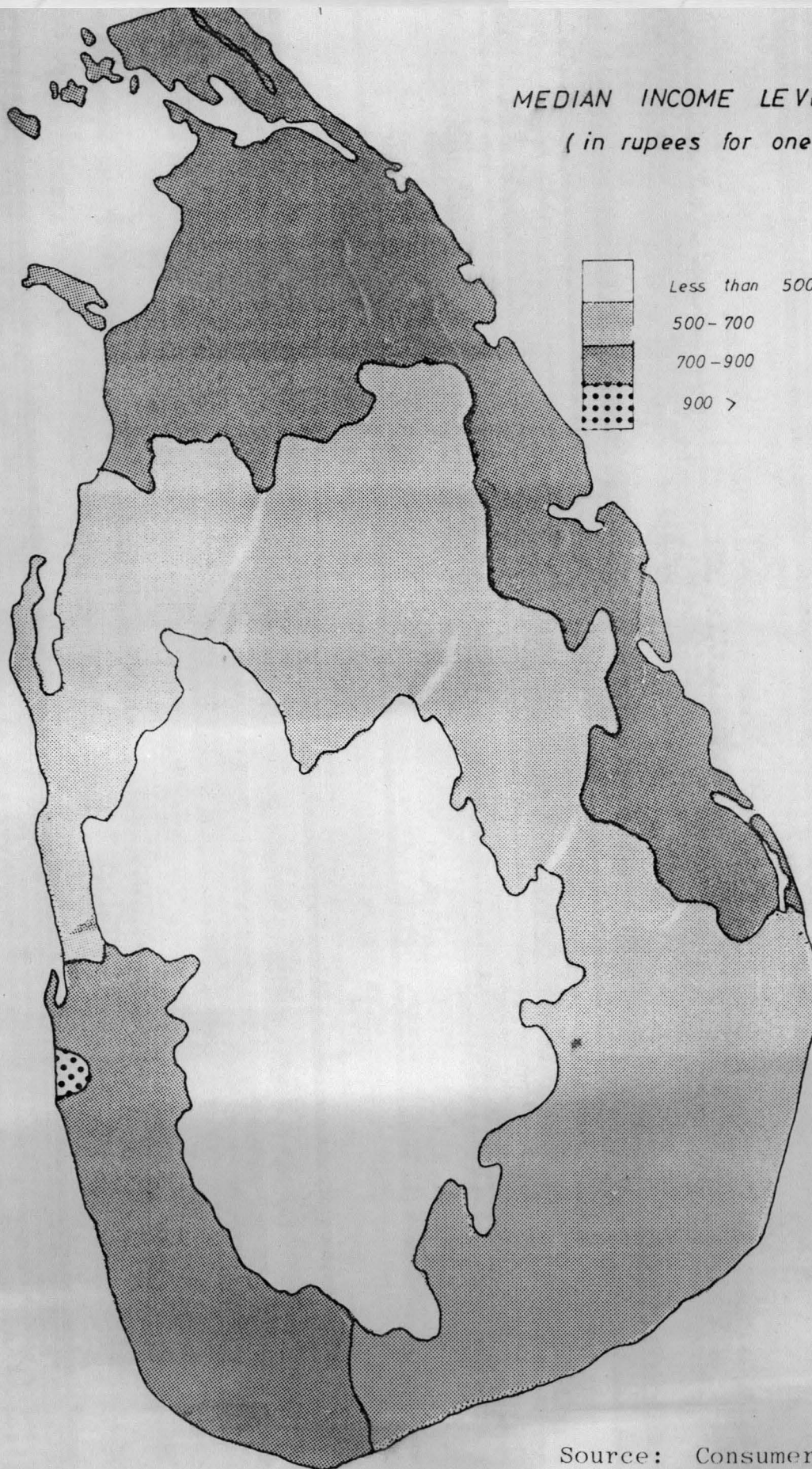
Source: Consumer Finance
Survey, 1981/82.

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<u>Times</u> (London)