

**ROLE OF THE INDIAN PEACE KEEPING FORCE
IN SRI LANKA**

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IN SRI LANKA**

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C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled "Role of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka" submitted by Ms. Mukta Chauhan in fulfilment of 9 credits out of total requirement of 24 credits for the award of the Degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil) of the University is her original work according to the best of my knowledge and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation. This dissertation has not been submitted for award of any other degree of this university or of any other university.


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P R E F A C E

The anti-Tamil riots in Sri Lanka in July - August 1983 marked a turning point in Indo - Sri Lankan relations. Before 1983 India viewed the ethnic problem as an internal matter of Sri Lanka and desisted from interfering in it. In 1983 with the involvement of external powers in the conflict by way of providing assistance to the Sri Lankan President to curb the growing violence in the country and the heightening of the conflict leading to a civil war resulted in a large influx of refugees in Tamil Nadu. This also led to arousal of the sympathy of the Tamils in India for the Sri Lankan Tamils. The emergence of these events compelled India to take stock of the situation and provide assistance to the Sri Lankan President to solve the problem. India offered to mediate between the warring groups which finally resulted in the signing of the July 29, 1987, India - Sri Lanka Agreement. It provided for the invitation of an Indian Peacekeeping Force by the Sri Lankan President to implement the agreement.

At the invitation of President Jayewardene the Indian government sent the Indian Peacekeeping Force to Sri Lanka. The Indian Peacekeeping operation was not based on clearly defined functions. With changing circumstances the role of the peacekeepers also

underwent change. So far no full-length study has been conducted specifically on the role of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka. In this context, the proposed dissertation is an attempt to deal with this aspect of the Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

The present cannot be understood without reference to the past. Similarly, the role of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka cannot be understood without understanding the development of ethnic strife in Sri Lanka and Indo - Sri Lankan relations since the independence of both countries. Keeping this in mind, the second and third chapters are devoted to ethnic strife in Sri Lanka and Indo - Sri Lankan relations respectively.

The study is divided into six chapters. The introductory first chapter gives a bird's eye view of Sri Lanka - its geographic location, population and ethnic relationship, the involvement of India and also the role of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka.

The second chapter deals with ethnic strife in Sri Lanka. It traces the historical background of the problem and provides an outline of the relations between the Tamils and successive Sinhala - dominated governments.

The third chapter embraces an account of Indo - Sri Lankan relations and analyses the circumstances which ultimately led to the signing of the Indo - Sri Lanka Agreement.

The fourth Chapter deals with the role of the Indian Peacekeeping Force in Sri Lanka, which actually forms the central theme of the study. The functions performed by the Peacekeeping Force have been grouped into three categories, namely, military, political and civil. Each of these functions is examined in detail.

The fifth chapter identifies certain conditions which are essential for a peacekeeping operation to be successful. The role of the Indian Peacekeeping Force is analysed with reference to these conditions. Due to the absence of these conditions the Peacekeeping mission ended in a failure.

The concluding sixth chapter assesses the changing role of the Peacekeeping Force and identifies the reasons for this change.

Till 1972 Sri Lanka was officially designated as Ceylon. In the present work the word Sri Lanka has been used throughout to maintain consistency.

In the completion of this work, I am indebted to many. First and foremost, I express my profound sense of

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C H A P T E R - I

INTRODUCTION

In 1983 India became a concerned party to the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka. In order to help Sri Lanka find a politically negotiated settlement, India offered to mediate between the Sri Lankan government and the various Tamil groups. India tried her best to bring the two parties to the ethnic conflict together, narrow the communication gap and to make them negotiate a political settlement. India played this role of a mediator with the offer of good offices for nearly three years. This role, however, changed in 1987 with the signing of the India - Sri Lanka Agreement on July 29, 1987. India's role changed from a promoter to party to the settlement. India was directly involved in the conflict when the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) was sent at the invitation of the President of Sri Lanka.

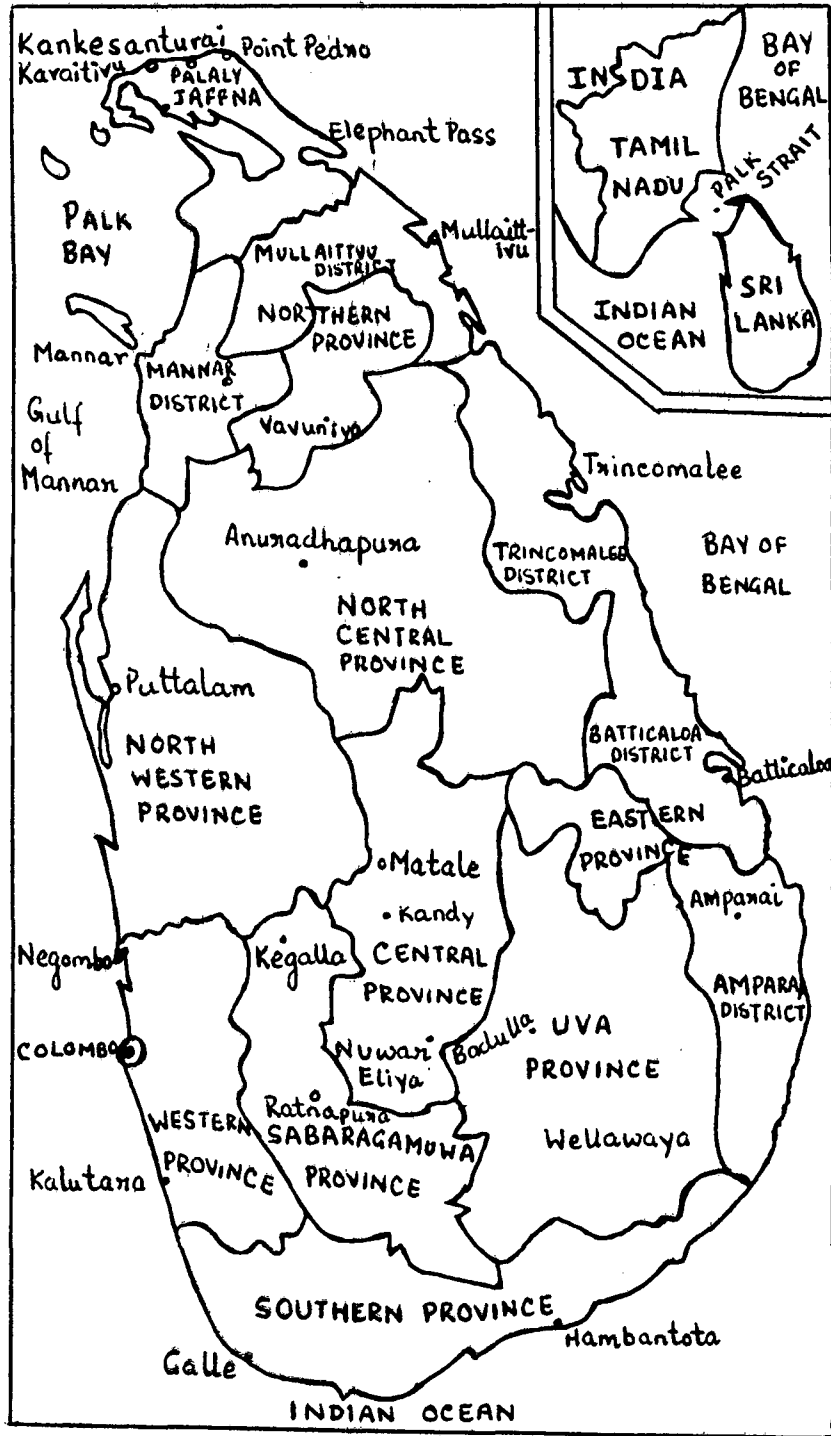
The island of Sri Lanka is situated in the Indian Ocean, south east of India, and between the latitude $5^{\circ} 55'$ to $9^{\circ} 50'$ North and longitude $79^{\circ} 41'$ to $81^{\circ} 53'$ East. It has a land area of 65,608 square kilometers. From north to south the Island has a maximum length of 432 Kilometers and at its widest point it measures 224 kilometers.

Sharing the same continental shelf as India, it is a mere 48 kilometers from the sub-continent to Sri Lanka's northernmost extremity, Point Pedro, in the Jaffna peninsula. It is separated from the Indian sub-continent by a strip of shallow water of Palk Strait. Sri Lanka is strategically placed to the south of India and given its geographic location it has a great deal of relevance to India's security environment. (see Map-1 inset)

Sri Lanka is a plural society. The two major ethnic groups are the Sinhalese and the Tamils. The Sinhalese as a majority group constitute nearly 74 per cent (1981 census figures) of the total population. The Tamils form the most important ethnic minority group, constituting approximately 12.6 per cent (1981 census figures) of the total population. Religion-wise Buddhists comprise 69.3 per cent, Hindus 15.5 per cent, Muslims 7.6 per cent, Roman Catholics 6.9 per cent and others 0.7 per cent of the population. Broadly speaking the mother tongue of the Buddhists is Sinhala whilst that of the Hindus and Muslims is Tamil, with Christians being found in both linguistic groups.

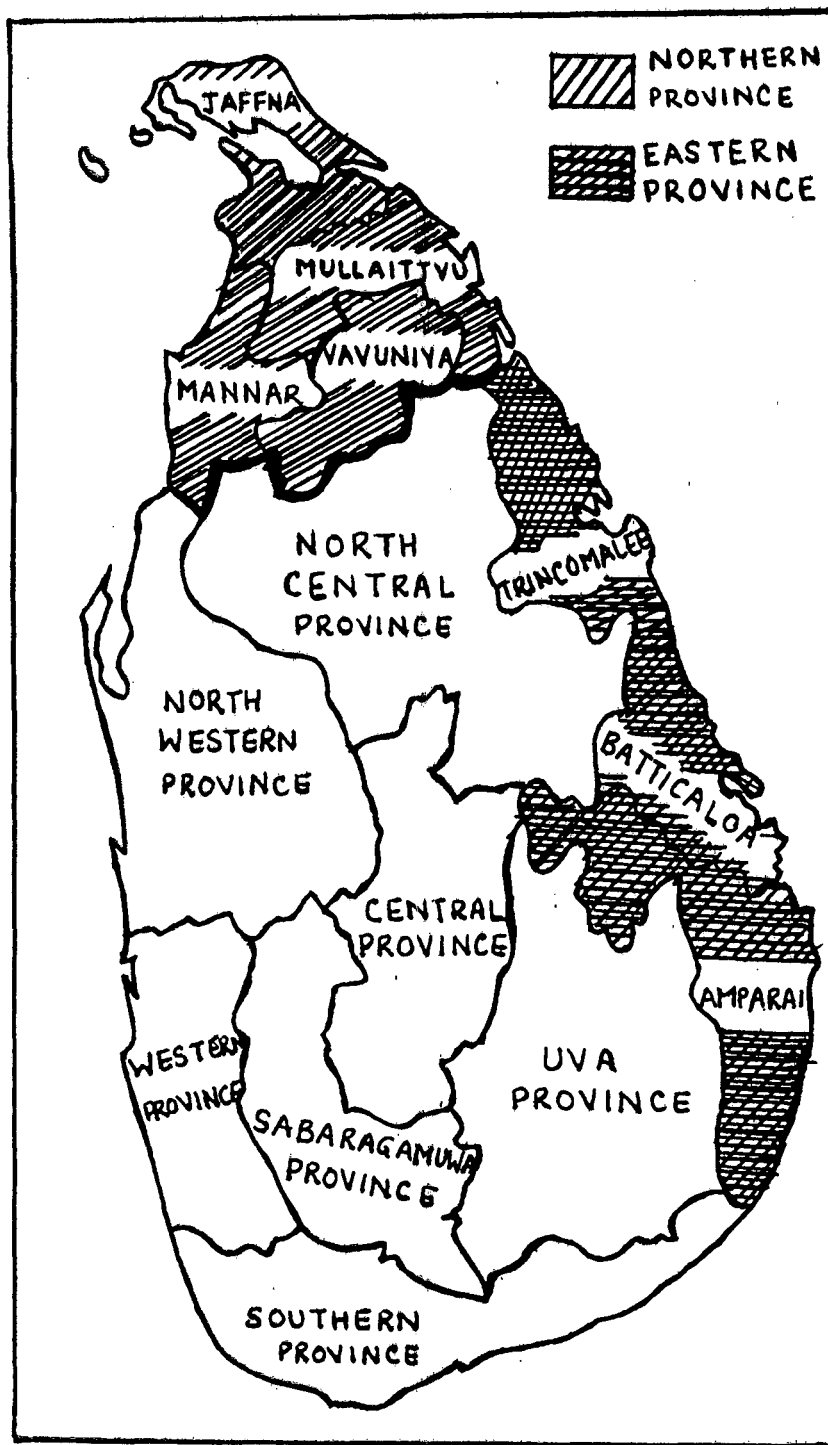
The island is divided into nine provinces. The Tamils historically have been concentrated in the Northern and Eastern provinces, which they consider to be their homeland while the Sinhalese have lived in the other seven provinces (See Map-2). There is a concentration

MAP OF SRI LANKA



MAP-1

MAP OF SRI LANKA SHOWING THE
NORTHERN AND EASTERN PROVINCES



MAP-2

of Tamils of recent origin in the hill country districts.

Sri Lanka was ruled by three Western colonial powers in succession the Portuguese (1505-1656) the Dutch (1656 - 1802) and the British (1802 - 1948). The country attained independence in 1948.

Conflicts between the various linguistic and religious groups have occurred from time to time since 1948. For instance in 1961, there was a potentially dangerous confrontation between the Buddhists (majority being Sinhala) and the Roman Catholics in relation to the take over of schools. In the 1970s in certain urban areas there were sporadic outbursts of violence between the Moors (Muslims) and the Sinhalese. However, by and large these conflicts have been transitory and have not gravely affected the relations between them¹. The exception is the Sinhalese - Tamil rift in Sri Lanka. Over the years this rift has grown and today threatens to tear the island country apart.

The Tamils who constitute the minority have been seeking a reasonable share of political power and economic opportunities within the Sri Lankan State.

1. C. Richard de Silva, **Sri Lanka: A History** (Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1987) p.235.

The Sinhalese political leaders responded to these demands by

(a) politically marginalising the Tamils through the enactment of discriminatory legislations, which diminished their political and economic power, and,

(b) physically marginalising the Tamils by unleashing pogroms, which resulted in a gradual displacement of Tamils in many parts of the island. Large numbers of Tamils were forced either to flee to the northern and eastern provinces or to foreign countries².

The starting point of this marginalisation was the enactment of the 'Official Languages Act' in 1956. Popularly known as the 'Sinhala Only Act'. The Act established Sinhala as the sole official language of the country. In effect, this legislation reduced the Tamils to the status of second class citizens. The 'official Language Act' was followed by a series of discriminatory legislations which politically further marginalised the Tamils³.

2. Indo Sri-Lanka Agreement 1987: An Emerging Consensus (A ProTEG Publication, Syndicate Printers, Madras, 1988) pp.1-2.

3. Ibid pp. 2-3.

Efforts were made to chalk out reasonable solutions to the problems of the Tamils. The Bandaranaike - Chelvanayakam Pact (1957) and the Dudley-Chelvanayakam Pact (1965) were concluded between the Tamil leaders and the Sri Lankan government to meet the demands of the Tamils. But these agreements failed to solve the problem because successive Sinhala leaders went back on the promises given to the Tamil leaders. In fact, pacts and agreements were abrogated with impunity.

When all the attempts made by the Tamil leaders to evolve a political compromise with the Sinhalese leaders through a negotiations failed in the mid 1970s, the Tamil leadership raised the demand for the creation of a separate Tamil State - an Eelam - composed of the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. There was loss of faith in the ability of the established institutions and Sinhala leadership to fulfill even some of the genuine demands and aspirations of the Tamil youth. This impelled the more radical Tamil youth, which came to displace the old leadership, to invoke armed resistance against the Sinhalese dominated Sri Lankan State as the only means of carving out a separate State and securing the legitimate rights of the Tamils. This gave rise to a protracted guerrilla war which began in the late 1970s. Agitated over the imposition of an alien language, frustrated on being deprived of higher education, plunged into despair of

an unemployed existence, the Tamil youth grew militant with an iron determination to fight back the national oppression. Mob-violence, terrorism and guerrilla activities became a common feature of Sri Lankan life.

As violence in Sri Lanka increased and the Tamil militant groups became more active, the Sri Lankan government was unable to control the situation and so the President sought assistance from abroad - the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, China and Pakistan. Furthermore, the Sinhalese chauvinist elements resorted to killing, looting and burning of the Tamils and their property. A large number of Tamils had to flee to the northern and eastern provinces and some sought refuge in Tamil Nadu. Moreover, the government also simultaneously intensified its military operations.

This was the prelude for the emergence of the India factor in the domestic Sri Lankan ethnic strife. Initially, the Indian government had watched with cautious concern the inability of the Sri Lankan government to find a negotiated settlement to the Tamil Question. But the events which occurred in 1983 were such that the government of India could no longer remain a passive spectator to the policies pursued by the Sri Lankan government. The involvement of outside powers - including the United States, Britain, Israel, Pakistan and China - was viewed with suspicion by the

Indian government as it was against its security interests. Furthermore, the genocidal policies pursued by the Sri Lankan government had their repercussions in Tamil Nadu. People of the state demanded that the Indian government should intervene militarily in Sri Lanka as it had done in the case of erstwhile East Pakistan in 1971. However, the Indian government was not in favour of it and made efforts to prevail upon the Sri Lankan government not to seek a military solution but to secure a politically negotiated settlement.

The then Prime Minister of India Indira Gandhi took the initiative. She got in touch with the then President Jayewardene and offered her good offices to help the Sri Lankan government find a negotiated settlement to the Tamil Question.

To resolve the Tamil question several moves were made but none seemed to have worked. Among them were : G Parthasarathy's 'Annexure C', Harry Jayewardene's visits to Delhi, the talks at Thimpu, the shuttle diplomacy resorted to by the then Foreign Secretary Romesh Bhandari, and the missions led by Natwar Singh and P. Chidambaram. All these attempts at finding a solution to the ethnic problem proved abortive. The reason for the failure was the rigid stance adopted by the Sri Lankan government as well as the Tamil

militants, particularly the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE).

India's attitude towards ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka underwent a change when Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India. In June 1985 a summit meeting was held between President Jayewardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. The two leaders agreed to take immediate actions to diffuse the situation and to attempt a political solution acceptable to all concerned and within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and integrity. It was also agreed that 'all forms of violence should abate and finally cease'⁴.

As a result of these talks India began getting tough with the Tamil militants. Rajiv Gandhi initiated steps to ensure that Indian territory would not be used by the militants. Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan government went ahead with its military offensive against the Tamil insurgents. In December 1986, when the LTTE announced its decision to set up a parallel government on 'New Year's Day', the Sri Lankan government seized the opportunity and used this as an excuse to mount a major military offensive against the LTTE. The Sri Lankan forces succeeded in establishing their hold over the eastern province and an attack was launched on the Jaffna peninsula. The government imposed an economic

4. Times Of India, 5 June, 1985.

blockade in early 1987 denying the people of Jaffna food and fuel. This caused a great deal of hardship to the civilians. There was a public outcry in Tamil Nadu against this blockade and appeals were made to the Indian government to intervene.

The situation in Sri Lanka was worsening day by day. The scenario was grim enough for the Indian government to have another look at the crisis and take steps to resolve it in order to prevent the country from tearing itself apart. India was against the splitting of the island into two - a Sinhala Sri Lanka and a Tamil Eelam. It was aware of the impact an Eelam could have across the Palk Strait in Tamil Nadu which had experienced a separatist movement in the fifties and sixties. Besides a break-up of the country would pose strategic problems for India as military bases and facilities could be offered to foreign powers, an eventuality which Indian government and defence policy planners never relished.

On the one hand, with the fear of Tamil separatist tendencies sweeping the State of Tamil Nadu looming large over the horizon, it was in the national interest of India to have this problem resolved. On the other hand, India had to evict outside powers from Sri Lanka and thus bring security to India from the South and the

Indian Ocean. India had to achieve its objective by normalising Indo-Sri Lanka relations and bringing peace to the country and prevent its division into smaller units.

When the Sri Lankan Forces launched a final assault on Jaffna peninsula, the Indian government acted promptly in order to prevent the total rout of the Tamil guerrillas. India's military involvement in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka began by a symbolic air dropping of relief supplies to the Jaffna peninsula flouting Sri Lankan air space. The intervention was to show that India could come to the rescue of the Tamils militarily in case the Sri Lankan government continued with its military offensive against the guerillas.

President Jayewardene seemed to have taken note of the implications of the air dropping of supplies and considered it more prudent to come to an understanding with India partly because of his apprehensions of a coup against his government and partly because of the unwillingness of the other powers specially the US to get involved in Sri Lanka's ethnic strife.

This was the background to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement which Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene signed in Colombo on July 29, 1987. Under the terms of the agreement India agreed to send a Peacekeeping Force on the invitation of the Sri Lankan President to secure arms surrender

from the militants and ensure that they participated in the political processes envisaged by the agreement and to resolve the ethnic conflict. In effect, the role of the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) was to be what its name suggests - a force to keep the peace.

The IPKF was sent to Sri Lanka on 30th July, 1987, to deliver the military component of the agreement. There was to be a cessation of hostilities within forty - eight hours of the signing of the agreement, to be followed by the surrender of arms by the various Tamil militant groups and the confining of the Sri Lankan forces to the barracks within seventy - two hours.

The immediate aftermath of the Agreement did not seem conducive to the termination of the conflict between the various Tamil militant groups and the Sri Lankan forces and the Tamil militants. As the Agreement had been worked out without Tamil participation and a Sinhala consensus, the result was that it had no real effect on the conflict. On the one hand, the Agreement generated a Sinhalese Buddhist backlash and on the other the Tamil militants, specially the LTTE, refused to go beyond a formal surrender of arms. Thus, the IPKF was unable to perform the task assigned to it. In fact, the force itself came under the attack of the LTTE and then it immediately initiated military action

against the LTTE. When it launched an attack on Jaffna peninsula the peacekeeping force was transformed to a force to combat the LTTE.

On November 19, 1988, elections to the North Eastern Provincial Council were held under the supervision of the IPKF. The LTTE did not participate in the elections and criticised the IPKF for holding them. It claimed that elections were being thrust upon the people by the IPKF. It threatened to disrupt the elections but was unable to do so because of the good arrangements made by the IPKF for polling in peaceful conditions.

In December 1988 presidential elections were held in Sri Lanka, Premadasa, a United National Party candidate, made IPKF one of the major issues in his presidential election campaign. When he assumed power after winning the election, he categorically asked the Indian government to withdraw the IPKF. But the Indian government refused to oblige on the pretext that the Sri Lankan government had failed to devolve powers to the Northern and Eastern provinces.

There was a change of government in New Delhi in 1989. V.P. Singh, who had questioned the wisdom of Rajiv Gandhi to commit Indian troops to solve another country's ethnic problem headed the new government. In keeping with its policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka, the V.P. Singh

government decided to withdraw the IPKF, and this was completed in March 1990.

India's role in helping the Sri Lankan President find a political solution to the ethnic problem by signing the India - Sri Lanka Agreement and the induction of the IPKF to guarantee and underwrite the agreement and cooperate in its implementation marked a turning point in Indo-Sri Lankan relations. The agreement formed the basis for ending hostilities between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. There was hope that the agreement if successfully implemented, would ultimately lead to peace and settlement of the ethnic conflict.

The IPKF was to play a major role in restoring peace to the island. The tasks assigned to the IPKF were perceived to be simple and it was hoped that it would be able to perform them within a short period of time. In their over-enthusiasm to seek a political solution to the ethnic conflict, the two leaders did not take into consideration certain conditions which are necessary for a successful peacekeeping operation. The absence of these conditions cast a shadow over the smooth functioning of the IPKF. The operational instructions issued to the IPKF were vague merely directing the forces to implement the agreement which was interpreted in simple terms. It meant that fighting between the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) and

the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was to be stopped. They had to accept surrender of arms by the Tamil militants and thus ensure that they participated in the political process. However, actual events proved that the tasks assigned to the IPKF were not simple. Because of lack of proper planning and instructions the mission soon ran into problems on the ground. After almost three years the Indian forces were withdrawn from the island not after restoring peace to the island but further aggravating the conflict.

C H A P T E R - II

A PROFILE OF THE ETHNIC STRIFE IN SRI LANKA

In the multi-ethnic society of Sri Lanka the Tamil community has asserted its status as a nationality and created social and political conflict in the given system which, today, threatens the unity of the nation. The rigidity of the nationality feeling among the Tamils has led to sub-nationalism in Sri Lanka which has become more pronounced in recent years. The tension between the Sinhalese and the Sri Lankan Tamils has grown over the years and has drawn the two communities apart leading to a bid for secession by the Sri Lankan Tamils of the north and the east.

In order to preserve unity in a multi-ethnic society like Sri Lanka a sound framework is required to develop a sense of belonging to a nation among the various ethnic groups so that they identify themselves fully with the nation. The three fundamental elements of such a framework are:

First, to provide room to each ethnic group to participate in the political process and share governmental power and authority.

Second, to provide opportunity for economic development i.e. provide adequate growth, employment and educational opportunities to each ethnic group.

Third, to provide an environment to each group for preserving and promoting its culture and language.

In Sri Lanka the government failed to provide this framework to the different ethnic groups, specially the Tamils, and hence retarded the development of a sense of belonging to the nation among the Tamils.

In 1948 and 1949 with the enactment of two legislations the Indian Tamils were rendered stateless and without voting rights thereby reducing their participation in the polity. The Tamil United Liberation Front represented the interests of the Tamils in Parliament. In 1983, the members of Parliament elected on the Tamil United Liberation Front ticket were deprived of their seats because they refused to take the anti-secession oath¹. The government in this way debarred the Tamils from sharing political power.

Furthermore, by the enactment of the 'Sinhala Only Act' and the policy of standardisation (Tamil students had to secure a higher percentage of marks than their Sinhalese counterparts in order to secure admission in

1. Kumar Rupesinghe, "Sri Lanka: Peace Keeping and Peace Building", **Bulletin of Peace Proposals**; vol 20(3) 1989, p.339.

the universities) in education, the Sinhalese-dominated government further marginalised the Tamils. The 'Sinhala Only Act' restricted the growth of Tamil language and the policy of standardisation in education deprived a large number of young Tamils of educational and employment opportunities.

Because of the above mentioned discriminatory policies pursued by the Sri Lankan government, the Tamils became increasingly alienated from the Sri Lankan State. The Tamils now want a separate state - an Eelam - for themselves comprising of the northern and eastern provinces.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The two major ethnic communities - the Sinhalese and the Tamils - who are today at the centre of the ethnic conflict have their roots in India. They are the descendants of India's Aryan and Dravidian families respectively.

The *Dipavamsa*, a Sinhalese Chronicle (probably written in the 4th Century AD) purports to narrate the story of the island from the earliest human times. It introduces Vijaya, as the first occupant and founder of the Sinhalese dynasty in Sri Lanka. According to the chronicle Vijaya on being banished for misconduct by his father Sinhabahu, arrived in the island with seven

hundred men from Sinhapura in Orissa near the Bengal border. He landed on the west coast of Lanka, at a place called Tambapanni, in 543 B.C. Vijaya is said to have ruled for thirty-eight years from Tambapanni, his capital. He had no children and hence on his death, his brother's son Pandu Vasudeva came from Bengal and became the king of Lanka. This story has been retold with greater embellishment in another Sinhalese chronicle - the **Mahavamsa** - written in the 6th Century AD, by an unknown Buddhist monk. Generally, the **Mahavamsa** is regarded as the source of the early history of the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka ².

On the other hand, the Sri Lankan Tamils of today regard themselves as the lineal descendants of the original inhabitants of the island. They claim that at the time of the arrival of Vijaya, Tamil kingly rule was centred in Anuradhapura, the ancient capital which the Tamil kings founded. The Tamil king at that time was Devanampriya Theesan. He was followed by Senan and Kuddikan (177 - 155 B.C.) and by Ellalan or Elara (145 - 101 B.C.). With the defeat of Ellalan by the Sinhalese prince Dutugemunu, in 101 B.C., Anuradhapura became the seat of the Sinhalese dynasty. The history

2 Satchi Poonambalam, **Sri Lanka: The National Question and the Tamil Liberation Struggle** (London, 1983) pp 16-17.

of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka after Ellalan's death is lost in obscurity because of the absence of continuous recorded history upto 1214, Pali chronicles describe only the struggles between Sinhalese kings and Tamil invaders from South India. In 1214, an independent Tamil Kingdom, with its capital in Jaffna came into existence. From that time onwards the two communities remained separate. Sri Lanka comprised of two ethno-linguistic nation-states. Tamils in the north and the east and Sinhalese in the south and the west. These two ethno-linguistic nations remained separate and isolated because of separate political loyalties and differences in language, religion, culture and customs³.

Unlike the Sri Lankan Tamils, the origin of the Indian Tamils in Sri Lanka is relatively recent in the island. It was mainly during the British colonial rule that labourers migrated from South India to Sri Lanka to work on the coffee plantations and later on in the tea estates. The term 'Indian Tamil' is used to designate these Tamil labourers who had migrated to Sri Lanka during the nineteenth century⁴.

3 Ibid, p. 28-29

4 Ibid p. 34

In 1505, the Portuguese came to Sri Lanka. They captured the Sinhalese kingdom of Kotte, near present - day Colombo, and established their rule⁵. They also made attempts to conquer the Tamil Kingdom but were unsuccessful. It was in 1691 that the Portuguese were finally able to conquer the Tamil Kingdom, which they administered as a separate domain from their Sinhalese possession.

The Portuguese conquest and occupation was followed by the Dutch in 1656 and the British in 1796. After the initial control by the British East India Company from Madras, these areas became a British Crown Colony in 1802. The Kandyan Sinhalese Kingdom, which withstood the Portuguese and early British attempts at conquest, was ceded to the British by the Kandyan Convention of 1815⁶.

The Portuguese and the Dutch continued to administer the Sinhalese and Tamil areas separately. For some time the British also continued to administer the Sinhalese and Tamil areas as separate entities. But in pursuance of the Colebrooke - Cameron Commission recommendations, the separate administrations were

5. Mohan Ram, **Sri Lanka: The Fractured Island**, (Penguin India, New Delhi, 1989)

6. Poonambalam, Chapter 2, n.2, p.41

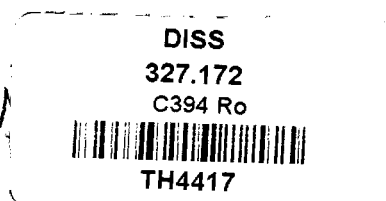
abolished and the Sinhalese and Tamil people were brought together in a single administrative unit under a centralised government in 1833 ⁷. The history of modern Sri Lanka starts from this point of time.

The British ushered in a plantation economy which transformed the island's subsistence economy. Due to the establishment of plantations the Kandyan farmers were deprived of their land. These farmers refused to work as wage labour in the plantations. The British were in urgent need of cheap labour. They turned their attention towards India and succeeded in inducing the government of India to allow emigration. A large number of people from the drought-prone Tamil districts of India migrated to Sri Lanka. These people from India worked initially in the coffee plantations and later on in the tea estates⁸.

The colonial government encouraged the study of English language and this resulted in the emergence of a new class of English - educated professionals and white-

7. P.A.Padmanabhan, "Historical Perspective" in Ed. N.V.M. Alagappan, **Tears in Teardrop Island** (Sterling Publishers Private Ltd. New Delhi) p.20.

8. Ravi Kant Dubey, **Indo-Sri Lankan Relation : with special reference to the Tamil problem** (Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1989) pp. 31-32.



collar workers. The emergence of new professions and a new elite class enabled the British to pursue their policy of divide and rule. The Sri Lankan Tamils from north and the east were encouraged to take up Western education and new professions. These Tamils were able to acquire various government jobs and were better off than their Sinhalese counterparts.

Representation on the basis of ethnic and communal lines was introduced by the British on the plea that in a country with ethnic and communal differences it was essential to have such an arrangement as it would help democratic institutions in the country. However, the main intention of the colonial government was to keep ethnic differences alive and prevent the growth of cross-ethnic national political identification.

Even after the establishment of the unified colonial state, both the Sinhalese and the Tamils continued to live in their traditional areas and migration outside their respective areas was limited to employment, professional life and trade. Under colonial rule both the Sinhalese and the Tamils participated in the political process, in the economic activity and in national life. There was considerable social intercourse and personal friendship between the Sinhalese and the Tamils at the local level. But at the elite level, where jostling for advancement and

prestige often brought them into competition, sectional loyalties often surfaced but were held in check by the British.

Representation on ethnic lines prevailed from the time of political unification in 1833. From that year until 1889, a Sinhalese, a Tamil and a Burgher were nominated to the legislative council to represent their respective communities. In 1889, the council was restructured and a Kandyan Sinhalese and a Muslim were also nominated to represent the interests of their communities. In 1920 a measure of territorial representation was introduced and expanded in 1924. The Council from its inception was conceived by the British as a body that would mirror the diverse ethnic groups in the island. The result was that though the various ethnic entities were brought together by the British, their separate loyalties as distinct nations prevailed and national integration failed to take root in Sri Lanka. What, in effect, took place under colonial rule was political and administrative nation - building only at the centre⁹.

The Donoughmore Commission (1927 - 28) abolished communal representation and introduced universal adult franchise and territorial representation. Abolition of communal representation did not have the desired

9. Poonambalam, Chapter 2, n.2 p. 53.

effect. The different ethnic entities still thought on communal lines. Throughout the 1930s and upto independence, the question of the proper Sinhalese - Tamil ratio in the legislature became the central bone of contention and the divisions within the various groups widened further.

In Sri Lanka only a section of the educated Sinhalese and Tamils actively sought independence. In 1915 the first major political party - the Ceylon National Congress, comprising both the Sinhalese and the Tamils was formed. The second World war led to the loosening of the British colonial grip. So in 1944, the British government sent the Lord Soulbury Commission to replace the 1931 Constitution and paved the way for eventual independence.

The Tamils put forth their demand for "fifty - fifty" or "balanced representation". i.e. they wanted fifty per cent of the seats to be reserved for the Tamils and other minorities and the remaining fifty per cent for the Sinhalese. G.G. Poonambalam, who founded the Tamil Congress in 1944, argued that Tamils would suffer discrimination at the hands of the numerically predominant Sinhalese majority in the legislature and hence "fifty - fifty" representation was essential¹⁰.

10. P Ramaswamy, **New Delhi and Sri Lanka: Four decades of Politics and diplomacy** (Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1987) p. 111.

The commission rejected the proposal because it was opposed in principle to any ethnic balance or ratio of representation. Instead, the new Commission provided a safeguard prohibiting the enactment of any law that would be prejudicial to the minorities.

The Soulbury Constitution was accepted and adopted by the State Council. Though the Tamils did raise the minority question but the leader of the State Council and president of the Ceylon National Congress, D.S. Senanayake urged the Tamils and other minority communities to accept the constitution and assured them that in an independent Sri Lanka no harm would be done to them and their interests would be looked after very well.

The Tamils accepted this assurance and all the Sri Lankan Tamil members unanimously voted for the acceptance of the Soulbury Constitution. With the unanimous acceptance of the Constitution by the Tamils and demand for self-government gaining ground, the road to independence was clear.

The Ceylon National Congress was converted into the United National Party (UNP) with D.S. Senanayake as its leader. Elections were held and the UNP failed to win an absolute majority. However, Senanayake wooed a number of independent members and with their support

formed the government. On 4th February, 1948, independence was granted to the people of Sri Lanka and power was transferred to the Senanayake government¹¹.

The Soulboury Commission had designed the Constitution of Sri Lanka prior to its attaining independence. It did not consider carefully the pertinent issues about citizenship, franchise, individual and group fundamental rights which were of crucial importance for a multi-ethnic state of Sri Lanka. The constitution contained no suitable laws pertaining to these matters.

The Soulboury Constitution was ineffective in safeguarding the pluralistic nature of the island. It did not provide effective checks for discrimination against minorities. In a way it opened the flood-gates for blatant discrimination of Tamils in employment, education and other areas of national life. Since the Sri Lankan government failed to draft a new constitution soon after independence, these lacunae in the Constitution bequeathed by the British led to discrimination against the Tamils.

Much of the post-independence conflict in Sri Lanka can be attributed to the fact that the Sri Lankan leaders failed to give the country a new constitution which

11. Poonambalam, chapter 2, n.2, p. 66.

could cover the hiatus left by the Soulboury Constitution. It was replaced by the republican Constitution in 1972. But it was too late because the damage had been done. With the control over the political institutions through elections, the Sinhala political leaders were able to use the State as an instrument to nurture and safeguard Sinhalese interests and actively pursued discriminatory policies towards the Tamils.

TAMIL - SINHALESE RELATIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

The first major conflict that arose in Sri Lanka soon after independence, was over the residents of Indian origin. The Soulboury Constitution did not define citizenship of Sri Lanka. The United National Party government took advantage of this and enacted the Ceylon Citizenship Act of 1948 and the Indian and Pakistani Residents (Citizenship) Act of 1949 and deprived most residents of Indian origin of their right to citizenship and franchise thereby rendering them stateless and, therefore, without voting rights.

The 1948 Act provided that citizenship would be determined either by descent or by stringent conditions of registration. There was no provision for citizenship by birth. Only the Tamils of Indian origin were called upon to prove their claim to citizenship. Most of them were unable to do so and hence were

deprived of citizenship. Furthermore, an amendment to the electoral law in late 1949 restricted voting rights to citizens only, thereby depriving most of the Indian Tamils of voting rights. The first blow was directed by the government against the 'Indian Tamils'. The Sri Lankan Tamils were unaffected by the overt discrimination against the Indian Tamils. However, soon they also faced discrimination.

Another issue to be settled was the language issue. At the time of independence English was still the official language though the majority spoke Sinhala. In 1956 S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) was elected on a "Sinhala Only" platform. He advocated the primacy of Sinhala as the sole official language in place of English¹².

A major blow was directed against the Tamils when Sinhala was enacted as the sole official language of the country through the 'Official Language Act of 1956'. It declared Sinhala to be the sole official Language of Sri Lanka. The Tamil Language was denied parity with the Sinhala language¹³.

12. Kumar Rupesinghe, "Ethnic conflicts in South Asia : The case of Sri Lanka and the IPKF", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol.25 no.4, 1988, p.339

13. *Keesings Contemporary Archives*, July 28- August 4, 1956, p. 15012

The Federal Party leaders vehemently opposed the act and regarded it as unconstitutional. They challenged it in courts and called upon the Tamils to transact all their business in Tamil or in English, if necessary, and not to learn Sinhala. By enacting the 'Sinhala Only Act' the government divided the Tamils and the Sinhalese. The Tamils resorted to strikes and civil disobedience in order to press their demand for parity. The Sinhalese reacted with mob attacks on Tamils. In order to diffuse the tension the Bandaranaike - Chelvanayakam Pact was signed in 1957 but it was not implemented because of Sinhalese opposition¹⁴. Bandaranaike yielded to pressure from the Sinhalese and unilaterally abrogated the Pact in April 1958¹⁵.

In May 1958 tensions between the two communities exploded and Sri Lanka witnessed the worst form of rioting. Over a thousand people died and many times that number were rendered homeless. Communal rivalry and confrontation between the Sinhalese and the Tamils on the basis of language and religion started in the 1950s and has continued unabated since then.

14. Ibid August 31 - September, 7, 1957, p. 15734.

15. Ibid May 10-17, 1958, p. 16177.

The Federal Party (FP), formed in 1949, launched an agitation against the 'Sinhala Only Act'. It launched civil disobedience campaign in 1961 in the northern and the eastern provinces. It called on Tamil government employees not to study Sinhala and not to transact any business in Sinhala. This peaceful agitation continued for days and effectively paralysed administration in the Tamil districts. Bandaranaike's government found that it was losing control over these areas. It declared a state of emergency and despatched military troops to occupy the northern and eastern provinces¹⁶. The Tamils for the first time faced military brutality in their struggle against 'Sinhala Only Act' and were taken aback. They became aware that the Sinhalese dominated government would not give them justice and would even go to the extent of using force to beat them into submission. The arrest and detention of the Federal Party MPs and military occupation of the Tamil areas gave rise to a new era of oppression and led the Tamils increasingly to question the policy of the government. The denial of the language right to the Tamils seriously effected their political, economic, social, educational and cultural life.

16. Keesings Contemporary Archives, May 6-13, 1961,
p. 18073 A.

Another blow was struck in the field of education in the 1970s. Discrimination was perpetuated by adoption of the policy of "standardisation". According to this pernicious method the Tamil students had to secure a percentage of additional marks than their Sinhalese counterparts to compete for a place in the various faculties of the universities. The main aim was to restrict the entry of Tamil students.

This pernicious method of standardisation initiated in 1973 was followed by standardisation and district quotas in 1974, standardisation and 100 per cent district quotas in 1975 and standardisation and 70 per cent marks and 30 per cent in district quotas in 1976¹⁷. These four schemes brought further benefits to the Sinhalese students at the expense of the Tamil students. All these resulted in a large number of Tamil students, who had studied and passed the examinations and were qualified for admission to the university, being debarred because they were Tamils. Each of these schemes generated a great deal of controversy. The Tamils appealed to the government to do away with these schemes. But the Sri Lankan government refused to oblige. The ultimate result of the quota and standardisation system was a progressive decline of Tamil students in the science based courses.

17. Poonambalam, chapter 2, n.2, pp. 173-77.

These manifestly discriminatory schemes in the field of higher education gave birth to Student's Forum, Youth's Forum and Militant Organisations. Faced with this situation of being debarred from acquiring higher education just because they were Tamils, these young Tamils sought to correct the disadvantage of Tamil birth by taking up arms to create a separate state of Tamil Eelam. It is these students, who were so flagrantly and unjustly excluded from university and prevented by the State from achieving higher education are today in the vanguard, providing the groundwork and leadership to the armed liberation struggle for the secession of the northern and eastern provinces to create a separate state (an Eelam).

For a long time the Tamil people and their nationalist leaders attempted to redress their grievances through peaceful political dialogue, non-violent agitation, negotiations and signing of pacts.

The first attempt made by the Tamil political leaders to secure their demands was by signing a pact on 26th July 1957. The then Prime Minister Bandaranaike concluded a pact with the leader of the Federal Party S.J.V. Chelvanayakam ¹⁸. It provided for the

18. Keesings Contemporary Archives, August 31 -
September 7, 1957.

establishment of Regional Councils in the Tamil areas (Northern and Eastern Provinces) and there was to be devolution of some powers through this Regional Council structure to the Tamil areas within the existing framework of the unitary state. It also recognised Tamil as the language of a national minority of Sri Lanka and as the language of administration in the Tamil majority northern and eastern provinces.

However, the pact was never implemented. Soon after the signing of the pact J. R. Jayewardene of the United National Party, launched an agitation against the concessions granted to the Tamils declaring that the pact spelt the disruption of Sri Lanka's unity. The agitation soon took a violent turn and many people were killed (mostly Tamils). An Emergency was declared, and the army eventually restored order. In the face of vehement Sinhalese opposition Bandaranaike abrogated the pact.

In 1965, with the signing of the Senanayake - Chelvanayakam pact another attempt was made to redress the grievances of the Tamils. The central feature of the pact was the establishment of District Councils with delegated powers. Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake agreed to frame new regulations making the Tamil language the language of administration and record in the northern and eastern provinces. It was also agreed

that provision would be made in the regulations for Tamil - speaking people to transact official and other business in Tamil throughout the country.

Because of opposition from the Sri Lanka Freedom Party in alliance with the Buddhist clergy, the United National Party failed to implement the provisions of the pact beyond enacting certain regulations for the use of the Tamil language which too, however, were never implemented.

In 1972, the Sri Lankan government drafted a new constitution. It made Sri Lanka a republic. It granted constitutional status to Sinhala as the sole official language. In fact, the Sinhala Only Act of 1956 was enshrined in the constitution. All laws were to be made in Sinhala and it was declared to be the language of the courts and tribunals throughout the island. It further entrenched the unitary state structure completely ignoring the Federal Party's demand for Tamil autonomy through a federal set-up. The constitution conferred a special status on Buddhism and made it the state's duty to protect and foster' this religion.

Successive Sinhala dominated governments in order to consolidate their political support base in the Sinhalese population, continued with their

discriminatory policies. They, however, failed to realise that they were destroying the very fabric of the multi-ethnic Sri Lankan nation - state and would in the long-run prove fatal to the unity of the nation.

When the Sri Lankan government failed to implement agreements signed with the Tamil leader Chelvanayakam, he lost faith in the ability of the established institutions to fulfill even some of the genuine aspirations and demands of the Tamils. He declared secession to be the goal of the Tamil people.

On winning the by-election from the Jaffna constituency in January 1975 he declared: "Throughout the ages the Sinhalese and the Tamils in the country lived as distinct sovereign people till they were brought under foreign domination. It should be remembered that the Tamils were in the vanguard of the struggle for independence in the full confidence that they also will regain their freedom. We have for the last 25 years made every effort to secure our political rights on the basis of equality with the Sinhalese in a united Ceylon. It is a regrettable fact that successive Sinhalese government have used the power that flows from independence to deny us our fundamental rights and reduce us to the position of a subject people. These governments have been able to do so only

by using against the Tamils the sovereignty common to the Sinhalese and the Tamils. I wish to announce to my people and to the country that I consider the verdict at this election as a mandate that the Tamil Eelam nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free. On behalf of the Tamil United Front I give you my solemn assurance that we will carry out this mandate"¹⁹.

The need to find a solution to the Tamil problem became important and the Tamil issue figured prominently in the 1977 election campaign. The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) election manifesto to the Tamil people stated:

"..... What is the alternative now left to the nation that has lost its rights to its language, rights to its citizenship, rights to its religion and continues day by day to lose its traditional homeland to Sinhalese colonisation?. What is the alternative now left to a nation that has lost its opportunities to

19. Rajesh Kadian, **India's Sri Lanka Fiasco: Peacekeepers at war** (Vision Books, New Delhi, 1990) Appendix iii p. 159.

higher education through 'standardisation' and its equality in opportunities in the sphere of employment? What is the alternative to a nation that lies helpless as it is being assaulted, looted and killed by hooligans instigated by the ruling race and by the security forces of the State? Where else is an alternative to the Tamil nation that gropes in the dark for its identity and finds itself driven to the brink of devastation?

There is only one alternative and that is to proclaim with the stamp of finality and fortitude that we alone shall rule over our land our forefathers ruled.

Sinhalese imperialism shall quit our Homeland
Hence the TULF seeks to establish an independent, sovereign, secular, socialist state of Tamil Eelam that includes all the geographically contiguous areas that have been the traditional homeland of the Tamil-speaking people in the country"²⁰.

This manifesto, in fact, sums up the attitude of the Tamil leaders who no longer had any faith in the government.

20. Quoted in Poonambalam, chapter 2, n.2, p.192.

In 1978 a new constitution was promulgated which provided for a presidential form of government. It increased the powers of the president. Sinhala language and Buddhist religion were accorded a special national status. It did ascribe Tamil the status of a 'national language' but it fell short of the earlier demand of the Tamil federalists for its parity with Sinhala as the official language. There was provision for the formation of District Development Councils, providing a certain degree of regional autonomy and restoration of full protection to the minorities²¹. However, the Tamils were dissatisfied by the 1978 Constitution as they were convinced that the government would not implement its provisions.

In the 1970s there was a major change in Tamil politics. A large number of young Tamils, who had been the worst sufferers because of the 'Sinhala Only Act' and the policy of 'standardisation', were deprived of higher education and employment. They held a deep sense of resentment against the state and felt that there was no future for them in a united Sri Lanka. These youths began to question the policies of the government and played an important role in Tamil politics. They

21. The Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (Certified on August, 1978) Colombo, Department of Government Printing.

resorted to violent means to achieve their aim of a separate state. Gradually militancy among the young Tamils grew and a large number of militant groups were formed. Notable among them were the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) formed in 1972 later renamed as Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (1978), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Front (TELF) later renamed as Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) founded in 1973, the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of students (EROS), started in 1975, the people's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) founded in 1980 and Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) formed in 1981. Among these groups the LTTE emerged as the militarily most powerful group. Alarmed at the rapid pace at which the military and organisational capacity of the militant groups grew and their increasing popularity amongst the Tamil masses, the Sri Lankan government enacted the Proscribing of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Law in 1978 which imposed a ban on the LTTE. Despite the ban, the LTTE continued to grow in strength and stature. In July 1979, the Jayewardene government repealed this law and replaced it with the Prevention of Terrorism Act. In order to curb the growing militancy among the Tamil youth the government used the specially promulgated legislation and Emergency regulations to allow arrest and detention, physical harassment and torture of detainees and extra-judicial killings.

The discriminatory policies followed by the government created a permanent scar on the hearts and mind of the Tamil people. The wound beneath the scar always remained sensitive and every repressive and discriminatory policy of the government set it throbbing. The Tamils regarded the state as oppressive and felt that they would not be able to promote and safeguard their interests within the Sri Lankan State.

The alienation of the Tamils was complete when in 1983 the members of Parliament elected on the TULF ticket were deprived of their seats because they refused to take the anti-secession oath. Till 1983, the TULF was the political party which represented Tamil interests in Parliament. Furthermore, instead of finding a political solution to the problem the government attempted to militarily suppress the struggle of the Tamils for a separate state. The government did not feel impelled to get to the root of the problem. Politics in Sri Lanka became heavily militarised and the rule of the gun prevailed. The climate of intimidation and terror continued to hold sway throughout the whole island. Mob-violence, terrorism and guerrilla activities gradually became a common feature of Sri Lankan life.

The main causes which resulted in the emergence of a Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka can be summed up as follows:-

(a) Growing Sinhala chauvinism, propagation of the superiority of Sinhalese language and Buddhist religion and regarding the Tamils as aliens and denigrating their language and culture.

(b) Adoption of discriminatory policies by successive Sinhala - dominated governments relating to language, education and employment.

(c) Increasing and indiscriminate use of force against the Tamils by the Sinhala-dominated security forces since 1977.

(d) Gross violation of human rights including torture, extra - judicial killings and arbitrary arrests.

(e) Adoption of military methods by the government to resolve a political problem.

C H A P T E R - III

INDO - SRI LANKAN RELATIONS

On July 29, 1987 when the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement was signed, it was considered to be a landmark in cooperative bilateral relations. However, this phase of cooperation did not last long. In less than two years it became a bone of contention between the two countries. This was in sharp contrast to the amicable manner in which bilateral problems had been sorted out in the past. Thus, on the issue of the political status of persons of Indian origin and the question of sovereignty over the Island of Kachchattivu, mutually acceptable agreements were negotiated in a spirit of cordiality, accommodating each other's interests and concerns. In the case of stateless persons of Indian origin, as and when differences arose on issues pertaining to interpretation of some of the clauses of the Shastri-Srimavo Pact of 1964, they were amicably settled. However, this did not happen in the case of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987. The issue of the withdrawal of the IPKF had become increasingly contentious and the two governments tended to become more and more strident in asserting their respective stands on it¹. This adversely effected the role of the IPKF.

1. Urmila Phadnis, "India's Lanka Policy in Retrospect" *Mainstream*, July 29, 1989, p. 5.

In Sri Lanka many ethnic riots had taken place between the Sinhalese and the Tamils since 1956. Though the Tamils suffered a lot, yet the Government of India did nothing beyond issuing curt statements expressing its concern at the happenings as India regarded these as an internal matter of Sri Lanka. However, the July 1983 riots marked a turning point in Indo- Sri Lankan relations. India was concerned with the spill-over effect the ethnic conflict could have in Tamil Nadu and over the involvement of external powers in the conflict.

The ethnic explosion in the island was such as to drive a large number of Sri Lankan Tamils as refugees to Tamil Nadu. The people of the State sympathised with the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and urged the Indian government to take firm measures - scrapping of diplomatic relations and even armed intervention. New Delhi did express its concern over the conflict but made it clear that it had no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka.

About the same time Sri Lankan President sought military help from Britain, the United States, Pakistan and Bangladesh to cope with its ethnic crisis. This move appeared to have been an attempt to pre-empt Indian involvement in the event of escalation of ethnic conflict. Attempts to secure military help from

foreign powers was viewed as having the potential of adversely affecting India's security interests.

Attempts by Sri Lanka to grant oil storage facilities in Trincomalee to a West-dominated consortium in 1982 and the alleged use of Trincomalee as a United States base in the Indian Ocean², which could serve the military and intelligence purposes of the United States ships and submarines in the Indian Ocean, were measures perceived by India as detrimental to its security interests.

It was in this overall context that the Tamil issue in Indo-Sri Lankan relations thus assumed geo-strategic as well as political dimensions. It became essential for India to offer her good offices to solve the ethnic problem in order to safeguard its own security interests and prevent the Tamil separatist movement from engulfing Tamil Nadu.

As mentioned in the second chapter, both the communities - Sinhalese and Tamils - owe their origin to India. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries both countries were subjected to British colonial rule. It was during this period that indentured Tamil labour migrated to Sri Lanka, at the behest of the then

2. Keesings Contemporary Archives, August 6, 1982, p. 31631

colonial masters to work on the coffee and tea plantations.

Soon after independence the hegemonic assertions of the Sinhalese became apparent in their attitude towards the Tamil plantation workers of Indian origin. The Sri Lankan government by two Legislative enactments, in 1948 and 1949 deprived the Indian immigrants of citizenship rights and disenfranchised them. They were rendered stateless and their fate was to be negotiated with the Indian government.

The Sri Lankan government wanted the Indian Tamils to return to India. The political leadership failed to accept that these people who had resided in the island for so many years had become a part of Sri Lankan Society and had greatly contributed to the prosperity of the island. The Indian government was unwilling to accept these Tamils back. It held the view that they were or ought to be Sri Lankan nationals.

The first major attempt to settle the problem through negotiations came when Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru went to London for the Commonwealth Conference in June 1953. At that time the population of Tamils of Indian origin was estimated at 950,000 and Senanayake stated that Sri Lanka would absorb about 600,000 and India should repatriate the rest. Nehru refused to accept

repatriation in principle and further negotiations became fruitless³.

The next round of discussions was held in New Delhi in 1954. Following Senanayake's resignation from the Prime Ministership, Nehru invited his successor Sir Kotelawala to continue discussions from the point where they had been left after the London talks. The Nehru - Kotelawala Pact was signed on January 18, 1954. Both the governments resolved to take steps to suppress the traffic in illicit immigration between Sri Lanka and India. The Sri Lankan government proposed to undertake the preparation of an up-to-date register of all residents who were not on the electoral register. This was to be done to track down illicit immigrants. They agreed that when the registration was complete any person having an Indian language as mother tongue could be presumed to be an illicit immigrant from India and was liable for deportation for which the Indian High Commission would extend all facilities. Indians not registered as Indian citizens were allowed, if they desired, to register themselves under article 8 of the Constitution of India⁴.

Unfortunately, the Nehru-Kotelawala Pact, ran into rough weather, even before it was ratified. The

3. P. Ramaswamy, chapter 2, n.10, p. 111.

4. Keesings Contemporary Archives, February 27- March 6, 1954, p. 13441.

government of Sri Lanka wanted that out of 9,84,327 Tamils of Indian origin, majority of them should opt for Indian citizenship. It argued that the pact envisaged only two classes of Indians (i) Indian nationals and (ii) Sri Lankan nationals. On the other hand, the Indian government envisaged a third category of stateless persons, whose cases would be re-examined after ten years and till then the status quo should remain. Due to the failure of the implementation of the Nehru - Kotelawala pact the problem remained unresolved. In October 1954 another conference was held in Delhi between the two countries to resolve the differences over the interpretation of the January agreement⁵. However, differences prevailed and the issue was not resolved amicably to the satisfaction of both countries.

Uptill 1964 no further attempts were made to resolve the problem of 'Tamils' of Indian origin. Between 1951 and 1962 only 131,312 persons of Indian origin had been granted Sri Lankan citizenship. In 1963 only 35,411 persons had been recognised as Indian citizens out of the island's 1,122,850 strong population of Indian origin. In 1964, the Indian and Sri Lankan government

5. Dubey, chapter 2, n.8, p.60.

estimated that there were 975,000 stateless persons in Sri Lanka⁶.

In 1964, another attempt was made by the prime ministers of the two countries to resolve this problem. Lal Bahadur Shastri and Sirimavo Bandaranaike entered into an agreement in October 1964.

The salient feature of the agreement was that the population of 'stateless persons' was to be divided in a 4:7 proportion. It meant that for every four persons accepted by Sri Lanka, India would take back seven. In effect, Sri Lanka was to give citizenship to 300,000 persons and their natural increase and India would accept 525,000 persons. The status of the 150,000 left out in the sharing exercise was to be decided later. The Sri Lankan government's enactment to implement the agreement took effect in 1968, following this the two governments invited applications for citizenship. While 700,000 opted for Sri Lankan citizenship only 40,000 sought Indian citizenship. Sri Lanka insisted on following the 4:7 ratio and took only 225,000 of the 700,000 who had opted for Sri Lankan citizenship, while India accepted all the 400,000 who had opted for its citizenship. So in addition to the 150,000 stateless

6. Mohan Ram, chapter 2, n.5, p.111.

people whose fate had not been decided when the agreement was signed, there were further 200,000 for whom there was no place in either country⁷. Apart from this shortcoming, the Sirimavo - Shastri Pact resolved the problem to the satisfaction of both countries.

In January 1974, Srimavo Bandaranaike visited New Delhi for talks with Indira Gandhi. A Joint communique issued on January 29, announced that a final settlement had been reached on the 15,000 people of Indian origin living in Sri Lanka who were not covered by the 1964 agreement. It was agreed that Sri Lanka would confer citizenship on 75,000 and the other 75,000 would be granted Indian citizenship⁸.

In theory the major problem between India and Sri Lanka - problem of the stateless persons of Indian origin - had been resolved. India had clearly expressed her desire to remain aloof from the domestic developments in Sri Lanka over the Tamil ethnic issue. Developments in Sri Lanka did not affect relations between the two countries as India viewed the Tamil problem as a matter concerning the government and people of Sri-Lanka. Gradually, however, these developments took a bad turn and cast its shadow on the Indo - Sri Lankan relations.

7. Ibid pp 111-112.

8. **Keesings Contemporary Archives**, March 18-24, 1974
p. 26418 A.

In 1983 events took such a turn that India had to involve itself in the internal affairs of Sri Lanka. There was a marked increase in violence in the State. The Tamil militant groups carried on a struggle for a separate state and the Sri Lankan government attempted to suppress this struggle militarily. Continued strife and disorder weakened the Sri Lankan State considerably and made itself vulnerable to foreign interference. The ethnic explosion in the island-state was such as to drive a large number of Sri Lankan Tamils as refugees to Tamil Nadu. The people of Tamil Nadu sympathised with their plight and appealed to the Indian government to interfere to solve the problem. In order to prevent other powers from entering Sri Lanka and avoid separatist movement from spreading to Tamil Nadu, India had to intervene to help Sri Lanka find a solution to the problem.

The anti-Tamil riots which broke out in July 1983 for the first time involved India in Sinhala - Tamil conflict. The Sri Lankan government sought assistance from the United States, Britain, Pakistan, Bangladesh and China to control the insurgency situation.

Britain did not help directly but assistance was provided through the Keeny Meeny Services (based in Channel Island). It was a security firm which has Special Air Services (SAS) veterans of the Rhodesian war. China supplied arms while Pakistan helped train

the Special Task Force to combat the militants. Israel provided assistance through Mossad, its external intelligence agency and Shin Beth, its counter - insurgency agency. Moreover, the agreement regarding the location of Voice of America transmitter in Sri Lanka was renewed. India viewed it as against its interests and alleged that the renewed agreement provided for facilities beyond normal communications in the Indian Ocean region. There was fear that it would be able to monitor all vital communications within India because the facility had an effective range of 3300 kilometers⁹.

India's concerns and apprehensions grew at increasing external involvement in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. These developments were viewed as a threat to the geostrategic interests of India. In order to prevent other countries from involving themselves in the conflict, it was essential for India to offer her good offices to solve the ethnic problem. Indira Gandhi was quick to act. She expressed her concern over the anti-Tamil riots. On 28th July 1983 she sent her External Affairs Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to Colombo¹⁰, without consulting President Jayewardene, while the

9. Mohan Ram, chapter 2, n.5, p.122.

10. **Keesings Contemporary Archives**, January 1984, p. 32632.

riots were still going on. India claimed that Rao's visit had helped in ending the anti-Tamil riots.

Within a week of his return, Mrs. Gandhi stated that the problem of Tamils was a matter in which India could not be treated as 'just another country'. It is a matter which concerned both India and Sri Lanka¹¹. She made it clear that India supported the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and believed in the policy of non-intervention in its domestic affairs. But the involvement of external powers in the ethnic crisis concerned India and warned Jayewardene against the involvement of these powers¹².

Mrs. Gandhi offered India's offices for mediation between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil groups. She went a step further and called A. Amrithalingam, leader of the Tamil United Liberation Front for talks without consulting the Sri Lankan President. Sri Lanka viewed this action as interference by India in her internal matters.

India persisted with efforts to find a political solution to the problem. After a long time India was successful in persuading Jayewardene to accept India's good offices to explore a political settlement. Mrs.

11. Dubey, chapter 2, n.8, p.105.

12. Ibid, p.105.

Gandhi appointed G. Parthasarathy as her personal envoy to mediate between the Tamils (TULF and the militant groups) and the Sri Lankan government. Parthasarathy held discussions with Sri Lanka and TULF leaders and then, along with President Jayewardene, drafted a set of proposals for devolution of power. The proposals known as 'Annexure C' provided for the creation of separate regional councils for the northern and eastern provinces. These councils were to be granted substantial powers including the subjects of law and order, social and economic development, land policy, education and administration of justice. In addition, these councils were to have powers of taxation¹³.

In India's view these proposals were adequate to meet the Tamil aspirations because it provided for some amount of autonomy. In January 1984, an All Party Conference was called to get a consensus on the proposals but President Jayewardene did not make 'Annexure C' as the basis of negotiations. Rather he put forward a diluted set of proposals which was unacceptable to the Tamils. The convening of the All Party Conference to evolve a national consensus proved futile. The plan to replace District Development Councils by more autonomous Regional Councils (as

13. Mohan Ram, chapter 2, n.5, p.56.

provided in the proposal) was opposed by the Sinhalese. President Jayewardene was unnerved by the Sinhala opposition and he reneged on his support to the proposals. He put forth another set of proposals which did not aim at any meaningful devolution of power but merely extended the scheme of decentralisation at the district to the provincial level¹⁴. This was rejected by the Tamils. Hence, no consensus could emerge and the first attempt by India to mediate between the Tamils and the Sinhalese proved abortive.

In 1984, there was a change in political leadership. With Rajiv Gandhi at the helm of affairs, India's attitude towards the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka also underwent a change. Romesh Bhandari became the new External Affairs Secretary. In May 1985, he visited Colombo and assured Jayewardene that India would not allow the militants to continue their activities on Indian soil. In June 1985, Jayewardene visited New Delhi for a summit meeting with Rajiv Gandhi. The two leaders agreed to take immediate action to diffuse the crisis and attempt a political solution acceptable to 'all concerned' within the framework of Sri Lanka's unity and integrity. It was also agreed that all forms of violence should abate and finally cease¹⁵. India

14. Ibid p. 56.

15. Times of India, 5 June, 1985

agreed to help bring about a cease-fire and arrange for direct negotiations between the Tamil groups (which included the TULF and the five main Tamil militant groups - the LTTE, the PLOTE, the EROS, the EPRLF and the TELO) and the Sri Lankan government.

In July 1985, direct negotiations between the Sri Lankan government delegation and the six Tamil groups were held in Thimpu, capital of Bhutan, to seek a political settlement to the problem. The four militant groups (LTTE, EROS, EPRLF and TELO) united to form an Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF).

The Thimpu talks failed. Only two rounds of meetings could be held in July and August. The talks had to be called off because the Tamils felt that the proposals put forward by the Sri Lankan government were inadequate. The Tamil groups put forth four principles on which the Sri Lankan government must base all the proposals. These were:-

- (i) Recognition of Tamil national identity.
- (ii) The integrity of the Tamil Homeland was to be recognised and respected.
- (iii) Recognition of the right of the Tamils to self-determination as a Tamil nation.

(iv) Citizenship rights to be granted to all Tamils living in Sri Lanka¹⁶.

This set of principles was designed to obtain recognition of the fact that the Tamils and the Sinhalese were separate and distinct nations, inhabiting geographically distinct territories and possessing separate and distinct national consciousness. Implicit in these principles was the demand for the merger of the northern and eastern provinces.

As expected, the Sri Lankan government rejected all the four principles. Because of certain fundamental difference between the two sides further negotiations were not possible. India assumed the role of a mediator between the two sides and continued to lend a helping hand to the process of indirect negotiations in order to pave the way for direct negotiations. The efforts bore fruit and the Sri Lankan government presented a working paper, known as the "Draft Framework of Accord and Understanding", as the basis for further negotiations. The proposals were discussed by the government of India with the Tamil militant groups who, however, rejected them. With the militants showing no sign of accommodation, the government of

16. Mohan Ram, chapter 2, n.5, p.57

India turned its attention towards the TULF. At the suggestion of the government of India, TULF leaders advanced an alternate set of proposals in December 1985. The demand for a federal structure was put forth in which the northern and eastern provinces would be combined into a single Tamil Language State, but the Sri Lankan government rejected the demand because it called for an amendment of the constitution which provided for a unitary state¹⁷.

After the rejection of these proposals there followed a period of temporary suspension of India's good offices as the Sri Lankan security forces resumed their attacks on Tamil civilians. Indian mediation was revived in April 1986. A delegation headed by P. Chidambaram, Minister of State for Internal Security, went to Colombo for negotiations. Sri Lankan government offered a new set of proposals to the Tamils which provided for the devolution of powers to the Provincial Council in the north and the east within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. In order to meet the Tamil demand for 'linkage' of the northern and eastern

17. Sumit Chakravarty, "Behind Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement" in M.D. Dharmdasani ed., **Sri Lanka An Island in Crisis** (Shalimar Publishing House, Varanasi, 1988) pp. 123-124.

provinces, the proposals offered institutional arrangements for coordination between the two provinces on certain matters. These proposals formed the basis for direct negotiations between the TULF and the Sri Lankan government. Alongside they were also discussed with the Tamil militant groups. But they rejected the proposals. The militant groups criticised the proposals maintaining that the powers granted to the provincial councils in respect of law and order and land settlement were still inadequate and the proposals did not specify the identified Tamil homeland¹⁸. It was clear that no political settlement was possible without the consent of the militant groups, particularly the LTTE, which has over the years emerged as the most powerful militant group and established its hegemony over the Tamil population. In December 1986, another attempt was made by India to mediate between the two sides. Indian officials tried to persuade the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran to agree to a political settlement. In mid-December, two Indian Ministers of State, Natwar Singh and Chidambaram visited Colombo. A new set of proposals known, as the 'December 19 Proposals' was put forward. These proposals provided for a new eastern province by excising the Sinhala - majority areas (the Amparai

18. Ibid p. 124-125.

electoral district). The smaller province was mainly to ensure Tamil dominance by improving the demographic composition of the province to their advantage. It proposed that the two councils would have institutional linkages for co-ordination between them. Furthermore, the Sri Lankan government also agreed to consider a proposal for a second stage of constitutional development providing for the merger of the two provinces, subject to the wishes of the people of the provinces, to be ascertained separately after a period of time¹⁹.

The Indian government hoped that the Tamil problem would be solved by the December proposals because they were the best offered so far to the Tamils. However, within a few days President Jayewardene withdrew them.

After nearly three years of mediation between the two sides, no solution could be found to the Tamil problem²⁰. The Indian government's hope of finding a

19. Ibid p. 125.

20. For a background to India's role in the ethnic conflict during 1983-87, also See P. Venkateshwara Rao, "Ethnic conflict in India: India's role and perception", *Asian Survey*, vol. 28 no. 4, April 1988 pp 419-36;

R. Premadas and S.W.R de Samarsinghe "Sri Lanka's Ethnic Conflict: The Indo-Lanka Peace Accord", *Asian Survey*, vol. 28, no. 6, June 1988, pp. 676-689 and Dagmar Hellman-Rajanyagam, "The Tamil Militants Before the Accord and After", *Pacific Affairs*, vol 61, no.4, 1989, pp. 603-19.

solution were all along shattered by the refusal of the Tamil militant groups, particularly the LTTE, to accept any proposal and also Sinhalese opposition to any concessions granted to the Tamils. A pattern was set.

The Indian government would take the initiative to hold talks with either the Sri Lankan government or the Tamil groups leading to some sort of proposals being put forth for a settlement which were either rejected by the Tamils or by the Sinhalese and then the Sri Lankan government would withdraw them.

The Indian government all along held the view that it was the LTTE which was responsible for the failure of negotiations. In its bid to make the LTTE accept a negotiated settlement, the Indian government began getting tough with the Tamil guerrillas. Rajiv Gandhi openly stated that he would not permit a Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka. He initiated steps to disallow the LTTE from operating from Indian soil. Tamil Nadu police was given orders to crack down on the militant groups. This attitude of the Indian government towards the LTTE continued even after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement of 1987 where it held the LTTE responsible for sabotaging the agreement by refusing to surrender arms. Rajiv Gandhi was convinced that the only way in which a solution could be found was by taming the LTTE. Hence, he ordered the IPKF to use force to

disarm the LTTE and force them to accept the agreement. He committed the peacekeepers to fight the LTTE thereby transforming the peacekeeping force into a fighting force. This seriously affected the role of the IPKF in Sri Lanka. Indian troops were sent for the purpose of protecting the Tamils; instead, they were called upon to fight the foremost Tamil militant group in the island. The peacekeepers were engaged in armed clashes with the LTTE for most part of their stay in the island.

Rajiv Gandhi failed to realise that there existed incompatible differences between the two communities in Sri Lanka. Incompatibility is the core of the conflict. Neither the Sinhalese nor the Tamils were in favour of a negotiated settlement. They had more faith in their military power to annihilate each other and were interested in achieving their aim through military action. Both the sides merely bought time by holding talks in order to equip themselves with arms and ammunitions to launch an attack on each other. This was borne out by the attacks launched by the Sinhalese and the Tamils on each other soon after negotiations or while negotiations were going on to disrupt them. A genuine settlement of the conflict required a change in the objectives of both sides so that they no longer remained acutely incompatible, termination of their attempts to resort to violence and their mutual

perceptions had to be more realistic. This usually takes a very long time. In civil war situations the goals are absolutely vital for the existence of extremist groups and they are therefore, generally unyielding in the pursuit of these goals and are immune to pressures exerted by a third party to negotiate a settlement.

Attempts to find a political solution through negotiations failed because on the one hand, there was an increase in the militancy of the Sinhalese chauvinistic elements and on the other, the Tamil militants, particularly the LTTE, adopted an intransigent attitude to a negotiated settlement. The main motivation behind both the Sinhalese and Tamils extremists was that any negotiated settlement would divert them from their stated objectives.

In late 1986, Prabhakaran announced his decision to take over the civil administration in the Jaffna Peninsula on the New Year Day of 1987. The Sri Lankan government reacted by declaring an emergency and imposed an economic blockade (fuel and food embargo) on the Jaffna peninsula and mounted a major military offensive in the Tamil areas. The Sri Lankan forces succeeded to some extent in clearing the northern and eastern provinces except the Jaffna peninsula in the northern province, the stronghold of the LTTE. It continued to be beyond the reach of the security

forces. In April 1987 the Sri Lankan government announced a ten-day cease-fire in order to replenish and reinforce the Sri Lankan forces to launch an attack on Jaffna peninsula in order to capture it. On May 26, 1987, the attack was launched to take the Jaffna peninsula²¹. The government of India was against the military actions undertaken by the Sri Lankan army and expressed its desire to work out a political solution. Rajiv Gandhi described the military action as "calculated and cold-blooded slaughter of thousands of civilians".²²

Tamils in India and Sri Lanka were hoping that the government of India would intervene to stop further military action. It was under intense pressure from the government of Tamil Nadu which pleaded with the Indian government to send humanitarian aid (food and medicines) to the beleaguered and embattled Jaffna peninsula. The Sri Lankan government stated that the modalities of supply and distribution must be worked out but later backed out.

The Indian government decided to send an unarmed and unescorted relief mission. Nineteen fishing boats

21. Rajesh Kadian, **India's Sri Lanka Fiasco: Peacekeepers at war** (Vision Books, New Delhi, 1990) pp. 80-81.

22. **The Hindu**, 29 May, 1987.

sailed out of Rameshwaram on 3rd June 1987 but had to return when the Sri Lankan Navy refused to permit the Indian boats to move into Sri Lankan territorial waters. The government of India was firm on providing the relief supplies and hence next day transport planes laden with food and medicines escorted by two Mirage - 2000 fighter aircraft air-dropped food and other supplies to the besieged Tamil population of Jaffna²³.

The Sri Lankan government regarded this act of the Indian government as an infringement on Sri Lankan sovereignty. However, the mission had its desirable effect-the Sri Lankan President turned amenable and the modalities of relief supplies were discussed. The military operations in the Jaffna peninsula also slowed down.

This incident soured relations between the two countries, the Sri Lankan government must have realised that it could not take the assistance of the military to solve the Tamil problem, as it feared that India could intervene militarily if the situation became worse. The symbolic air-dropping of supplies was seen as a signal of India's intention to come to the rescue of the Tamils militarily. Forthwith

23. **Keesings Contemporary Archives**, August 1987, p. 35315.

President Jayewardene considered it more prudent to come to an understanding with India. Behind the scenes negotiations went on between the two nations at the diplomatic level and finally, on July 29, 1987, the India - Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka was signed (See Appendix I).

The main points of the agreement were:-

(i) Sri Lanka was recognised as a multi-ethnic and a multi-lingual plural society consisting of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims (Moors) and Burghers. The unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka was to to be preserved.

(ii) The merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces into a single administrative unit for a period of one year was provided for with an elected provincial council, a Governor, Chief Minister and Board of Ministers.

(iii) Cessation of hostilities within forty -eight hours. The surrender of all arms held by the Tamil militant groups within seventy - two hours. Lifting of the emergency in the north and east by 15 August and the confinement of Sri Lankan army and other security personnel to their barracks.

(iv) A referendum was to be held in the Eastern province by December 31, 1988 to enable the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims residing there to decide whether they wished to remain a part of the province.

(v) Elections for the new Provincial Council to be held within three months in the presence of Indian observers.

(vi) A general amnesty for all Tamil militants including those detained or convicted.

(vii) Repatriation of 1,30,000 tamil refugees from India to Sri Lanka.

(viii) Sinhala, English and Tamil were to be the official languages.

(ix) India undertook to guarantee these resolutions and cooperate in their implementation.

(x) In case any militant group did not accept this framework of proposals for settlement, India was to take action to prevent its territory from being used by Tamil militants for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka.

An Annexure to the Agreement provided that an Indian Peacekeeping Force could be invited by the Sri Lankan

President to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities. The agreement formed the basis for ending hostilities between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. It marked a turning point in the Indo - Sri Lanka bilateral relations. By an exchange of letters between the Indian Prime Minister and the Sri Lankan President, India was able to get significant concessions: Sri Lanka pledged not to allow the port of Trincomalee to be used by other foreign powers, to reach an understanding with India regarding the employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel in Sri Lanka, to review agreements relating to foreign broadcasting facilities to ensure that they were not used for any military or intelligence purposes. India, in turn, agreed to deport all the Sri Lankan nationals engaged in terrorist or separatist activities and provide training facilities and military supplies for the Sri Lankan Security forces.

Soon after the signing of the agreement, President Jayewardene invited the Indian Peace Keeping Force to Sri Lanka to observe cease-fire and accept surrender of arms by the Tamil militants. He was aware that the Tamil militants would not surrender arms to the Sri Lankan Security forces and so he invited the IPKF.

Tamils of Sri Lanka had no faith in the Sri Lankan government because all the agreements signed in the past to solve the ethnic problem had failed miserably, the main reason being that the government always went back on the promises given to Tamil leaders. In fact, pacts and agreements were abrogated with impunity by the Sinhala leaders. Hence, it became necessary for India to take upon itself the responsibility to ensure the implementation of the agreement. For this reason the sending of the Indian Peace Keeping Force to Sri Lanka became necessary.

C H A P T E R - I V

OPERATIONS OF INDIAN PEACE KEEPING FORCE

"The writing of contemporary history is always difficult. Much of the real material of such history is not, at least officially, available to the historian. There is also the question of how truthful one's informants are".

Michael Edwardes.

The IPKF operation is a recent military event. This chapter is therefore based on the interviews of army personnel and the limited relevant reference material available so far.

The Indian Peace Keeping Force, by the nature of the circumstances that spawned it, was created in moments of great haste. Paragraph 6 of the Annexure to the Agreement stated that "the President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India agree that in terms of Paragraph 2.14 and 2.16 (c) of the Agreement, an Indian Peace Keeping contingent may be invited by the President of Sri Lanka to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities, if so required"¹. Invoking this clause, the Sri Lankan President invited the IPKF to Sri Lanka.

1. "Text of India - Sri Lanka Agreement", *Hindustan Times*, 30 July, 1987, p. 8.

On 30th July 1987, the IPKF was inducted in Sri Lanka. The 54 Infantry Division was the only major formation that was inducted in the northern and eastern provinces. It was deployed as follows:-

- (a) Divisional headquarters - Palaly
- (b) 47 Infantry Brigade - Vavuniya
- (c) 76 Infantry Brigade - Trincomalee
- (d) 91 Infantry Brigade - Jaffna

In the eastern provinces IPKF's operational responsibility was limited to Batticaloa and Amparai.²

The agreement did not mention the specific tasks that the IPKF had to perform. However, according to Lt. Colonel Depinder Singh, Overall Force Commander, (OFC) IPKF, the tasks allotted to the IPKF were as follows:-

- (a) Separate the two warring groups i.e. the Sri Lankan Armed Forces (SLAF) and the LTTE and ensure observance of the cease-fire.
- (b) Take over weapons and munitions being handed over by the Tamil militant groups.
- (c) Ensure dismantling of all SLAF camps established after May 1987.
- (d) Help the local population to return to their homes so that they would live in peace.

2. Depinder Singh, *The IPKF in Sri Lanka*, (Trisul Publications, New Delhi), p.43.

With the passage of time the IPKF had to perform the additional task of disarming the LTTE by force. It was transformed into a force to combat the LTTE. In fact, it was performing the tasks which the Sri Lankan Security forces were supposed to perform.

Though the boundaries between the various functions performed by the IPKF are not distinct, yet they can be grouped into three categories for the convenience of understanding the role of the IPKF. These are, military, political and civil.

MILITARY FUNCTIONS

Observation and monitoring of cease-fire, supervision of the withdrawal of SLAF from the positions which they had occupied after May 1987 and takeover of the weapons being handed over by the LTTE and other Tamil militant groups. When the LTTE refused to surrender arms, the Indian troops were engaged in a war with them in order to disarm them.

POLITICAL FUNCTIONS:

Supervision of elections to the North - Eastern Provincial Council and assistance in establishment of a viable government in the northern and eastern provinces. When internecine conflicts occurred between the militant groups, the IPKF had to perform an added function of maintenance of law and order (a policing role), after the capture of the Jaffna peninsula, there

was assumption of temporary governmental authority and administration by the IPKF.

CIVIL FUNCTIONS

Provision of humanitarian assistance, assistance in resettlement of refugees with the help of International Red Cross and the United Nations Agency for Refugees and restoration of public services - like water, electricity, postal services, banking system etc. In brief, the IPKF had to restore normal civilian activities in strife-torn areas in the northern and eastern provinces.

As the war with the LTTE progressed, these functions, whether military, civilian or political became more elaborate and more interrelated. The boundaries between the various functions were also blurred. At times the IPKF was carrying on all the three tasks simultaneously. Each of these functions will be examined in turn.

MILITARY FUNCTIONS:

With the arrival of the IPKF, hostilities between the SLAF and the LTTE ceased and the SLAF saw the cease-fire as the end of an unpleasant war. The SLAF were confined to the barracks and gradually started to withdraw from the positions occupied after May 1987. After a while the SLAF was reluctant to vacate the

camps. This resulted in slowing down of the withdrawal process. The LTTE viewed this with suspicion and was quick to point out that the SLAF was occupying a school building or a hospital and these must be vacated by them immediately for the public. The SLAF would give a lame excuse that it was unable to vacate the buildings because of lack of availability of alternative accommodation. The IPKF was caught in a dilemma; it could not force the SLAF to vacate the camps as it would result in the Indian troops clashing with the armed forces of another country and if it did not the LTTE was antagonised.

Even the arrival of the IPKF was not welcomed by the LTTE and when the force was unable to get the camps vacated, the LTTE viewed it with suspicion and blamed it for siding with the Sinhalese. However, the IPKF continued with its efforts to get the camps vacated and was able to achieve a fair amount of success.

When the Agreement was signed the LTTE leader, Prabhakaran, categorically rejected it and vowed to continue the armed struggle in Sri Lanka. He refused to surrender arms. After negotiations between the IPKF and the LTTE, the latter agreed to surrender arms. On 5 August, 1987 the first arms surrender took place. In the presence of a large gathering one of the leaders of the LTTE, Dileep Yogi, placed a pistol on the table

on the other side of which stood General Attygale, the Sri Lankan Defence Secretary and General Harkirat Singh of the IPKF³.

The IPKF made arrangements for taking over arms, ammunitions and explosives from the various militant groups. The return of weapons at first was very slow but gradually picked up. However, this situation was not to last long and as August, 1987 progressed the surrender of arms by the militants became increasingly sporadic. The end of August was marked by the eruption of violence. With the eruption of hostilities there was no surrender of arms by the militants. The IPKF could not compel the militants to hand over the weapons because force would have to be used to disarm them. By September, 1987 relations between the IPKF and the LTTE were strained and by October they were fighting the LTTE.

CONDITIONS THAT SHAPED THE CONFLICT:

There is no doubt that the LTTE militants were reluctant to accept the terms and conditions of the India - Sri Lanka Agreement. This was evident from the speech of Prabhakaran to a vast assemblage of Tamils near Jaffna on 4 August 1987 (See Appendix II), where he spelled out the LTTE position. He stated: ".....

3. *Hindustan Times*, 6 August, 1987,

this Agreement, concluded suddenly and with great speed between India and Sri Lanka, without consulting our people and without consulting our people's representatives, is being implemented with expedition and urgency. Until I went to Delhi, I did not know about this Agreement..... The Agreement was shown to us after I went there. There were several complications and several question marks in it. The doubt arose for us whether, as a result of this Agreement, a permanent solution would be available to the problems of our people. Accordingly, we made it emphatically clear to the Indian government that we were unable to accept this Agreement".

He further went on to declare: " This Agreement disarms us suddenly without working out a guarantee for our people's safety and protection. Therefore, we refuse to surrender arms.

I did not repose the slightest faith in the Sinhala racist government and did not believe that they are going to fulfill the implementation of this Agreement.

Were we not to hand over our weapons, we would be put in the calamitous circumstances of clashing with the Indian Army. We do not want this..... We have no way other than cooperation with this Indian endeavour".

Thus, he was prepared to give India a chance but the struggle for Tamil Eelam would continue. This is evident from the last line of the speech where he said:

"The Liberation Tigers yearn for the motherland of Tamil Eelam".

The major disadvantage was that the Agreement deflected them from their avowed aim of achieving Tamil Eelam. He thought that there was no solution to the Tamil problem short of a sovereign state.

The welcome accorded to the IPKF by the Tamil people was not liked by the LTTE. The welfare measures started by the IPKF resulted in enormous popularity of the Indian troops. A large number of Tamils looked upto the IPKF for ameliorating their living conditions. The LTTE viewed this growing rapport between the IPKF and the Tamils with apprehension. They feared that this would reduce their support base among the local population and saw themselves being displaced by the IPKF from the position of the sole protectors of the Tamil People.

The first indication that the LTTE was viewing the growing rapport between the Tamils and the IPKF with disfavour was visible when some people who were LTTE supporters asked the people to stop all contacts with

the IPKF Gradually, LTTE raised objections to the peace process. The intention was to prove to the local population that the IPKF was not in favour of the Tamils and was not supporting their cause but was acting on behalf of the Sri Lankan Government.

Relations between the IPKF and LTTE deteriorated when differences arose regarding the setting up of the Interim Administrative Council (IAC). The LTTE was against the take over by the proposed council of the administration of the northern and eastern provinces as a prelude to holding elections. After prolonged discussions between J.N.Dixit and the LTTE leaders, the latter agreed to the setting up of the Council. An agreement was reached in September 1987, whereby it was agreed that the LTTE would give three names for the appointment of Chairman from which the Sri Lankan President would select one. The Council would consist of 12 members of which there would be seven LTTE nominees and there would be one Muslim, two Sinhala and one TULF and EROS nominees each⁴. However, the LTTE resiled from the agreement claiming it was forced upon them. Thus, the proposed IAC failed to take off. The LTTE claimed that the Sri Lankan government was violating the agreement.

4. Hindustan Times, 29 September, 1987.

By mid-August the EPRLF also refused to surrender weapons. They alleged that the Tigers had abducted thirteen members of their group and so they need arms to protect themselves⁵. On the other hand, the LTTE complained that India was arming the other militant groups and was bringing them over to Sri Lanka to fight the LTTE⁶. The first major fight occurred between the LTTE and the EPRLF on 24 September 1987 in the Batticaloa district of the Eastern province. Nearly eighty people of the EPRLF group died.

The EPRLF leaders accused the IPKF for merely looking on and not interfering to stop the LTTE. The LTTE blamed the IPKF for inciting the EPRLF members to attack the LTTE. So both the militant groups blamed IPKF for the clash. Fighting between the militant groups continued. The IPKF was not prepared for such an eventuality and so it was unable to control the situation. It sought assistance from the Sri Lankan Police to maintain law and order among the Tamil areas. Later on the IPKF was to take on this policing role as well.

5. Ibid 10 August, 1987.

6. Ibid 22 September, 1987.

Another contentious issue was the return of Sinhala families to the eastern provinces. During the ethnic strife a large number of Sinhala families had fled their homes in the eastern provinces. When the situation had improved after the stationing of the IPKF these families wanted to return. The LTTE was against their return and alleged that the Sri Lankan government was colonising the area to alter the demography of the eastern province.

Since the IPKF had no means of checking the genuineness, or otherwise, of such allegations, it was decided that each case would be referred to the Indian High Commission in Colombo to be discussed with the Sri Lankan government. It was agreed that investigations would be conducted by a representative from the concerned Ministry and the Indian High Commission. A team of representatives was appointed. They visited the site and carried out a detailed check by interrogating the people who were returning and also checking the land records⁷.

This process of verifying the antecedents of the returning Sinhala families was cumbersome and was bound to take a very long time. The LTTE was not prepared to

7. Singh, chapter 4, n.2, pp. 69-70.

accept this line of action and viewed it as an attempt by the government to colonise the traditional Tamil area. It was quick to react and killed Sinhalese civilians.

Conflict between the militant groups continued unabated. Meanwhile, LTTE sprang a surprise, One of its leaders, Amrithalingam Thileepan, went on a fast unto death on 15 September to seek redressal for the Tamils. He put forward five demands. These were:-

- (i) release of all political prisoners and detenus held under anti-terrorist laws.
- (ii) End of Sinhala colonisation of Tamil areas.
- (iii) Disarming of the Home Guards and other Sinhala - dominated para - military forces.
- (iv) Closure of all army and police camps in Tamil - dominated areas. Vacation of school and college buildings by the SLAF.
- (v) The setting up of the IAC⁸.

Thileepan's fast resulted in a Tamil political upsurge in the form of a non-violent mass movement. On 16 September peaceful picketing of government offices began. Indians maintained that the fast was unjustified. It was clearly stated that the demand for

8. Hindustan Times, 29 September, 1987.

the setting up of the IAC had been met. The blame for the delay in the formation of the IAC was laid on the shoulders of the LTTE. The Indian government did not consider it necessary to discuss the matter with the Sri Lankan President. This gave the impression to the LTTE and the Tamil population that the Indians were more concerned about maintaining cordial relations with the Sri Lankan President rather than look after Tamil interests.

On 24 September, 1987 a large group of Tamils collected in front of an IPKF camp at Manner. The Indian troops were forced to open fire when the mob turned violent. A Tamil was killed and about twenty-seven were wounded⁹. This resulted in the alienation of the Tamils and they no longer viewed the Indian forces as saviours but as 'killers of Tamils'.

J.N. Dixit, Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, went from Colombo to Jaffna and gave assurances to the Tamils that their demands would be met but these assurances failed to satisfy them. In fact, it was too late, for the next day i.e. on 25 September, 1987 Thileepan died. Thileepan's death further strained the relations between the LTTE and the Indian forces.

9. Ibid, 25 September, 1987.

Dixit made an attempt to pacify the anguish of the Tamils. He put forth the proposal to set up an IAC in which the LTTE was to have seven out of the twelve seats. President Jayewardene appointed C.V.K. Sivangnanam as the Chairman of the Council. He was from the list of three given by the LTTE to the President for approval. The LTTE leader Prabhakaran stated that Sivagnanam was unacceptable because he wanted the chairmanship to go to a Tamil from the Eastern province. He wanted N. Pathmanathan to become the Chairman¹⁰. Dixit objected to this change and pointed out that the LTTE had given three names as decided and the President was to choose one, which he had done in accordance with his prerogative and the LTTE should accept it. The LTTE refused to accept this arrangement and withdrew support. The proposed IAC did not take off.

Another tragic episode occurred which permanently embittered relations between the LTTE and the IPKF. On 3 October 1987, the Sri Lankan Navy intercepted a boat carrying seventeen LTTE personnel in Sri Lankan territorial waters. All the seventeen members were arrested. Among them were two regional commanders of the LTTE - Kumarappa and Pulendran. The former was in

10. Times of India, 1 October, 1987.

charge of the military and political wings of the organisation in Batticaloa. The latter was in charge of the LTTE's military training and was also the regional commander of Trincomalee. All seventeen were taken to a hangar at Palaly Air Base under Sri Lankan Army guard and were to be taken to Colombo¹¹.

The LTTE wanted the IPKF to intervene and seek their release. They claimed that because of amnesty the capture and detention was illegal. The Sri Lankan authorities, on the other hand, claimed that the amnesty granted pardon for offences committed prior to 30 August 1987, and as these prisoners were held for an offence committed on 3rd October, 1987, they could not be freed. The Sri Lankan authorities wanted to take the prisoners to Colombo for questioning. They were leaving the country without valid papers and had violated the agreement by transporting arms and ammunitions after the expiry of the deadline for surrender of weapons.

Prabhakaran argued that LTTE cadres were allowed to carry personal arms for their own security and blamed the Sri Lankan Navy for violating the agreement by intercepting the boat. He stated that the Sri Lankan government wanted to show the prisoners on television

11. Times of India, 6 October, 1987.

and compel them to make statements against the LTTE and the Tamil movement. He appealed to the peace keepers to take over the prisoners and not allow them to be taken to Colombo. In order to diffuse the tension the IPKF mounted guard around the hangar to prevent the captives from being moved. OFC Depinder Singh flew to Colombo and met General Ranatunge and President Jayewardene to explain the LTTE position and apprehension and seek the release of the prisoners. The President gave an assurance that the prisoners would not be tortured or shown on television¹². He categorically refused to release the prisoners. He argued that these prisoners were caught outside the jurisdiction of the IPKF and so the force had no authority to intervene in the matter. The Indian forces were not sure of their position and so they sought advice from New Delhi. The Indian government tried to persuade Jayewardene to release the prisoners but he refused. The Indian government was helpless in the matter. The IPKF also could not do anything to avert the crisis and had to withdraw the IPKF guard which it had mounted around the hangar.

The prisoners threatened to commit suicide if they were taken to Colombo. The Sri Lankan authorities ignored the threat. On 5th October, 1987, when the Sri Lankan

12. Singh, chapter 4, n.2, p.82.

guards started to escort the prisoners to the aircraft all seventeen swallowed cyanide capsules and twelve of them, including Pulendran and Kumarappa died.

The Indian government had tried its best to seek the release of the prisoners but was helpless because Jayewardene was adamant and refused to listen. Prabhakaran charged that India had tried to bargain with the LTTE. He maintained that the stand taken by the Indian government was that the captives would only be freed if the LTTE accepted the India- Sri Lanka Agreement and the IAC. This was an erroneous charge. He stated that the LTTE had made sincere efforts to abide by its commitment but it was being betrayed by the Indian government as it failed to keep its promise of protecting the Sri Lankan Tamils. The fragile trust which existed between the LTTE and India was completely broken after the suicide of the twelve LTTE men.

LTTE reacted in a swift and savage manner. The very next day Prabhakaran repudiated the cease-fire. The eight Sinhala policemen held captive by the LTTE were executed. Over 200 Sinhalese were massacred in brutal retaliation and over 10,000 rendered homeless. Sri Lankan President blamed the LTTE for violating the cease-fire and not abiding by the agreement, India endorsed this charge.

Relations between the IPKF and the LTTE were now embittered beyond repair. LTTE view was that India did not safeguard the interests of the Tamils and was imposing an unfair agreement on them. The IPKF was stationed in Sri Lanka to make sure India's own strategic interests in Sri Lanka were protected. The force was acting on behalf of the Sri Lankan President to destroy the Tamil movement for an Eelam. This misconception regarding the IPKF proved fatal. The stage was being set for a confrontation between the LTTE and the IPKF.

The situation was grim. By October 1987, the IPKF which had been inducted to maintain peace in the island faced prolonged hostilities. On 8th October a Jonga carrying five paracommandos on their way to collect supplies were ambushed by the LTTE. The men were hacked to death and tyres were put round their necks and ignited. This was a most indecent act and was against all humanitarian conventions. It was a clear indication of the intention of the LTTE they were prepared to fight the Indian soldiers. On the same day, the Chief of Army staff, General Sundarji flew to Palaly where he was briefed about the situation. The next day the LTTE fired on a CRPF patrol van and three men were killed. In the meantime Indian Defence

Minister, K.C. Pant, reached Colombo. He met President Jayewardene¹³. The aim of the visit was to ensure the support of the Sri Lankan government for the IPKF's crackdown on the LTTE.

The President was eager to oblige. On 10th October Jayewardene revoked the amnesty and declared the LTTE illegal.

On 9th October the headquarters of IPKF received direct instructions from General Sundarji to use force against the LTTE. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in a statement in parliament described the instructions given to the IPKF (Appendix III). He stated:

"..... the IPKF were given instructions to apprehend anyone carrying arms or involved in the massacre of civilians the LTTE launched attacks on the IPKF. There was then no alternative to disarming the LTTE. The IPKF were given strict instructions not to use tactics or weapons that could cause major casualties among the civilian population of Jaffna....."

FIGHTING THE LTTE

When attacks were launched by the LTTE on Indian soldiers, the possibility that an offensive operation may have to be undertaken by the IPKF was considered. A contingency plan to undertake the offensive was

13. Times of India, 10 October, 1987.

prepared by HQ 54 Infantry Division. The main plan of action was:-

(a) Capture of Jaffna town earliest by employing multiple thrust lines including air and sea borne landings.

(b) Open at least one axis of maintenance behind the advancing troops to ensure continuous supply.

(c) Troops not dependent on this axis of maintenance to be supplied by air till supply by road could be commenced.

(d) Air, naval and artillery support to be confined to confirmed targets only, and

(e) The Navy to establish a sea blockade.¹⁴

Once the political decision to launch the offensive against the LTTE to disarm them was taken and orders issued to the IPKF, this contingency plan was ordered to be implemented. The Indian Army codenamed its offensive as 'Operation Pawan'. The mission was to

capture Jaffna at the earliest. To capture Jaffna was essential because it was an LTTE stronghold. It was in this town that the LTTE were virtually running a state within a state. Their headquarters, training facilities, munition making factories and caches of

14. Singh, chapter 4, n.2, p. 89.

arms and ammunition were all located in Jaffna. It was, therefore, necessary to capture it in order to break the back of the LTTE and force them to surrender arms and accept the agreement.

The IPKF swung into action after receiving orders to disarm the LTTE. During the early hours of 10 October the 1st Battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry ventured out of Jaffna Fort and blew up the printing press of two LTTE newspapers - the **Eelamurasu** and **Murasoli**. While this action was going on in Sri Lanka, simultaneously in Madras powerful radio transmitters were also seized¹⁵. The purpose was to reduce the ability of the LTTE cadres to communicate with each other.

When the attack was launched the forces at the disposal of the division were:

- (i) Two battalions of 91 Infantry Brigade (5 Madras and 8 Mahar) at Kankesanthurai.
- (ii) Two battalions of 72 Infantry Brigade (4/5 Gorkha and 13 Sikh Light Infantry) at Palaly.

15. **Times of India**, 11-12 October, 1987.

(iii) One battalion of the 91 Infantry Brigade (1st Mahar Light Infantry) was stationed at the Jaffna Fort. It was sharing the Fort with a battalion of the Sri Lanka Army.

(iv) Ten Parachute Commando battalion and a regiment of light artillery.

The number of battalions was too small and even their effective strength was below par. Nearly 30 percent of the troops were not available, some were on leave, some were undertaking training courses and some had been left behind in India.

The strength of the LTTE in and around Jaffna was estimated at about 3,000. Of these at least seventy-five per cent were armed with AK 47 and G3 automatic rifles, light and medium machine guns, mortars and rocket launchers. Indian forces had to fight the Tigers who were well-motivated and well-trained. Jaffna was heavily defended by them.

Operation Pawan was envisaged as a whirlwind campaign aimed at the outright occupation of Jaffna. According to the Indian plan, three brigades were to be positioned at a distance of about twenty kilometers from the Jaffna Fort in three different directions. The troops were to advance along a number of axis in order to divide the attention of the LTTE militants so as to scatter the militants and thereby reduce the

number of militants available to fight the Indian troops along any particular axis of advance.

The plan of action to capture Jaffna was as follows:

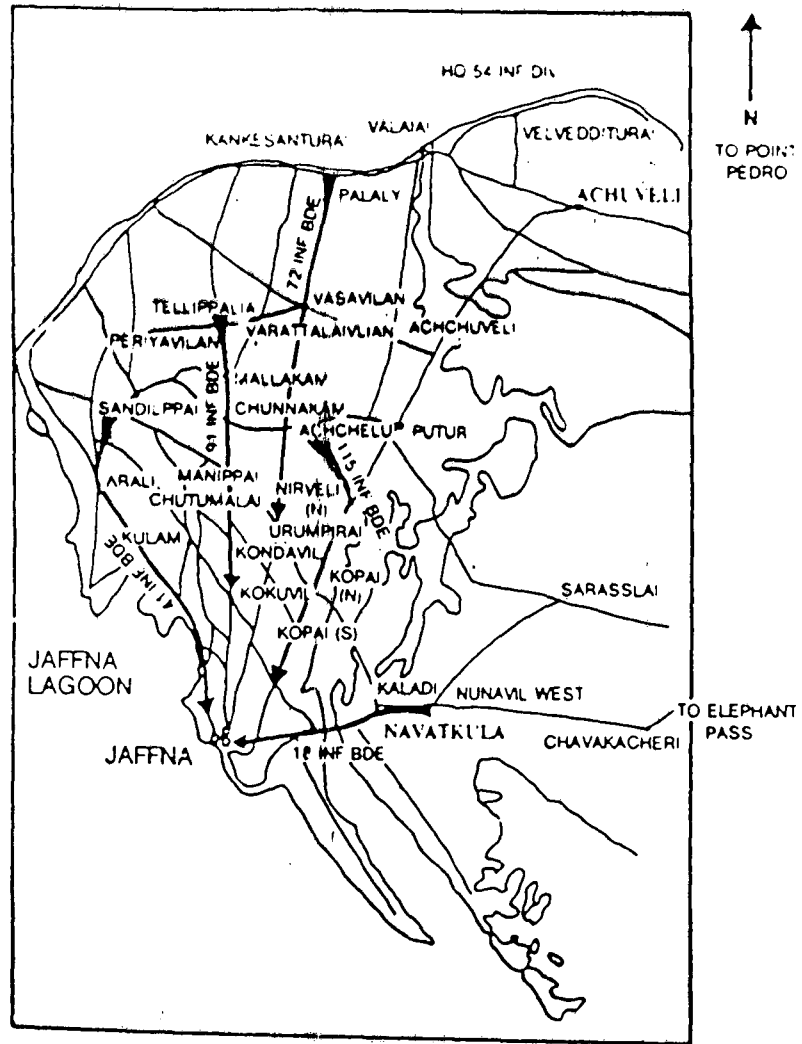
- (i) The 18 Infantry Brigade was to advance and launch an attack from the east.
- (ii) The 72 and 91 Infantry Brigades were to advance and launch an attack from the north.
- (iii) One infantry company and one commando company was to heliland in the area near the Jaffna university to raid the LTTE headquarters located in the university.
- (iv) The 41 and 115 Infantry Brigades were to arrive later and launch an attack from the west and the north respectively (See Map 3).

This plan neat on paper had a major flaw. It was heavily dependent upon timely availability of resources by way of units and helicopters. When the plan was drawn up by the IPKF personnel in Sri Lanka, it was expected that these resources would be made available in time. However, this did not happen and the Indian toops had to undertake the operation with limited resources and so were able to achieve only little success. It was only after the reinforcements arrived that the IPKF was able to launch a full -fledged attack to capture Jaffna.

The LTTE were well prepared for the attack. All the roads leading to Jaffna were mined by digging along the

MAP - 3

THE CAPTURE OF JAFFNA BY IPKF



SOURCE: Depinder Singh, The IPKF in Sri Lanka (Trishul Publications, New Delhi)

sides to retain the original look of the roads. These mines were connected to a nine volt battery and could be detonated from a distance of 100 or 200 yards. Nearly all the buildings were booby-trapped. Among the weapons they possessed AK 47 rifles, .5 inch Browning Machine guns, RPG-7 Anti - tank rockets and an array of mortars of varying calibres. For quick and easy communication they possessed sophisticated walkie - talkie radios.

The Indian troops launched their attack to capture Jaffna on 11 October 1987. The 91 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Ralli moved from Kankesanturai, 8 Mahar Battalion was ordered to advance along the coastal road in a north -western direction and then turn south-west wards towards the Jaffna Fort. The initial advance was swift and trouble free. At about three kilometers from the fort the troops were divided into penny pockets in order to secure a more direct route to Palaly. The troops faced stiff resistance from the militants. The LTTE had organised its defences very well in this region. The mines laid by them played havoc with the Indian troops, seven died in a hail of bullets, 4 trucks which had twenty -four soldiers lost their way¹⁶.

16. Kadian, chapter 3, n.21, p.40.

Another Battalion of the Brigade, 5 Madras, advanced slowly but was held up around Chunnakam. The third Battalion I Maratha Light Infantry remained inside the Fort and attempted some forays from Jaffna Fort. The area around was heavily mined by the militants and the Battalion came under intense small arms fire from built up areas adjoining the Fort. The 4 Mahar Battalion of the Infantry Brigade established contact with Kopai North, 12 Grenadiers was ambushed seven times in their move upto Navatkuli and so could not advance beyond Navatkuli towards West¹⁷.

The 72 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Misra advanced from Palaly towards the Fort. The 4/5 Gorkhas were following the four tanks in Jaffna belonging to 65 Armoured Regiment. Their target was the LTTE headquarters located at the Jaffna University Campus. At about eight kilometers from their target they were ambushed by the militants. The Commanding Officers Lieutenant Colonel Bawa and a Company Commander Major N.J.D. Singh were killed. A very tragic incident occurred. Major A.A. Verghese went into a house to comfort the crying women and children. As he was leaving the room he was shot in the back by an old women. The situation was grim. With almost seventy

17. Singh, chapter 4, n.2, p.96.

personnel dead, many more wounded and only one field officer unhurt, the Gorkhas were unable to carry on the fight further¹⁸.

A Battalion of the 72 Infantry Brigade and 13 Sikh Light Infantry was to launch an attack on the LTTE Headquarters. A part of the Battalion reinforced by 4/5 Gorkhas and four tanks was to later link up by fighting their way through Jaffna. A para - commando company was to land and secure the landing zone for the heliborne Sikh Light Infantry Company. A football field in the Jaffna University campus was selected as their landing zone. Four MI 8 helicopters were used for the mission. On 12 October 103 Para Commando and 30 personnel of the Sikh Light Infantry landed from their helicopters into a hail of intense fire from the militants. Three of the helicopters were hit and damaged. They were unable to fly and so the remaining men of the 13 Sikh Light Infantry could not land. At Palaly a decision was taken that because of the intensity of fire and lack of availability of serviceable helicopters the remaining men would not land. This decision was conveyed to the platoon. But there was no one to receive the message in the field of Jaffna university as the platoon's radioman was already dead. The Para commandos who

18. Kadian, chapter 3, n.21,p. 41.

could have given the platoon this information had, by this time, already moved out to carry out their mission¹⁹.

The Para Commandos managed to take over buildings and gradually spread out to carry out their mission. At this stage they committed a grave mistake. Instead of carrying out the mission as planned they acted on the information given by a local man apprehended by them. He offered to guide them to where the LTTE were hiding, the commandos believed him. The information given by him was incorrect and they came under fire from the LTTE. They fought the militants gallantly and were able to keep them at bay. They hung on to their position. At night they were rescued by their colleagues who, supported by tanks, advanced along the railway line to link up with them. This rescue operation was conducted in the face of heavy fire.

The 13 Sikh Light Infantry Battalion under the Command of Major Birendra Singh faced a major problem. He waited for the remainder of his company to land which he was unaware would never come. The platoon put up a gallant fight but soon ran out of ammunition. No option was left but to undertake a bayonet charge.

19. Ibid, p. 41-42.

All men were killed except one who was wounded and captured. He was the sole survivor to tell the tale²⁰.

The 18 Infantry Brigade moved to Kilinochi from Palaly under Brigadier Dhillon. Later it received order to advance from Chavakachcheri region towards Navatkuli. One of its Battalion, 4 Mahar, moved northwards to advance on a north to south axis. At Kopai North the advance of this unit was halted by the LTTE. Another unit 18 Garhwal, had to suffer heavy losses when it advanced along the west to east axis²¹.

Infantry was the main fighting force in this war. It suffered heavy casualties. Major General Harkirat Singh was forced to use artillery fire in order to provide support to the battered infantry. But only a few 105 mm calibre guns of light artillery were available. Even these were divided among various columns and were scattered. General Harkirat sought assistance of the Sri Lankan Army and asked them for artillery fire support which was readily provided.

The Indian troops could not advance further because of paucity of troops and ammunitions. More troops were required in order to continue the attack on the LTTE.

20. Ibid, p.44.

21. Ibid, p.44.

The 41 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Manjit Singh and 115 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Samay Ram were inducted in the island. A senior staff officer Major General A.S. Kalkat was moved from Pune to Jaffna. The Army Headquarters at Delhi sent Brigadier R.I.S. Kahlon to oversee the operations conducted by the Indian forces.

On 15 October, 1987, 41 Infantry Brigade arrived in Palaly and was ordered to approach Jaffna from the West along the coast road. A battalion of 5 Rajputana Rifles, was sent into battle straightaway, after landing, to join the other four Brigades which were progressing towards Jaffna to flush out the LTTE. They advanced forward clearing all the resistance they encountered enroute. This battalion had the singular distinction of being the first IPKF unit to enter Jaffna and link up with the besieged garrison in Jaffna Fort on 19 October. While advancing towards Jaffna Fort it established its control over Jaffna railway station, Hindu College and Hindu Ladies College²². On the same day 115 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier J.S. Dhilhon launched its attack. They moved through Urmpirai towards Kopai North and Kopai South where 18 Infantry Brigade under Brigadier Samay Ram was held up,

22. Unpublished manuscripts of Major General (Retd.)

C.N.DAS.

by the fierce resistance put up by the LTTE in their advance towards Jaffna. After the link up both Brigades resumed their advance on Jaffna.

After the induction of the 41 and 115 Infantry Brigades the position of the Indian forces was strengthened and the militants were on the run. The LTTE shifted to the Jaffna hospital. They took shelter in it and continued to fight from inside the hospital building. To stall the advance of the Indian troops the militants fired incessantly. The Indian soldiers returned fire. Consequently the hospital became a military target. The building was stormed and occupied. In the crossfire that took place a number of civilians, including doctors, hospital staff and patients were killed or wounded.

The LTTE had extensively mined and booby-trapped the area between Palaly and Jaffna Fort. When the 72 and 115 Infantry Brigades advanced along this line they had to contend with those mines, Colonel Saraon, the Deputy Commander of 72 Infantry Brigade, was killed when his BMP (armoured Fighting Tank) hit a mine. A number of other tanks were also destroyed. At the Nallur Kandaswamy temple nearly 30,000 Tamil civilians had sought refuge from the fighting. The LTTE militants mingled with the refugees and opened fire at the Indian troops. Brigadier Samay Ram refused to return the fire

as it would result in a high number of casualties. The Indian troops suffered some casualties. The LTTE could not carry on the firing for long and decided to withdraw because of the civilians. After their withdrawal the Indian troops entered the temple and a huge cache of arms and ammunition was found in the temple precincts²³.

The Indian troops advancing from Chavakachcheri towards the east encountered stiff resistance by the LTTE. The M1-25 helicopter gunships had to be used to shoot down LTTE militants who were perched atop the coconut trees and were attacking the Indian troops. Only then could the troops advance. By 26 October the Indian forces from all directions of their advance were able to reach Jaffna. The next day the troops conducted operations to comb-out the militants by fanning out across Jaffna. The 91 Infantry Brigade conducted operations in the Pandattarippu and Vadukkodal regions, the 18 Infantry Brigade moved towards Kodikamam area and the 115 Infantry Brigade moved towards Point Pedro to conduct the operations. A few skirmishes between the LTTE and the Indian forces occurred, a large amount of arms and ammunitions were seized and a few militants were captured. The task assigned to the Indian forces, that of capturing Jaffna was completed within sixteen days.

23. Kadian, chapter 3, n.21, pp. 49-50.

After the militants had been pushed out of Jaffna town, operations were undertaken to disarm militants and to unearth arms and ammunition hidden in different places in the countryside and built-up areas. In the process the IPKF unearthed an arms factory of the LTTE. Subsequently, three more arms and ammunition factories and stores full of arms and foundries were unearthed.

In the Trincomalee area the Indian Peacekeeping Force carried out cordon and search operations. It raided and ambushed the LTTE cadres in order to reduce its strength. The main purpose was to establish the domination of the Indian troops over the area so that pressure could be mounted on the LTTE and prevent them from sending further reinforcements to Jaffna. The Indian soldiers had to establish their control over the area and keep the Trincomalee - Vavuniya road and the Elephant Pass free of militants so that the Indian soldiers, vehicles and stores that were coming at the Trincomalee port could be moved to Jaffna quickly.

After the IPKF had established its control over the Jaffna area, redeployment was undertaken so that the areas that had been left vacant while all resources were employed against the LTTE at Jaffna could be brought under IPKF domination. The LTTE adopted guerrilla tactics and continued to attack Indian soldiers. Only a few of the LTTE men were in Jaffna, the rest had fled to the Eastern provinces. A major

clash between the IPKF and LTTE occurred in the Mullaitivu area north of Trincomalee. An LTTE gang located in the area attacked the Indian troops. In the ensuing fire both sides suffered some casualties. By the time reinforcements reached the area, the LTTE stopped the attack, broke contact and disappeared into the forest.

In the Jaffna area another incident took place. A patrol of 8 Mahar under Major R. Parmeshwaran was ambushed by the LTTE. In the ensuing fire Major Parmeshwaran was able to kill the LTTE men and overcome the opposition but he was fatally wounded and later succumbed to his injuries.

Once the IPKF was able to establish its control over Jaffna the LTTE had no place to hide and were constantly on the run. They made a conditional offer of cease-fire, the main condition being that the IPKF should withdraw to positions before 10th October, 1987. The Indian government was under the impression that since the LTTE was willing to accept a cease-fire, its collapse was imminent and in such a situation pressure on the LTTE must be mounted for surrender of arms. Thinking along these lines the Indian government called for a total surrender of arms and unconditional acceptance of the July Agreement by the LTTE and only then the IPKF would be withdrawn to pre-October

position. The LTTE refused to accept this and stuck to their stand that only after the withdrawal of the IPKF to pre-October positions would they surrender arms. Both, the government of India and the LTTE, refused to give way.

War against the insurgents continued. Cordon off operations, house to house searches, mass identification parades, search and destroy missions continued unabated by the IPKF.

The Indian forces had to perform traditional counter-insurgency role in the northern and eastern provinces. In addition, they performed the task of guarding important installations and providing convoy protection.

Uptill its withdrawal in March 1990, the IPKF carried out a number of military operations. In February 1988, a major operation was organised in the Mallaitivu district, the purpose of which was to capture Prabhakaran. In the ensuing fight both sides suffered some casualties. However, the Indian forces were not able to capture Prabhakaran, he escaped into the jungle.

Between mid-February and late March 1988 the IPKF launched a number of operations in Batticaloa district of the Eastern province. The operations were codenamed

'Rolling Trumpets', 'Blooming Tulips', 'Red Rose'.
'Lilac' and 'Goldfish'²⁴. The main purpose of these operations was to smash the LTTE bases in Batticaloa. IPKF also carried out search and destroy operations. The operation in Batticaloa was simpler than the Jaffna operation because the IPKF did not have to attack fortified positions.

In April 1988 'operation Trishul' was launched in the province south of the Elephant Pass. In this operation nearly a hundred weapons were seized by the IPKF. In May - June 1988 'Operation Viraat' was launched. During this operation the LTTE attacked the Indian troops, who were taken by surprise as they were unprepared for such an eventuality. Armoured vehicles and a force of 15,000 men were hastily rushed to provide assistance to the fighting Indian forces. The guerrillas managed to escape and only a few were killed or captured. In the northern province 'Operation Mahaan Kartavya' was launched to apprehend the militants. Later on 'Operation Checkmate' was launched in the eastern province to seize arms and capture the militants²⁵. The main purpose of these operations was to marginalise the LTTE before and during the elections held in these two provinces in September 1988.

24. Mohan Ram, chapter 2, n.5, p. 70.

25. Unpublished manuscripts of Major General (Retd.) C.N. Das.

In the Trincomalee area in March 1989 cordon and search operations were carried out, codenamed 'Operation Talash I', 'Operation May Flower I', 'Operation Vijra' and 'Operation Tracker'. The purpose was to apprehend militants and seize weapons from the coastal areas and the LTTE bases on land.²⁶

The main aim of these operations was to mount unrelenting pressure on the LTTE in order to force them to an unconditional surrender. Indian troops destroyed the LTTE bases, many of its cadres were killed or captured and its sources of arms from outside the country were blocked by Indian naval ships. The result of this unrelentless pressure was that the LTTE militants were on the run. But the IPKF was not able to liquidate the LTTE entirely.

POLITICAL FUNCTIONS

On 10 September 1988, President Jayewardene announced the merger of the two Tamil provinces (northern and eastern provinces) and, on 12 September he announced that elections to the merged North -Eastern Provincial Council (NEPC) would be held in November. After this announcement the IPKF declared a ten-day unilateral cease-fire from 15 September in order to allow the LTTE to participate in the elections. The elections were to

26. Ibid.

be held under the supervision of the IPKF²⁷.

The President had announced the elections but made no arrangements to hold them. Nothing was done to prepare the electoral rolls and appoint election staff. India was firm on holding the elections and so the responsibility for making all the arrangements fell on the IPKF. Indian army men were not prepared for such a task but with the assistance of civilian advisers from the Indian Administrative Service, the IPKF was able to do the job. The Tamil groups refused to participate in the elections because of threat from the LTTE. The IPKF persuaded members of the EPRLF to participate in the elections by giving an assurance of protection. The Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) also participated in the elections.

Filing of nominations was to begin on 2 October but the electoral offices were closed as there was no staff. So no papers could be made available. On 7 October the election staff was flown in from outside the area by the IPKF, to accept papers from the candidates, in Jaffna, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya districts of the northern region. All the thirty - six seats from these five districts were filled uncontested.

27. Times of India, 13 September, 1988.

In the eastern province also election staff and party representatives were flown in by the IPKF. Under the protection of the IPKF the cadres of the EPRLF and ENDLF held election meeting but very few people were present. Meanwhile, IPKF launched its 'Operation Mahaan Kartavya' to maintain pressure on the LTTE in order to prevent them from disrupting the elections.

When polling was to be held none of the officials who were assigned election duties was present so the IPKF flew in 324 officials from Colombo to supervise the polling. Out of the proposed 576 polling stations only 324 were operational. Each of the polling booths was manned by only one officer. Under the supervision of the IPKF the elections were held peacefully²⁸.

EPRLF secured forty one seats, its ally, ENDLF twelve seats and the United National Party only one seat. In the eastern region most of the seats were filled without contest. EPRLF-ENDLF combine formed a government. These elections were held virtually at gun point and so were regarded by the LTTE as a farce.

28. Mohan Ram, **Sri Lanka : The Fractured Island**:(New Delhi: Penguin India, 1989) p. 125.

The performance of the IPKF in the election process was commendable. They had to work against various odds. They had forced the Sri Lankan government to initiate the process and in order to hold the elections successfully they had provided security to the participants. Lieutenant General Kalkat was very happy with the performance of the IPKF. According to him it was possible to hold the elections and establish a viable government in the northern and eastern region because of the work done by the IPKF. They created the necessary environment and showed exemplary courage, dedication and determination.

After the capture of Jaffna city the responsibility for running the administration of the city fell on the IPKF. Brigadier R.I.S. Kahlon was appointed the Town Commandant Jaffna (TCJ). Jaffna was administered by the LTTE cadres and as they had either died fighting or fled to the outlying areas so the city was without administrators. The IPKF had to fill the void. All attempts were made to improve the situation as soon as possible.

Major Kahlon kept his office open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day to receive and answer any complaints. With the passage of time more staff was made available to the TCJ. Three IAS officers from the Tamil Nadu cadre served in running the administration of the town. The

IPKF established good relationship with the people enabling it to run the administration successfully and efficiently.

The TCJ Jaffna had to carry out its tasks under the threat of an attack by the LTTE every now and then. Brigadier R.I.S. Kahlon was awarded the Uttam Yudh Seva Medal for his performance as Town Commandant of Jaffna City.

CIVIL FUNCTIONS

Since its induction the IPKF was involved in carrying out a vast array of activities that affected almost every aspect of life in Sri Lanka. The principal objective was to restore conditions that would enable the people to go about their daily business without fear for their lives and without being victimised and in this connection to restore governmental services and economic activities disrupted by the inter-communal strife. A significant aspect of IPKF procedures under this heading concerned humanitarian and relief assistance.

From the beginning the peace keepers undertook measures to save lives, minimise suffering and to the extent possible restore essential civilian activities. These measures included:

(i) Bringing in food supplies and their distribution to the starving people and to provide medical assistance to the people.

(ii) Normalising the public services, restoring water and electricity supplies, postal services, banking services, etc.

(iii) Providing relief and help in the rehabilitation of refugees.

When the IPKF personnel were stationed in the northern and eastern provinces, the local population started returning to their homes and the troops tried to ameliorate their sufferings. Food was distributed to the starving people. Medical assistance was provided on a very large scale. The IPKF medical personnel facilitated the re-opening of civil hospitals and ensured that they functioned properly. Electrical and mechanical engineers played an important role in repairing defective hospital equipments.

Railway lines were extensively damaged. In order to restart the railway services, work was undertaken by the IPKF to carry out repairs. Roads and runways of existing air fields were repaired speedily to permit free flow of traffic. Banks were opened and local staff was located to run them.

When the IPKF established its control over Jaffna they had to undertake several measures to restore normal conditions. Bringing in food supplies and their distribution along with medical assistance was the first priority. Whatever food supplies the IPKF had been able to move in Jaffna in August - September 1987 had been exhausted. Food supplies arrived at Karainagar and Kankasanturai port from India. There were difficulties in moving the stocks to Jaffna as IPKF vehicles ran the risk of being attacked by the LTTE. Civil vehicles were therefore pressed into service in order to get the food stocks into Jaffna. The IPKF and the Red Cross distributed food to the people.

IPKF played a significant role in reopening of existing hospitals and dispensaries. These were manned by Indian doctors and nursing staff where local doctors were not available. When the Indian Army took over the Jaffna General Hospital it was in a pathetic state. Medicines were not available, there was no electricity and the building was damaged considerably. Officers from the Indian Army worked round the clock to restore medical facilities. Medicines, oxygen cylinders and portable generators were supplied to the hospital by the Indian Army.

Disinfection operation was carried out to improve the hygienic conditions. Reconstruction on a large scale was undertaken in the Jaffna town. Railway lines were repaired to link Jaffna to Killinochi and Colombo. Indian Engineers worked to restore water and electricity supply. The Central Telecommunication office complex had been considerably damaged. The Indians restored 200 exchange lines. Troops were employed to repair places of worship and educational institutions.

Provision and distribution of petrol, kerosene oil and diesel to the people was another function performed by the IPKF. In order to ensure that petrol and diesel did not fall into LTTE hands, a rationing-cum-screening system was introduced. In addition, the IPKF had to perform a multitude of other tasks like carriage and delivery of mail, reopening of banks and educational institutions. Teachers and children had to be persuaded to attend schools and conduct examinations and sometimes the Indian forces were called upon to carry question papers from Colombo. Furthermore, the courts had to be reopened and court staff persuaded to return to work.

The IPKF had to work to ensure rehabilitation of refugees who were brought back from Tamil Nadu. With the assistance of the Red Cross and United Nations

Agency for Refugees, they were rehabilitated. Relief was provided to the refugees. Each family was given a fixed sum of money to construct a temporary shelter, buy basic utensils, some clothes and free stocks of food.

These functions, whether military, civil or political became more frequent, more elaborate and more interrelated with passage of time. The IPKF had to perform all the three functions simultaneously. On the one hand it had to continue its military operations against the LTTE and, on the other, it had to provide humanitarian assistance to the people and help the EPRLF - ENDLF combine to establish a viable government in the northern and eastern province.

C H A P T E R - V

ASSESSMENT OF THE ROLE OF INDIAN PEACE KEEPING OPERATIONS

In 1987 when the IPKF was inducted in Sri Lanka, the popular perception was that the Indian peacekeepers were going to the island country to guarantee peace and create conditions for the cessation of hostilities, including among other things, surrender of arms by the Tamil militants. Understandably, it was welcomed by the Tamils as it brought hopes of a durable peace. But this did not last long. In less than three months it had to bridle the LTTE through military means. The IPKF was also called upon to perform tasks which were beyond the scope of its peacekeeping role. A peacekeeping force is by no means a fighting force. Indian troops were not sent to the island for fighting purposes, yet they were transformed into a fighting force.

There are certain conditions which must be met before a peacekeeping force is inducted into another country. First, the peacekeepers cannot by themselves stop hostilities. Consent of parties to the conflict is essential for this purpose.

Second, a peacekeeping force must be deployed after an agreement between the disputants in order to ensure that it performs only a supervisory role. Its task would be to verify whether the terms of the agreement

are adhered to or not. If no agreement has been reached then it is essential that clear - cut policy directions are issued to the peacekeepers regarding the functions they have to perform.

Third, peacekeeping is primarily a political and diplomatic activity. Success or failure depends more on political conditions than on the military capability of the force.

Lastly, peacekeepers have no rights of enforcement. They must not resort to the use of force in case a party to the conflict decides to violate the peace.

The absence of certain conditions complicated the peacekeeping mission in Sri Lanka from its inception. Each of these conditions will be examined to highlight the way in which they affected the peacekeeping mission.

First, the peacekeepers cannot by themselves stop a conflict. Consent is one of the primary and fundamental requirements of successful peacekeeping. It also rests on the consent of the state on whose territory the peacekeepers operate. If a peacekeeping operation is to maximise its contribution to the maintenance of peace, it must necessarily have the cooperation of all the relevant disputants. In other words, it is the

parties who provide the context for peacekeeping and without that context there can be no peacekeeping.

In Sri Lanka this context was missing. The decision of the Sri Lankan President to invite the Indian troops was not well received either by the LTTE or the Sinhala Buddhists. The opposition parties, specially the Sri Lanka Freedom Party led by Sirimavo Bandaranaike, and some ministers of Jayewardene government opposed the decision of President to invite IPKF to Sri Lanka. The Janatha Vimukhti Peramuna (JVP), a Sinhala extremist group, was also against the IPKF.

Jayewardene concluded the agreement with India in the face of a deep cleavage within his cabinet. Prime Minister Premadasa, National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali and Agriculture Minister Gamina Jayasuriya opposed Jayewardene's decision to invite the IPKF.

In the south the JVP led a violent movement in protest. Anti-India sentiments were whipped up. Popular Sinhala mood was against the IPKF. Critics stated that by inviting the IPKF the President was initiating the process of a 'sell out' to India. In fact, they were against the signing of the agreement. Before the signing of the agreement widespread riots erupted in Colombo. Gradually violence spread to other parts of the country. In order to curb the growing

violence from spreading throughout the country, Colombo and some other towns were put under curfew.

When Rajiv Gandhi, reached Colombo, the entire country was under curfew in order to prevent riots. When he landed at Colombo airport, nearly 10,000 Sinhalas were violently demonstrating against the agreement. The agreement deeply polarised the Sinhala community.

The Indian government and Jayewardene himself had faith in his political authority to overcome opposition to the agreement and have it accepted by the party and approved by Parliament. In his opinion once it was accepted and approved by Parliament the administration would implement the agreement. Sinhala acceptance of the agreement was taken for granted by the President. Jayewardene's confidence in his ability to get acceptance of Parliament emanated from the insular position he enjoyed under the Sri Lankan Constitution. He made it clear at his Press Conference after the signing of the agreement that if Parliament tried to obstruct the implementation of the agreement he would dissolve Parliament¹. Many of the ruling party MP's were unhappy over the President's decision to sign the

1. H.K.Dua, "Launching Peace in Sri Lanka", **The Hindustan Times**, 5 August, 1987.

Agreement and also to invite the IPKF. They did not openly oppose the decision because they were not willing to relinquish power.

Reaction in Sri Lanka to the imminent arrival of the IPKF in the northern and eastern region was hostile. It was seen by the Sinhalese as compromising national sovereignty. There was a feeling that IPKF's role could grow beyond merely keeping the peace and disarming the Tamil militants. They perceived that the IPKF was sent to Sri Lanka by India in order to further its expansionist and hegemonistic designs.

Until 1987 the JVP was not so popular among the Sinhalese. Its activities involved eliminating dissidents in its ranks and also members of other leftist organisations which competed with it for influence among the Sinhala youth. After the induction of the IPKF, the JVP directed its wrath against India and those who supported the India - Sri Lanka Agreement. The JVP got a new lease of life and it thrived on the opposition to the Indian military presence. It was able to muster the support of Sirimavo Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party and also some members of the ruling United National Party. Taking advantage of widespread resentment against the presence of the IPKF, the JVP was able to further intensify its violent activities. It unleashed

a new brand of violence and assassinated all those who supported the Agreement².

With success in its efforts to eliminate those who supported the Agreement, the JVP was able to muster a lot of support from the Sinhalese. It was clear that Jayewardene had failed to sell the agreement to the Sinhalese. He could not build a Sinhala consensus within the constraints of the India - Sri Lanka Agreement. To counter criticism against the presence of the IPKF, Jayewardene made several statements to the effect that the IPKF was under him and he could order them out of Sri Lanka whenever he wished. But the Sinhalese did not accept this line of argument. Jayewardene could not convince the Sinhalese that the IPKF was on the island for good and not to harm the Sinhalese interests and it was not an infringement of Sri Lankan sovereignty.

The Tamil community welcomed the induction of the IPKF as they felt that there would be some respite from the

2. For details see Bryan Pfaffenberger, "Sri Lanka in 1987 - Indian Intervention and Resurgence of the JVP", *Asian Survey*, vol. 28, no. 2, February, 1988, pp 137-147, Shelton U. Kodikara, "The Continuing Crisis in Sri Lanka - The JVP, the Indian Troops and Tamil Politics", *Asian Survey*, vol. 29, no. 7, July, 1989, pp 716-724.

atrocities of the Sri Lankan Army. The Tamil groups like the EPRLF, Eelam People's Revolutionary Front, People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) and the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front (ENDLF) extended their collective support to the Agreement. They welcomed the deployment of the IPKF and regarded it as necessary and unavoidable. They were of the opinion that because successive Sri Lankan governments had in the past never implemented previous agreements, it was imperative that the government of India should be brought in as the guarantor of the Agreement. Hence, they welcomed the decision of the President to invite the IPKF to supervise the implementation of the Agreement³.

The position taken by the LTTE, which regarded itself as the sole legitimate representative of the Tamil people and denied any legitimacy to the other Tamil politico-military organisations, was different. It rejected the Agreement. Prabhakaran maintained that it did not provide for a permanent solution to the problem of the Tamils and vowed to continue the struggle for attaining a Tamil Eelam. The arrival of the IPKF was

3. "E.P.R.L.F on the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord- An Assessment"; Indo Sri Lanka Agreement, 1987: An Emerging Consensus (ProTEG Publication, 1988) pp 156-158.

viewed with apprehension and within three months of its induction, the IPKF faced the wrath of the LTTE.

First, the Indian peacekeeping operation had the consent of the President and some Tamil groups. But the LTTE and the Sinhalese opposed the IPKF. The LTTE, having established its supremacy among the various Tamil groups and being militarily the most powerful group, posed a major challenge to the peace process.

Second, Peacekeeping is a hazardous process when hurriedly imposed at the most acute stage of hostilities where no prior written agreement has been reached between the parties to the conflict. In such situations there is always a possibility that one party may refuse to cooperate with the peacekeeping forces. Hence, advance preparation must be done and a comprehensive agreement of peacekeeping modalities must be worked out so that the likelihood of further eruption of hostilities is reduced. The functions of the peacekeeping forces must be clearly defined.

While the Agreement was signed by the Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka, no agreement was reached between Jayewardene and the Tamil groups. As the ethnic conflict is an internal problem of Sri Lanka, the Indian government had no authority to sign the agreement on behalf of the Tamils.

The agreement was concluded in great haste. India was keen to find an early solution to the ethnic problem and restore peace to the island to serve her own national and security interests. A peace keeping force was sent to implement the agreement at the invitation of Jayewardene. However, no mention was made about the specific role that the IPKF had to perform in Sri Lanka. Its functions were not clearly defined and no clear cut policy directions were issued. The peacekeepers had a vague idea of their role. They were expected to ensure surrender of arms and to prevent fighting from recurring. The tasks of the peacekeepers were perceived to be very simple. No contingency plans were formulated to meet the situation in case the Tamils refused to accept the Agreement.

When the LTTE refused to surrender arms, the peacekeepers were unable to cope with the situation. Due to lack of adequate planning and serious preparations, the Indian forces were drawn into a role far different from what was envisaged at the time of induction.

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Third, Peacekeeping is primarily a political and diplomatic activity. Success or failure depends much more on political conditions than on the military capability of the force. The Indian peacekeeping operation in Sri Lanka soon became a military campaign. From the beginning Prabhakaran did not accept the

concessions which were granted to the Tamils and strictly adhered to his demand of a separate state. In such a situation it was essential for the Indian and Sri Lankan government to keep the channel of negotiations open with the LTTE. Peacekeeping forces could have played a very important role in this regard. As the peacekeepers were in direct contact with the LTTE they could communicate with them easily, messages and appeals could be sent to the LTTE leader calling upon him to exercise restraint, refrain from provocative actions, observe cease-fire, surrender arms and participate in the political process, cooperate with the peacekeepers and contribute to a return to normal conditions. It was an arduous task considering the attitude of the LTTE, but it should have been undertaken to achieve a permanent settlement.

Instead of using the peacekeeping force as a political instrument to help settle the conflict, it was assigned a military role to forcefully disarm the LTTE and make them accept the Agreement. Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene were of the opinion that all the genuine demands of the Tamils had been met and Prabhakaran was unnecessarily indulging in violence and making the implementation of the agreement more difficult. They failed to realise that the attainment of the goal of Tamil Eelam is absolutely vital for the existence of

the LTTE. When Prabhakaran refused to accept the terms of the Agreement, negotiations should have been held with the LTTE in which the IPKF could have played an important role in order to arrive at an amicable settlement.

Rajiv Gandhi and Jayewardene adopted a rigid stance that the LTTE was primarily a guerrilla force without any political ideology and was therefore unable to adjust to the political process and so it was refusing to accept the Agreement. The only way to tackle the LTTE, according to them, was to use force.

When the LTTE refused to surrender arms the IPKF was instructed to use force to disarm the militants. This damaged the peace process considerably. Once the decision to tackle the LTTE by force was taken, the military aspect took precedence over the political aspect. The result was a full-scale war against the LTTE. This left no room for political negotiations. Though the IPKF declared a ten-day cease-fire in September 1987 to allow LTTE to participate in the elections but it refused. No progress could be made on the political front. The LTTE was willing to surrender arms if the IPKF returned to pre-October positions but the Indian government wanted it to surrender arms and accept the agreement. Only then would the IPKF withdraw to the pre-October positions. Because both stuck to their stance no settlement was possible.

Lastly, the IPKF was sent to Sri Lanka to restore peace but within three months of its induction its role changed. From a peacekeeping force it was transformed to a fighting force. Certain events took place which soured relations between the LTTE and the IPKF. Most important was the death of Thileepan following his fast while drawing India's attention to the demands of the Tamils and capture of seventeen LTTE militants by Sri Lankan Navy and death of twelve of them by taking cyanide. The LTTE wanted the IPKF to withdraw as it saw it as a major impediment in its struggle for Eelam. LTTE used these events as a pretext to launch an attack on the IPKF.

The LTTE provoked the IPKF in order to make it unpopular among the Tamils and the force succumbed to these tactics. When the peacekeepers used force against the LTTE the purpose of the LTTE was served - to denigrate the peacekeepers in the eyes of the Tamils. Soon the peacekeepers were called upon to wage a full-scale war. Peacekeepers were no longer regarded as saviours and trustworthy friends but as 'killers of Tamils'. By resorting to the use of force the IPKF got deeply involved in the internal conflict which it should not have.

India was opposed to a military solution to the ethnic problem. Ironically, peacekeepers were taking the same road which the Sri Lankan forces had taken in early 1987 - to capture Jaffna city by force. At that moment the Indian government had opposed it and in October 1987 the Indians were doing the same thing.

Peacekeepers can never resolve a conflict by using force to compel a party to the dispute to acquiesce. The IPKF should not have been engaged in a war with the LTTE. It was not equipped for combat.

CONCLUSION

The role that the IPKF performed in Sri Lanka has hardly a precedent in the history of contemporary international relations. At the invitation of the President of Sri Lanka, India sent a Peacekeeping force to the island republic. The main tasks assigned to IPKF were to restore peace, to rid the island republic of continuing civil war and to safeguard the national unity and integrity of Sri Lanka.

An analysis of the events in Sri Lanka from the time of the induction of the IPKF (July 1987) upto its withdrawal (March 1990) brings to light the fact that with changing circumstances the role of the IPKF also underwent change. In July 1987 conditions were such that it was essential for India to send the force to Sri Lanka in order to supervise the cessation of hostilities, accept the surrender of arms by the militants, confine the Sri Lankan security forces to the barracks and restore normal civilian conditions that would enable the people of the island to go about their daily business without fear.

By October 1987 the situation had altered completely. The LTTE refused to surrender arms and retreated into the jungles to take up arms against the IPKF. As a consequence of the change in situation the role of the

IPKF also changed. The functions of the IPKF were conceived in relation to the inter-ethnic conflict and it was not supposed to engage in large - scale hostilities arising from the actions of one of the militant groups. When the peacekeepers were attacked by the LTTE their role also underwent a change. It was transformed from a force to keep the peace to a force to combat the LTTE.

When the Indian government took the political decision to employ force against the LTTE, the IPKF OFC, Lt. Col Depinder Singh did express his unwillingness to do so. He recommended to General Sundarji that "we must not go in for the hard option because, if we did, we would be stuck in an insurgency situation for the next twenty years"¹. But this advice of a military commander who had been in closer touch with reality was completely ignored by the Indian Government.

The opinion held by the Indian government was that the Indian forces would be able to overrun the LTTE in a few days and then they would surrender arms and accept the Agreement. But events proved that Indian forces were unable to reduce the LTTE to the point of either accepting the Agreement or surrendering arms.

1. Singh, chapter 4, n.2, p. 84.

The peacekeeping operations were overshadowed by the Indian Army's military operations. The IPKF operations proved very costly to India in lives, material and money. Failure of Indian intelligence and euphoria in government circles in New Delhi made India commit its defence forces to perform tasks in Sri Lanka which were actually to be performed by a country's own security forces.

The IPKF waged a long war in order to tame the LTTE. During the course of its prolonged operations, the force found itself in an unfamiliar and unpopular role. It was severely criticised for its actions and was dubbed as an 'invading army'. It was accused of committing atrocities on the local population. In the process of carrying out military operations it found its image tarnished among a segment of the local population, particularly in the north where people at times were caught in the cross-fire between the LTTE and the IPKF. The responsibility for this state of affairs must be laid at the door of the political decision-makers, who committed the Indian Army to perform a military instead of a peacekeeping role. They failed to comprehend the complexity of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. All along the LTTE was held responsible for sabotaging the peace process and credit was given to Jayewardene for meeting all the demands of the Tamils.

Rajiv Gandhi failed to see through the diabolical designs of Jayewardene. He wanted to have the cake and eat it too. He signed the agreement in order to preserve his own position as there existed a threat of a coup against his regime and for this reason he was willing to grant concessions to the Tamils and invite the IPKF to supervise cessation of hostilities. Soon after induction of the IPKF, his intentions became clear when he failed to fully implement the agreement. The LTTE, already against the agreement, but willing to participate in the peace process because of Indian intervention was alienated by Jayewardene.

Certain issues mentioned in the July 1987 Agreement were not fully implemented. These were:

(i) The emergency imposed in the Tamil areas was not immediately lifted.

(ii) All the LTTE detenus were not released.

(iii) The assurance that Sri Lankan Armed Forces would be confined to the barracks was flouted.

(iv) The Home-Guards were not fully disbanded and the withdrawal of the Sri Lankan Armed Forces from the positions occupied after May 1987 was not complete. They did not vacate some of the college and school buildings occupied by them.

One of the LTTE leader Thileepan undertook fast unto death in order to draw attention of the Indian government to these issues but the Indian government soft - paddled the issue and when Thileepan died the LTTE turned against the IPKF. Furthermore, when seventeen LTTE prisoners were caught by the Sri Lankan Navy LTTE sought their release but Jayewardene refused to listen and when twelve of them died by consuming cynaide LTTE held the IPKF responsible for it.

These two events prove that the intention of Jayewardene was to use the IPKF to tackle the LTTE, because he was aware that if the LTTE turned against the IPKF the Indian government would give orders to the IPKF to force it into submission. By driving a wedge between the LTTE and the IPKF, he was able to do so. He knew that once the IPKF launched military operations against the LTTE there would be no implementation of the Agreement. Thus, with one hand he did give concessions to the Tamils but with the other he took them away.

This was evident when he called for elections to the North Eastern Provincial Council (NEPC). No arrangements were made by the Sri Lankan government to hold elections. The IPKF had to undertake the responsibility for holding them. Even after the

elections, there was no meaningful devolution of powers. When the Council came into existence it faced significant opposition throughout the country. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna along with the more militant Sinhala opposition led by the JVP opposed it. It was also opposed by some members of the ruling party. Faced with opposition Jayewardene did not go ahead with the devolution of powers.

His actions after the signing of the agreement were consistent with the conduct of the Sinhalese leaders over the years. Whenever an agreement was reached between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil leaders and there seemed a chance for a negotiated settlement, the Sinhalese leaders would soon abort that possibility by abrogating the pact because of widespread Sinhalese opposition.

Thus, the Indian government, particularly Rajiv Gandhi, were at fault to hold LTTE solely responsible for flouting the Agreement. Jayewardene was equally responsible for blocking the smooth implementation of the Agreement.

Before the signing of the Agreement on July 29, several attempts were made by the Indian government to mediate between the Tamil groups and the Sri Lankan government. Some of the important proposals put forth were

Parthasarathy's 'Annexure C', the Draft Framework of Accord and Understanding and the December 19 Proposals. All of these proposals failed to solve the problem because at times the proposals were withdrawn by the President when faced with strong Sinhala opposition and at other times the militants, particularly the LTTE, rejected them because it had no faith in the President. They always felt that the proposals put forth would never be implemented. Rajiv Gandhi held the LTTE more responsible for the failure of these attempts for a political solution rather than Jayewardene.

This was evident from his statement in Parliament on November 9, 1987 on the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement (See Appendix III). He stated:

"..... Peace had been established in the north and east of Sri Lanka. The return to normalcy was imminent. It is a matter of great regret that the LTTE threw all this away. They went back on every commitment they had given to us. They deliberately set out to wreck the agreement, because they were unable or unwilling to make the transition from militancy to the democratic political process while they promised us support to the agreement they started a propaganda campaign against India and the agreement They organised disturbances in Jaffna disrupting normal life and the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation

.... They tried to inflame Tamil opinion in Jaffna by imposing an unnecessary and tragic fast unto death by one of their cadres to demand concessions that were already under discussion and were resolved to their satisfaction".

He further stated:

".....They publicly repudiated the agreement and started armed attacks on Sinhalese and Muslims in the east and their murder of Sri Lankan soldiers threatened to produce a Sinhala backlash that would have destroyed the agreement and produced a cycle of violence worse than any the island had so far seen".

Rajiv Gandhi's view that the attacks by the LTTE on the Sinhalese and Muslims would produce a Sinhala backlash and would result in violence engulfing the island was imprudent and unfounded. At that moment the Sinhalese were more opposed to the presence of the IPKF in Sri Lanka than the activities of the LTTE. In fact, it was the Agreement which resulted in a Sinhala backlash.

Furthermore Rajiv Gandhi stated:

" the House will appreciate that this could not have been allowed to happen. In these circumstances, the IPKF was given instructions to apprehend anyone carrying arms or involved in the massacre of civilians.

At this point the LTTE launched attacks on the IPKF. There was then no alternative to disarming the LTTE".

Rajiv Gandhi thus, regarded the LTTE as the sole impediment to the peace process. This assessment was based on flawed intelligence reports which portrayed the LTTE as a rag - tag guerrilla group which could be brought to book by the superior Indian Army. The intelligence agencies in India were not able to assess correctly the strength of the LTTE. The qualities of leadership of the LTTE, its dedication to the cause, courage, will and determination to fight, contacts with other countries, particularly with Israel and Lebanon and sources of supply of material and money. These were the inputs which should have been analysed, assessed and evaluated before the Indian government took the decision to commit the peacekeepers to perform a military role.

Considering the fact that our intelligence agencies had equipped and trained the LTTE cadres, they should have been able to provide the required information regarding the LTTE chain and level of command, the type and availability of transportation, the quantity, quality and types of weapons and explosives and their special skills.

The agencies were not in a position to provide the information because no records had been kept of the people trained by Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). It had trained the militants in guerrilla warfare. They were taught to handle light and medium machine guns, automatic rifles, pistols and rocket propelled grenades. Training was also reportedly imparted by the Indian Army at Deolali and Ahmednagar. This is, however, denied by the army.

Another reason for laxity in providing information was that very few agents had been sent by RAW and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) to Sri Lanka to gather information. Some personnel were sent to Jaffna, Batticaloa and Trincommalee. But they were unable to work with secrecy as their presence was known to all the militant groups. Infact, they survived with the help of the guerrillas. They were in a way indebted to the guerrillas for their survival.

These personnel acted in an incompetent manner and could not collect independent, reliable and useful information. No information was gathered regarding the training imparted by Israeli and Lebanese personnel to the LTTE and also the assistance sought by them from the Governments of Iran and Libya, the LTTE tactics and the mines and booby traps employed by them, the efficient communication network of the LTTE and also

the Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)² used by them. The information given to the IPKF was confined only to the peace time location of the LTTE units, headquarters and arms caches which was of little use to IPKF.

Furthermore, the intelligence agencies were in no position to provide adequate topographical information about the terrain, the quality and presence of roads, bridges, railway lines, airfields and harbours where

2. Some of the IED'S used by the LTTE were :-

(a) **Claymore Mines** : Which were three times more powerful than the ones generally used. They contained nails and pellets placed in a cylindrical shaped container. When detonated they could reach a distance of 30-40 meters.

(b) **Grape Shot Charges**: They resembled a large 12 bore cartridge and were filled with nails, steel fillings etc. when detonated they caused excessive damage.

(c) **Mines** : Explosives comprising of gelatine, plastics and ammoral powder weighing nearly 100 kgs were filled into plastic containers like buckets, jerricanes etc. These were generally used on roads. They were detonated by electronic pressure or pull switches. All these IED'S were locally manufactured by the militants in underground bunkers.

the military operations were to be conducted. Only a limited number of copies of 1937 edition maps were made available which did not have all the necessary information and tremendous changes that had occurred during the period of fifty years (1937 to 1987). For example, Palaly airfield was not marked on these maps as it did not exist at that time. These maps were therefore, of little use for terrain evaluation for infantry and mechanised forces. Also, there was no proper arrangement even to take out photocopies of these maps as the photocopy machine available in Sri Lanka was quite old and could take out only eight copies in a day.

It would have been appropriate to look at the attempts made by Tamil leaders independently, well before India's active involvement, to facilitate a solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. The more notable amongst these attempts were:

- (i) The Bandaranaike - Chelvanayakam Pact of 1957.
- (ii) Senanayake - Chelvanayakam Pact of 1965, and
- (iii) The establishment of District Development Councils in 1980.

These agreements were never implemented by the government because of vehement Sinhala opposition. In fact, the Bandaranaike - Chelvanayakam Pact was not implemented because it was Jayewardene who led the agitation and forced the government to abrogate it.

The trend was that discriminatory policies of the Sinhalese - dominated government would agitate the Tamils. In order to seek justice the Tamil leaders would launch an agitation which would sometimes take a violent turn and paralyse the administration, particularly, of the northern and eastern provinces. To diffuse the crisis the government would reach an agreement with the Tamil leaders and grant some concessions. The Sinhalese majority, would launch a counter - agitation in order to pressurise the government to withdraw the concessions granted to the Tamils. These agitations were so violent that the government was unnerved by them and to appease the Sinhalese it would soon abrogate the agreements.

The Indian government should have kept in mind the attitude of the Sri Lankan Government towards the agreement reached between India and Sri Lanka regarding the issue of citizenship and other rights of the Tamils of Indian origin. The Sri Lankan government has all along soft - pedalled the implementation of the provisions of the agreement.

Thus, the Indian government failed to study the problem deeply enough before giving orders to disarm the LTTE. The government should have studied the historical background of ethnic strife and thoroughly examined the reasons for the failure of past agreements. The ramifications of involving the IPKF into the internal conflict of Sri Lanka should have been analysed thoroughly.

In situations where the peace-keeping force comes under attack it should be withdrawn rather than use force. After nearly three years of harrowing experience the IPKF returned to India without restoring peace and ethnic harmony but further aggravating the conflict.

APPENDIX I

India - Sri Lanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Sri Lanka:

The President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, His Excellency Mr. J.R. Jayewardene and the Prime Minister of the Republic of India, His Excellency Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, having met at Colombo on 29th July 1987.

Attaching utmost importance to nurturing, intensifying and strengthening the traditional friendship of Sri Lanka and India, and acknowledging the imperative need of resolving the ethnic problem of Sri Lanka, and the consequent violence, and for the safety, well-being and prosperity of people belonging to all communities in Sri Lanka.

Have this day entered into the following Agreement to fulfill this objective.

In this context,

1.1 Desiring to preserve the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka;

1.2 Acknowledging that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic and a multi-lingual plural society consisting, inter alia, of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims (Moors) and Burghers;

1.3 Recognising that each ethnic group has a distinct cultural and linguistic identity which has to be carefully nurtured;

1.4 Also recognizing that the Northern and the Eastern Provinces have been areas of historical habitation of Sri Lankan Tamil speaking peoples, who have at all times hitherto lived together in this territory with other ethnic groups;

1.5 Conscious of the necessity of strengthening the forces contributing to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, and preserving its character as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious plural society, in which all citizens can live in equality, safety and harmony, and prosper and fulfill their aspirations;

2. Resolve that,

2.1 Since the Government of Sri Lanka proposes to permit adjoining Provinces to join to form one administrative unit and also by a referendum to separate as may be permitted to the Northern and Eastern provinces as outlined below:

2.2 During the period, which shall be considered an interim period, i.e. from the date of the elections to the Provincial Council, as specified in Para 2.8 to the

date of the referendum as specified in Para 2.3, the Northern and Eastern provinces as now constituted, will form one administrative unit, having one elected Provincial Council. Such a unit will have one Governor, one Chief Minister and one Board of Ministers.

2.3 There will be a referendum on or before 31st December, 1988 to enable the people of the Eastern Province to decide whether;

(a) The Eastern Province should remain linked with the Northern Province as one administrative unit, and continue to be governed together with the Northern Province as specified in para 2.2 or

(b) The Eastern Province should constitute a separate administrative unit having its own distinct Provincial Council with a separate Governor, Chief Minister and Board of Ministers.

The President may, at his discretion, decide to postpone such a referendum.

2.4 All persons who have been displaced due to ethnic violence, or other reasons, will have the right to vote in such a referendum. Necessary conditions to enable them to return to areas from where they were displaced will be created.

2.5 The referendum, when held, will be monitored by a committee headed by the Chief Justice, a member

appointed by the President, nominated by the Government of Sri Lanka; and a member appointed by the President, nominated by the representatives of the Tamil speaking people of the Eastern Province.

2.6 A simple majority will be sufficient to determine the result of the referendum.

2.7 Meetings and other forms of propaganda, permissible within the laws of the country, will be allowed before the referendum.

2.8 Elections to Provincial Councils will be held within the next three months, in any event before 31 December 1987, Indian observers will be invited for elections to the Provincial Council of the North and East.

2.9 The Emergency will be lifted in the Eastern and Northern Provinces by 15 August 1987. A cessation of hostilities will come into effect all over the island within 48 hours of the signing of this Agreement. All arms presently held by militant groups will be surrendered in accordance with an agreed procedure to authorities to be designated by the Government of Sri Lanka. Consequent to the cessation of hostilities and the surrender of arms by militant groups, the army and other security personnel will be confined to barracks in camps as on 25 May 1987. The process of

surrendering of arms and the confining of security personnel moving back to barracks shall be completed within 72 hours of the cessation of hostilities coming into effect.

2.10 The government of Sri Lanka will utilize for the purpose of law enforcement and maintenance of security in the Northern and Eastern provinces the same organisations and mechanisms of government as are used in the rest of the country.

2.11 The President of Sri Lanka will grant a general amnesty to political and other prisoners now held in custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other Emergency laws, and to combatants, as well as to those persons accused, charged and/or convicted under these laws. The Government of Sri Lanka will make special efforts to rehabilitate militant youth with a view to bringing them back into the mainstream of national life. India will co-operate in the process.

2.12 The Government of Sri Lanka will accept and abide by the above provisions and expect all others to do likewise.

2.13 If the framework for the resolution is accepted, the Government of Sri Lanka will implement the relevant proposals forthwith.

2.14 The government of India will underwrite and guarantee the resolutions, and co-operate in the implementation of these proposals.

2.15 These proposals are conditional to an acceptance of the proposals negotiated from 4.5.1986 to 19.12.1986. Residual matters not finalised during the above negotiations shall be resolved between India and Sri Lanka within a period of six weeks of signing this agreement. These proposals are also conditional to the Government of India co-operating directly with the government of Sri Lanka in their implementation.

2.16 These proposals are also conditional to the government of India taking the following actions if any militant groups operating in Sri Lanka do not accept this framework of proposals for a settlement, namely,

(a) India will take all necessary steps to ensure that Indian territory is not used for activities prejudicial to the unity, integrity and security of Sri Lanka.

(b) The Indian Navy/Coast Guard will co-operate with the Sri Lanka Navy in preventing Tamil militant activities from affecting Sri Lanka.

(c) In the event that the Government of Sri Lanka requests the Government of India to afford military assistance to implement these proposals, the Government of India will cooperate by giving to the Government of Sri Lanka such military assistance as and when requested.

(d) The Government of India will expedite repatriation from Sri Lanka of Indian citizens to India who are resident there, concurrently with the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees from Tamil Nadu.

(e) The Government of Sri Lanka and India will cooperate in ensuring the physical security and safety of all communities inhabiting the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

2.17 The government of Sri Lanka shall ensure free, full and fair participation of voters from all communities in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in electoral processes envisaged in this Agreement. The Government of India will extend full cooperation to the Government of Sri Lanka in this regard.

2.18 The official language of Sri Lanka shall be Sinhala. Tamil and English will also be official language.

3. This Agreement and the Annexure thereto shall come into force upon signature.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF we have set out hands and seals hereunto, DONE IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA, on this the twenty-ninth day of July of the year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty Seven, in duplicate, both texts being equally authentic.

Junius Richard Jayewardene
President of the Democratic
Socialist republic of Sri Lanka

Rajiv Gandhi
Prime Minister of
the Republic of
India.

Annexure to the Agreement

1. His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka and His Excellency the Prime Minister of India agree that the referendum mentioned in paragraph 2 and its subparagraphs of the Agreement will be observed by a representative of the Election Commission of India to be invited by His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka.
2. Similarly, both Heads of Government agree that the elections to the Provincial Council mentioned in paragraph 2.8 of the Agreement will be observed by a representative of the Government of India to be invited by the President of Sri Lanka.

3. His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka agrees that the Home Guards would be disbanded and all para-military personnel will be withdrawn from the Eastern and Northern Provinces with a view to creating conditions conducive to fair elections to the council.

The President, in his discretion, shall absorb such para-military forces, which came into being due to ethnic violence, into the regular security forces of Sri Lanka.

4. The President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India agree that the Tamil militants shall surrender their arms to authorities agreed upon to be designated by the President of Sri Lanka. The surrender shall take place in the presence of one senior representative each of the Sri Lanka Red Cross and the Indian Red Cross.

5. The President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India agree that a joint Indo-Sri Lankan observer group consisting of qualified representatives of the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of India would monitor the cessation of hostilities from 31 July 1987.

The President of Sri Lanka and the Prime Minister of India also agree that in terms of paragraph 2.14 and paragraph 2.16(c) of the Agreement, an Indian Peace

Keeping contingent may be invited by the President of Sri Lanka to guarantee and enforce the cessation of hostilities, if so required.

Letter from Mr. J.R. Jayewardene

(President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka)

To Shri Rajiv Gandhi

(Prime Minister of the Republic of India)

Excellency.

Please refer to your letter dated the 29th July 1987,

which reads as follows:

Excellency,

Conscious of the friendship between our two countries stretching over two millennia and more, and recognizing the importance of nurturing this traditional friendship, it is imperative that both Sri Lanka and India reaffirm the decision not to allow our respective territories to be used for activities prejudicial to each others unity, territorial integrity and security.

2. In this, spirit, you had, during the course of our discussions, agreed to meet some of India's concerns as follows:

(i) Your Excellency and myself will reach an early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel with a view to ensuring that such presences will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

- (ii) Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India's interests.
- (iii) The work of restoring and operating the Trincomalee oil tank farm will be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka.
- (iv) Sri Lanka's agreements with foreign broadcasting organizations will be reviewed to ensure that any facilities set up by them in Sri Lanka are used solely as public broadcasting facilities and not for any military or intelligence purposes.

3. In the same spirit, India will:

- (i) Deport all Sri Lankan citizens who are found to be engaging in terrorist activities or advocating separatism or secessionism.
- (ii) Provide training facilities and military supplies for Sri Lankan security forces.

4. India and Sri Lanka have agreed to set up a joint consultative mechanism to continuously review matters of common concern in the light of the objectives stated in para I and specifically to monitor the implementation of other matters contained in this

letter.

5. Kindly confirm, Excellency, that the above correctly sets out the agreement reached between us.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-

(Rajiv Gandhi)

His Excellency
Mr. J.R. Jayewardene,
President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.
Colombo

This is to confirm that the above correctly sets out the understanding reached between us.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sd/-

(J.R. Jayewardene)

His Excellency
Mr. Rajiv Gandhi,
Prime Minister of the Republic of India,
New Delhi.

Source : Mohan Ram, **Sri Lanka : The Fractured Island**: (New Delhi : Penguin India, 1989) Appendix-I.

APPENDIX II

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam View of the India - Sri Lanka Agreement:

The 'we love India and the people of India' speech of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam Leader V. Prabhakaran on 4 August 1987 at the Sudumalai Amman temple in the vicinity of Jaffna town is an interesting political exposition. This translation from Tamil was made available by the LTTE.

My beloved and esteemed people of Tamil Eelam:

Today there has taken place a tremendous turn in our liberation struggle. This has come suddenly, in a way that has stunned us, and as if it were beyond our power to influence events.

Whether the consequences of this will be favourable to us, we shall have to wait and see.

You are aware that this agreement, concluded suddenly and with great speed between India and Sri Lanka, without consulting our people and without consulting our people's representatives, is being implemented with expedition and urgency. Until I went to Delhi, I did not know anything about this agreement. Saying that the Indian Prime Minister desired to see me, they invited me and took me quickly to Delhi. The Agreement

was shown to us after I went there. There were several complications and several question marks in it. The doubt arose for us whether, as a result of this Agreement, a permanent solution would be available to the problems of our people. Accordingly, we made it emphatically clear to the Indian government that we were unable to accept this Agreement.

But the Indian government stood unbudging on the point that whether we accepted or did not accept the Agreement, it was determined to put it into effect. We were not taken by surprise by this stand of the India government. This Agreement did not concern only the problem of the Tamils. This is primarily concerned with India-Sri Lankan relations. It also contains within itself the principles, the requirements for making Sri Lanka accede to India's strategic sphere of influence. (An alternative translation of this sentence, closer perhaps to its literal meaning, would be: ' It also contains within itself the stipulations for binding Sri Lanka within India's big (power orbit') It works out a way for preventing disruptionist and hostile foreign forces from gaining footholds in Sri Lanka. That is why the Indian government showed such an extraordinary keenness in concluding this Agreement. However, at the same time, it happens to be an Agreement that determines the political future and fate of the people of Tamil Eelam. That is why we firmly

objected to the conclusion of the Agreement without consultations with the people and without the seeking of our views. However, there is no point in our objecting to this. When a great power has decided to determine our political fate in a manner that is essentially beyond our control, what are we to do?

This Agreement directly affects our movements and our political goals and objectives. It affects the form and shape of our struggle. It also puts a stop to our armed struggle. If the mode of our struggle, brought to this stage over a fifteen year period through shedding blood, through making sacrifices, through staking achievements and through offering a great many lives, is to be dissolved or disbanded within a few days, it is naturally something we are unable to digest. This Agreement disarms us suddenly, without giving us time, without getting the consent of our fighters, without working out a guarantee for our people's safety and protection. Therefore we refused to surrender arms.

Under such circumstances India's Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, invited me for a discussion. I opened my mind and spoke to him of our concerns and our problems. I pointed out to the Indian Prime Minister the fact that I did not response the slightest faith in the Sinhala racist government and did not believe that they were going to fulfill the implementation of this Agreement. I spoke to him about

the question of our people's safety and protection and about guarantees for this. The Indian Prime Minister offered me certain assurances. He offered a guarantee for the safety and protection of our people. I do have faith in the straightforwardness of the Indian Prime Minister and I do have faith in his assurances.

We do believe that India will not allow the racist Sri Lankan state to take once again to the road of genocide against the Tamils. It is only out of this faith that we decided to hand over our weapons to the Indian Peace-keeping Force.

What ardent, immeasurable sacrifices we have made for the safety and protection of our people. There is no need here to elaborate on this theme. You, our beloved people, are fully aware of the character of our passion for our cause and our feelings of sacrifice. The weapons that we took up and deployed for your safety and protection, for your liberation, for your emancipation, we now entrust to the Indian government.

In taking from us our weapons - the one means of protection for Eelam Tamils - the Indian government takes over from us the big responsibility of protecting our people. The handing over of arms only signifies the handing over, the transfer of this responsibility. Were we not to hand over our weapons, we would be put

in the calamitous circumstance of clashing with the Indian Army. We do not want this. We love India. We love the people of India. There is no question of our deploying our arms against Indian soldiers. The soldiers of the Indian Army are taking up the responsibility of safeguarding and protecting us against our enemy. I wish very firmly to emphasize here that by virtue of our handing over our weapons the Indian government should assume full responsibility for the life and security of every one of the Eelam Tamils.

My beloved people.

We have no way other than co-operation with this Indian endeavour. Let us offer them this opportunity. However, I do not think that as a result of this agreement; there will be a permanent solution to the problem of the Tamils. The time is not very far off when the monster of Sinhala racism will devour this agreement. I have unrelenting faith in the proposition that only a separate state of Tamil Eelam can offer a permanent solution of the problem of the people of Tamil Eelam. Let me make it clear to you here, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that I will continue to fight for the objective of attaining Tamil Eelam.

The forms of struggle may change, but the objective or goal of our struggle is not going to change. If our cause is to triumph, it is vitally necessary that the

wholehearted, the totally unified support of you, our people, should always be with us.

The circumstance may arise for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to take part in the interim administration or to contest elections, keeping in view the interests of the people of Tamil Eelam. But I wish firmly to declare here that under no circumstances and at no point of time will I contest elections or accept the office of Chief Minister.

The Liberation Tigers yearn for the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Source : Mohan Ram, **The Fractured Island**, (Penguin Books India, New Delhi, 1989), Appendix II, pp. 147-149

APPENDIX III

TEXT OF PRIME MINISTER RAJIV GANDHI'S STATEMENT
IN THE PARLIAMENT ON NOVEMBER 9, 1987 ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDO-SRI LANKA
AGREEMENT

1. I rise to inform the House about progress on the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement, including the background to the operations of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in the Jaffna Peninsula.
2. The agreement has been acclaimed internationally. There is a widespread consensus that the full implementation of the agreement will be of universal benefit. Tamil aspirations would be met, the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka preserved, and peace and stability restored to the region. Some of our important security concerns would also be met. Therefore, the Government of India are committed to the full implementation of this agreement. We believe that this resolve is shared by the Government of Sri Lanka.
3. In the three months since the agreement was signed, we have made satisfactory progress on many fronts. Sri Lankan security personnel have stayed in their barracks. Home Guards in the Eastern province have been disarmed and the Special Task Force has been

largely withdrawn. Over 3,300 Tamil detenus have been released under an amnesty, and the rest would have been freed if the LTTE had not disrupted the return to normalcy. The contours of civil administration in the north and east were being drawn on lines suggested by Tamil representatives ranging from the LTTE to the TULF. The interim Administrative Council had been announced with the LTTE given a decisive majority.

4. The return of the refugees from India had been planned in consultation with the Government of Sri Lanka. We had identified priority areas for rehabilitation to be financed through a grant of Rs. 25 crores (Rs. 250 million) by India. Peace had been established in the north and east of Sri Lanka. The return to normalcy was imminent. It is a matter of great regret that the LTTE threw all this away. They went back on every commitment they had given to us. They deliberately set out to wreck the agreement, because they were unable or unwilling to make the transition from militancy to the democratic political process. The LTTE were given every possible encouragement and opportunity to join the political mainstream and even to play a leading role in the process. The LTTE leadership, which had masterminded the killings of over 600 rival Tamil Militant cadres, were permitted to retain their personal arms for their security. They were allowed to hand over their arms at their own pace, even though

this enabled motivated parties to question our resolve to implement the agreement.

5. Our High Commission flew to Jaffna several times to find out what the LTTE leadership wanted. On September 28, an agreement was reached. The minutes signed conceded every demand of the LTTE concerning the composition and functioning of the Interim Administrative Council. In return, the LTTE reiterated their support to the agreement and once again promised to lay down arms. The establishment of the Interim Administrative Council was announced in accordance with this agreement. But within hours the LTTE went back on their commitment. The LTTE chose to adopt a course of violence.

6. While they promised us support to the agreement they started a propaganda campaign against India and the agreement through meetings and through their illegal broadcasting facilities. They organised disturbances in Jaffna, disrupting normal life and the process of reconstruction and rehabilitation. They threatened all Tamil civilians who disagreed with them. They hunted down and massacred about 100 members of other Tamil militant groups. They tried to inflame Tamil opinion in Jaffna by imposing an unnecessary and tragic fast unto death by one of their cadres to demand concessions that were already under discussion and were resolved to their satisfaction. At this stage, the unfortunate

suicide of 12 LTTE cadres took place.

7. The LTTE killed the eight Sri Lankan soldiers in their custody and massacred over 200 civilians in the Eastern province. They publicly repudiated the agreement and started armed attacks on the IPKF. The LTTE's repudiation of the agreement, their attacks on Sinhalese and Muslims in the east and their murder of Sri Lankan soldiers threatened to produce a Sinhala backlash that would have destroyed the agreement and produced a cycle of violence worse than any the Island had so far seen. The victims would have been mainly Tamils especially in the south and in the central highlands.

8. The House will appreciate that this could not have been allowed to happen. In these circumstances, the IPKF were given instructions to apprehend anyone carrying arms or involved in the massacre of civilians. At this point the LTTE launched attacks on the IPKF. There was then no alternative to disarming the LTTE. The IPKF were given strict instructions not to use tactics or weapons that could cause major casualties among the civilian population of Jaffna who were hostages to the LTTE. The Indian army have carried out these instructions with outstanding discipline and courage, accepting in the process a high level of sacrifices for protecting the Tamil civilians.

9. I place on record the Government's very deep appreciation of the dedication and high moral standards with which the Indian armed forces have conducted their operations in Jaffna, against a group that flouts every norm of civilised behaviour, forcing old men, women and children to act as shields, using innocent children as human bombs, murdering prisoners and booby-trapping houses of the people of Jaffna on whose behalf they claim to be fighting.
10. We wish a speedy recovery to our wounded soldiers. I pay homage to the soldiers who have laid down their lives. I am sure the entire House will join me in conveying our tribute to our gallant armed forces and our deepest sympathies to the bereaved families. Despite grave risk to Indian Air Force helicopters, emergency food supplies were airdropped over the city even during the fighting. The IPKF shared their rations with the refugees in Jaffna. Cooked food was sent to refugee camps as soon as these came under the IPKFs protection. We have made a major effort to restore civil supplies, amenities and administration to Jaffna. Simultaneously, shiploads of essential food and other supplies have been sent to the port of Kankesanthurai. Relief convoys are being sent to Jaffna even though the LTTE continues to attack these humanitarian missions. Electricity and telephone communications which had been sabotaged by the LTTE

have been partially restored with equipment flown out from India to replace what had been damaged. A small team of civil administrators has been sent to advise and assist the IPKF in relief and rehabilitation work. The Indian Red Cross have sent over their personnel and in cooperation with the local Red Cross they are doing a remarkable job of providing relief and medical assistance in the city. The unfortunate developments in Jaffna were not of our making. We reacted with a heavy heart when there was no alternative. We got the LTTE everything they wanted, disregarding the cost to our credibility with other Tamil militant groups and all communities, including the Tamil. We over looked the LTTE's vicious propaganda even before the outbreak of hostilities, not just against the agreement but against India and the IPKF. In the interim Administrative Council, they were given a clear majority of seven out of twelve, including a Chairman of their choice. Other Tamil militant groups were excluded at their insistence. While the Government of India have accommodated every concern of the LTTE, the LTTE have not honoured any of their commitments. Even after they attacked the IPKF and precipitated the hostilities we have repeatedly said that if the LTTE hand over their arms, support the agreement and renounce the path of violence they can still play an important role in the future democratic set-up.

President Jayewardene has already promised them amnesty again if they surrender their weapons and support the agreement. The LTTE have responded only with ultimatums and renewed propaganda, spreading misinformation and lies aimed at tarnishing the image of India and our armed forces. We still hope that better sense will prevail.

11. The legislation also provides for the creation of a single Tamil province in the north and the east. In the light of Sri Lanka's unitary Constitution, this legislation is unprecedented. The powers it seeks to devolve to the provincial councils are considerable. However, some of its provisions do not fully meet Tamil expectations. This matter was discussed extensively with President Jayewardene in Kathmandu and during his three day working visit to Delhi. We have received firm assurances that if over the coming months, difficulties arise, the Sri Lanka Government will make such changes as are found necessary.

12. The Government of India believe that despite some problems and delays, many of which are foreseen but unavoidable in the resolution of an issue of this magnitude and complexity, this agreement represents the only way of safeguarding legitimate Tamil interests and ensuring a durable peace in Sri Lanka.

13. Some have chosen to criticise the agreement. None was shown a better way of meeting the legitimate aspirations of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, restoring peace in that country and of meeting our own security concerns in the region.

14. We have accepted a role which is difficult but which it is in our national interest to discharge. We shall not shirk our obligations and commitments. This is a national endeavor. I am confident our efforts will have the full support of the House.

Source : Rajesh kadian, **India's Sri Lanka Fiasco: Peacekeepers at war** (Vision Books, New Delhi, 1990), Appendix VIII, pp. 171-175.

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