

International and Regional Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the eyes of the international community, the conflict in Sri Lanka is developing into a living laboratory to study ethnicity, insurgency and security at the turn of the millennium. What has escaped the attention of the international community is the transformation of insurgent groups into transnational networks in the last decade of the 20th century. Today, actively or passively, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) receives or derives, sanctuary, finance, weapons, and training from other governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals.

The traditionally held belief that an external support base is a prerequisite for an insurgency to flourish has been overtaken by the recent sweeping changes of the globe. Today, a globe in chaos, a globe without direction, a globe struggling for a new order, is the base. In reality, modern insurgents are no more groups but entities. They have their investments, lawyers, ships, and armies. They tap from the resources and expertise from a range of sources. The saturated arms market and the fledgling arms industry to soldiers of fortune and mercenaries in search of greener pastures have become the center of attraction for groups like the LTTE. Mastery in improvisation of explosives (suicide body suit, land mines, anti-personnel mines), the use of dual-technology (civilian equipment that will enhance the performance of a militancy), and acquisition of area impact munitions (cluster bombs, fuel air explosives, multiple rocket launchers) by subnational groups have added a new dimension to warfare.

Transnational networks cannot be fought by domestic governments without a transnational capability and capacity, both to monitor and operate. For a domestic militarily, it is impossible to meet a threat that has grown into a global network, over two decades. Legal norms of the international system, preclude the expansion of the theater of war beyond the domestic shores of a centralized nation state. It is ironic that a bulk of the war budget of the LTTE is raised from the heartland of continental Europe and North America, the guardians of human rights and the proponents of democracy. It is also a paradox that a bulk of the weapons and explosives used to kill and maim hundreds of thousands of men, women and children of this century is being produced in the West.

The West is beginning to experience the implications of this duality. Using the cover of the Muslim émigré, Iran and Libya continues to hunt their opponents down in France and Germany. Governments, with the help of the Diaspora and other armed groups, continue to fight the international infrastructures of the Hezbollah, the PKK and the LTTE, by proxy. Such events have proved that individual governments - whether in the north or the south - cannot sustain and maintain their security in the years ahead. Such trends are indicative that at least the challenges to late 20th and early 21st century security can only be addressed collectively. These transnational networks are increasingly gathering momentum and generating their own dynamic. By themselves, government bureaucracies, unlike transnational terrorist networks, are not administratively or operationally flexible, to engage and interlock new threats. Similarly, the classical roles of defense and foreign affairs establishments designed for deterrence and bilateral relations respectively do not have the institutional mechanisms or the sophistication to meet such new threats. An integrated, multipronged and a transnational strategy is the key to addressing the political, economic and security delimita confronting Sri Lanka today.

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Introduction

The impact of the regional and international activity of the Sri Lankan Tamil insurgents on the national security of Sri Lanka has not received adequate attention by the domestic security, intelligence and foreign service community. The wider threat posed to regional and international security by Tamil insurgents - by the enhanced ideological, technological and financial interaction with overseas insurgent groups - has also escaped their close attention. Therefore, an understanding of the international infrastructure of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as well as their relationship with the Tamil Diaspora, is vital for improving Sri Lankan, South Asian and global stability and security.

Although, I have been engaged in research and writing on the Sri Lankan Tamil and Sinhala insurgencies during the past decade, I had the opportunity to focus on their international operations, only during the past two years. I conducted most of my research while resident at two research institutions in the US: the Office of Arms Control, Disarmament and International Security at the University of Illinois in 1994 and at the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland in 1995. At Illinois, I had the opportunity of working with Professor Stephen Cohen, a US expert on South Asian security, and at Maryland, with Admiral Stansfield Turner, one time head of the US intelligence community.

My presentation is organized into three areas:

First, a brief history of the Tamil insurgents and the origins of their international network.

Second, a description of the international network and its operation.

Third, the impact and the implications of the network, both on the security of Sri Lanka and the world at large.

History of Insurgency

Contrary to popular perception, Tamil insurgency originated in northern Sri Lanka in the early 1970s, during the United Front government, a coalition of the SLFP, LSSP and CP. From 1970 onwards, there were a number of acts of terrorism in the Jaffna peninsula. In February 1971, bombs were thrown at the residence of the Jaffna Mayor Alfred Duraiappah. On March 11, a bomb was placed in his car. On August 27, 1972, Velupillai Prabhakaran, the current leader of the LTTE, who was only 18 years of age, lobbed bombs at a carnival organized by the mayor in the stadium in Jaffna. Once again bombs were thrown at the stadium on September 17, and at the mayor's residence on December 19, 1972. On July 27, 1975, Duraiappah, who visited the Krishnan temple at Ponnalai in his car, was assassinated by Prabhakaran and two others. The mayor was the representative of the then United Front government in Jaffna. His elimination was symbolic of the contempt the Tamil insurgents had over the rule of Jaffna by a representative from Colombo.

In their literature, the LTTE, the most formidable of Sri Lankan insurgent groups, claim that they originated in 1972. However, they did not begin to operate as an organization - the Tamil New Tigers (TNT) - until 1974. The leader was Chetti Tanabalasingham, a common criminal. Prabhakaran, who was politically motivated from his younger days, developed the military organization of the TNT and later the LTTE. Three early secretive linkages the LTTE enjoyed with other Tamil political - militant organizations helped the LTTE to develop its international component. They were tactical and not enduring relationships.

Origins of the Network

The LTTE link with the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) arose even before the TULF obtained a formal mandate from the Tamil people for a separate Tamil State in 1977. In the mid 1970s, the TULF leader Appapillai Amirthalingam clandestinely supported the LTTE. Amirthalingam believed that his position as the political leader of the Tamil people would be enhanced if he could exercise control over the Tamil insurgent groups. The TULF helped the LTTE to emerge as a powerful force. Two of its prominent youth wing members, Uma Maheswaran, joined the LTTE as its chairman, and Urmila Kandiah, as its first female member. On government stationery, Amirthalingam, as leader of the parliamentary opposition, provided letters of reference to the LTTE and to other Tamil insurgent groups to raise funds. Amirthalingam, also introduced N.S. Krishnan, to Prabhakaran. Prabhakaran, who later became the first LTTE international representative, laid the foundation for LTTE overseas activity (*note 1*). Interestingly, it was Krishnan who introduced the current LTTE theoretician and ideologue Anton Balasingham to Prabhakaran. Balasingham, a former Tamil journalist and a translator at the British High Commission in Colombo, was then a Ph.D. candidate writing his dissertation on the psychology of Marxism at the South Bank Polytechnic. The tutors at the polytechnic, (now known as the South Bank University) still remember him as a bright but unusual student. Balasingham's first Jaffna Tamil wife, whom he loved very much, died of kidney failure in London. Balasingham's current wife Adele, an Australian citizen and a nurse by professional training, is a prominent member of the women's wing of the LTTE.

Another TULF parliamentarian that supported the LTTE was the then Chavakachcheri MP V.N. Navaratnam, who was an executive committee member of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU). Navaratnam introduced many influential and wealthy Tamils living overseas to Tamil insurgent leaders. In one of the first meetings in Oslo, Norway, Navaratnam, introduced the Polisario representative to the LTTE. Polisario, a Moroccan insurgent group was ready to cooperate with the LTTE.

The second organization that helped the LTTE to develop its international component was the Eelam Revolutionary Organizers (EROS), erroneously and better known as the Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students founded by Eliyathamby Ratnasabapathy (*note-2*). Like most ideologues, Ratnasabapathy too was a Marxist-Leninist. In Sri Lanka, he had lived both in the north and in the plantations of the central hills and was a LSSP supporter and a JVP sympathizer. After taking up residence in London, he also formed the General Union of Eelam Students (GUES), modeled on the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS). While GUES was the student wing, EROS was the principal group. As a supporter of the Palestinian cause, he had developed excellent relations with Sayed Hamami, the PLO representative in London. Before Sayed was assassinated by Israeli operatives, he helped Ratnasabapathy to develop links with Fatah, the military wing of the PLO. Fatah offered a training opportunity to EROS. This was a time when the insurgent groups shared their expertise and resources. EROS shared the training offer with the LTTE. As a result in early 1977, Vichweshwaran alias Visu of EROS (later LTTE) and Uma Maheswaran of LTTE (later PLOTE), traveled to Lebanon and trained with Fatah.

The third organization that helped the LTTE to develop its international component was the Tamil Liberation Front, the precursor of the Tamil Liberation Organization (TLO) (*note-3*). The TLO, distinct from the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO), originated in London in the mid-1970s. The dynamic leadership of TLO made it a powerful organization within a short period of time. TLO organized a number of demonstrations, rallies and protest marches opposing the Government of Sri Lanka. During the second half of the 1970s, TLO was gradually absorbed by the LTTE. TLO began to function as the international arm of the LTTE.

Rationale for the Network

The powerful presence of an international link was a major morale boost for the Tamil insurgents in Sri Lanka. It was a form of recognition of their struggle both domestically and internationally. The international component enhances domestic survival and contributes to the resilience of an organization. Although there was limited financial assistance until the ethnic riots of July 1983, there were many Tamils who were sympathetic towards the Tamil cause and waiting for an opportunity to make a contribution for the advancement of Tamil nationalistic aspirations and goals. The ethnic riots deeply wounded the sentiments and galvanized the Tamils as a community. Past tragedies were brought to light and kept alive by the political leaders on both sides.

The injustices upon the minority as a community by the successive majority dominated Colombo governments were rectified by two pacts - the Bandaranaike - Chelvanayakam in 1957 and the Senanayake - Chelvanayakam in 1965. But under pressure from sections of the majority community, the pacts were abrogated. A series of ethnic riots - 1956, 1958, 1961, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1981 and 1983 - scarred the memories of a substantial segment Tamils. Many who left Sri Lanka as victims of the riots were made to believe by Tamil politicians that only a separate Tamil state can and would ensure permanent protection. The TULF and several other Tamil political and insurgent groups kept the campaign alive by bringing back bitter memories. The incessant waves of riots that destroyed lives and property of the Tamils were highlighted. Sinhala Sri, Sinhala Only Act, Sinhala colonization and standardization of education that had antagonized the Tamils formed the basis of the conflict. (*note-4*)

Prior to July 1983, all efforts by Tamil insurgent groups and their representatives to raise money overseas to sustain a war had been unsuccessful. It was only after July 1983, with the exodus of over 100,000 Tamil refugees and another equal number of displaced persons that gave birth to a distinct Tamil Diaspora (*note-5*). By the end of 1983, there were over 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamils in Tamil Nadu alone and this number would swell up to nearly 200,000 with the escalation of the conflict. The exodus to the West was equally intense. Many countries in the West, sympathetic to the plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils would revise their immigration and emigration policies vis-à-vis Sri Lanka. As a consequence, the number of refugees, mostly economic but in the guise of political asylum seekers, would bring the totality of the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora to over 450,000.

Mid-1983 to mid-1987 witnessed Sri Lanka's international image at its lowest ebb. Despite having an open economy, a model democracy and a major tourist destination, Sri Lanka's international image suffered irreversibly. TULF propaganda branded Sri Lanka as a state guilty of discrimination and perpetrating genocide against its minority. Sri Lanka harped on the fact that six of its top Ambassadors including those to the United Kingdom, France and West Germany were Tamils. Colombo also said that the Inspector General of Police, at least four Deputy Inspector Generals of Police, and the Chief Justice were Tamils. But, no attempt was made by the government to turn the events that would dampen the formation or hamper the operation of the network. Counter propaganda by Sri Lankan missions overseas and associations heightened the ethnic tensions overseas and polarized the communities further. Sections of the Tamils marginally involved or disinterested in communal politics were dragged into the center of a conflict in the making.

Formation of the Network

Although the TULF politicians spearheaded this anti-Sinhala and anti-government drive, it was not the TULF that reaped the benefits of their international and domestic campaign to politicize and mobilize the Sri Lanka Tamils. It was the Tamil insurgent groups that raised funds from a TULF - politicized and mobilized Tamil Diaspora to fund their war effort for an independent Tamil Eelam. Of the Tamil groups, the only group that developed consistency in conducting propaganda against the government and the Sinhala majority community and later even against the Government of India was the LTTE. It was also the LTTE that developed the systematic organization to collect money and use it with a high degree of honesty and efficiency to further their political and military goals. The LTTE has displayed mastery in generating funds from the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora spread over 50 countries. Soon after the July riots of 1983, the LTTE international representative K. Balasekeram, a radiographer working in a London hospital, convened a meeting under the banner of the Eelam Solidarity Campaign. After many speakers had aired their views, the voices from the audience asked, "What can we do?" Balasekeram said, "Those who want to do something about the plight of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka may leave your name and phone number." (*note-6*) From that night, Balasekeram called many of the committed Tamils who had come for the London meeting. After soliciting funds, Balasekeram developed a system to follow up on the contributions pledged by the community. Afterwards, he appointed a coordinator for each area and set out guidelines to develop a state of the art finance generation operation throughout the UK. His policy was not to request or receive a large donation at once, but to socialize the Tamils to donating a small amount of money every month. This became the first instance the LTTE collected money from a large public gathering. The LTTE firmly believed in compartmentalization to secure the vital element of secrecy.

Attempts prior to 1983 had failed to raise funds from the Tamils as a community although individuals did contribute to procure weaponry (*note-7*). Pre 1983 period witnessed the politicizing of the Tamils at a low level. The first public organization of the Sri Lankan Tamil community to generate funds had been formed in London in 1978. TULF's Amirthalingam who was on a world tour, together with a London based Eelam activist S.K. Vaikundavasan, formed the Tamil Coordinating Committee (TCC). (*note-8*) The TCC was later used by the LTTE as a front organization to carry out propaganda as well as to generate finance.

The UK Net

The UK has always been the heart of LTTE overseas political activity. Since the riots of July 1983, the LTTE has expanded into Europe from London. To make its position secure, the LTTE has either established, absorbed, or infiltrated a number of LTTE, LTTE front or pro-LTTE organizations in the UK. Some of them are the Tamil Information Center at Tamil House in Romford Road in London, The Tamil Rehabilitation Organization in Walthamstow in London, and the International Federation of Tamils (IFT) in Birchiew Close in Surrey. From IFT, LTTE legal advisor N. Satyendran, a Cambridge academic and son of the late S Nadesan Q.C., edits Network. IFT also publishes a Tamil journal Kalathil. Among the other LTTE publications are Viduthalai Puligal and Tamil Land. Other Tamil newspapers are Tamil Nation published from Croydon, Surrey and Thamilan from Undine Street in London. More recently, an LTTE front in London, publishes Hot Spring, a journal hitherto published in the peninsula. The LTTE International Secretariat located at St. Katherine Road has functioned continuously since its establishment in 1984. Among the other organizations through which the LTTE operate are the London Tamil Mandram and the World Saiva Council. The latter uses an address care of the London Meikandaar Adheenam on King Edward Road. The LTTE also maintains an information center in Albany Street, London, where the latest news from Sri Lanka is provided to any caller. The Tamil Eelam British Branch, providing this service could be accessed by calling 0171 387 4339. There are similar news services in a number of countries from Germany to the US.

From the UK, the LTTE feeds propaganda to its offices and cells throughout Europe, North America and elsewhere. In turn the funds collected are transferred to a number of LTTE and cover bank accounts. In charge of the LTTE propaganda and fund raising is John Christian Chrysostom alias Lawrence Tilagar, the international representative of the LTTE (*note-9*). With him, dedicated LTTE leaders from Shanthan, Shegar and Ramasar in London, Murali in Geneva, Rudrakumaran in New York and Suresh in Toronto work day and night. The LTTE propaganda and fund raising network is superior to other extant networks such as Hamas, Hezbollah, Kashmiris, or the Basques. Today, in the North Atlantic countries alone, there are over 40 Sri Lankan Tamil newspapers, of which over 80% are either managed by the LTTE or their front organizations. If the LTTE is unable to infiltrate a Sri Lankan Tamil newspaper, it would call the stores that sell the newspaper not to sell it or would call the Tamil public to boycott it. In mid 1996, the LTTE decided to kill Manchari, a Tamil newspaper edited by D.B.S. Jeyaraj in Canada. Therefore, the writ of the LTTE extends beyond the LTTE dominated areas in Sri Lanka, into distant theaters where they have made a significant political, economic and a militant presence.

Dynamics of the Network

To build support for their domestic struggle as well as to consolidate their position overseas, the LTTE has developed relationships clandestine with foreign insurgent groups. By studying how other revolutionary groups operate overseas, the LTTE learnt the importance of propaganda material. London, the hub of revolutionary representatives, cells and offices, helped the LTTE to realize

this dimension. In 1978, the LTTE produced its first leaflet for international distribution - it was for a conference in Cuba where a large group of revolutionary leaders would meet. In 1978, a Sri Lankan delegation left to attend the 11th World Youth Conference in Havana, Cuba. The three member TULF delegation was joined by a LTTE representative who had hitherto studied in the Soviet Union. Hoping to join them, the then UK based LTTE international representative N.S. Krishnan traveled with LTTE literature from London to Madrid in Spain to obtain a visa for Cuba. The visa was not granted and Krishnan had to return to London. However, he managed to courier the propaganda material to Havana, in time for the meeting.

From 1977 onwards the LTTE international network made inroads to countries where there was a Tamil presence. From the mid-1970s onwards, the Tamil militant structures steadily grew in the West, with its nucleus in London. The linkages were mostly confined to the Middle East, for military development, and to Europe and elsewhere like Nigeria, Yemen and Zambia for financial assistance. By the 1980s, Tamil militant representatives had traveled far and wide. The Arab and Islamic world was important but so were countries where Tamils lived, worked and earned in substantial number. They were Libya, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Algeria, Morocco, Turkey and Yemen. They also had substantial contacts with Cyprus and Greece. The government in Colombo failed to keep track of Tamil political activities overseas. The United National Party government of J.R. Jayewardene that came to power in 1977 reorganized the intelligence apparatus and as a consequence, intelligence and data collection and analysis on Tamil insurgency suffered. In 1984, one year after the riots of 1983, when the seasoned operatives were called back, Tamil network overseas by then had grown substantially (*note-10*). Very few in the national security apparatus at that time realized the importance of monitoring activities of the Tamil insurgents overseas, including the vibrant Tamil Diaspora - insurgent link.

Although a number of Tamils left Sri Lanka in the aftermath of the 1977 riots, they were not sufficiently politicized or mobilized to make financial contributions to the LTTE but this dynamic changed after mid-1983. The expansion of the LTTE network after 1983 was meteoric. The LTTE focused not only in developing relationships with neighboring India, Tamil communities overseas, but other revolutionary groups. But unlike other Tamil groups, the LTTE was mindful in every step they took both domestically and internationally. Even in their relationship with India, the LTTE ensured that their other relationships did not suffer. While the LTTE developed new contacts, they also managed to keep the old contacts alive. Until late 1986, Prabhakaran did not wish to antagonize India but neither did he wish to rely on India totally. This led the LTTE to develop alliances with other groups outside India and thereby not become totally dependent on India. However, many of the alliances the LTTE developed during the early years, just like those developed in the subsequent years, were not permanent friendships. They were temporary and tactical relationships, very similar in content and context developed with India from 1983 to 1987 and with the Premadasa Administration from 1989 to 1990. Prabhakaran never compromised his avowed dream of Tamil Eelam. Prabhakaran's primary task and primary goal was to advance his objectives and reach his goal. So, the alliances would not last for more than a few years.

LTTE Foreign Policy

Having established political links with revolutionary regimes and revolutionary groups quite early in their history, the LTTE realized the importance of such linkages. Gadhafi, Assad, and Khomeni were their heroes in a series of anti-US and anti-Israeli demonstrations in the peninsula in the mid 1980s. These regimes had pledged support to LTTE representatives while maintaining a relationship with Colombo (*note-11*). However, the LTTE was cautious not to have contacts with organizations for the mere sake of establishing links because that would draw the attention of foreign security and intelligence agencies. Therefore, if ever the LTTE established links, it was based either on advancing mutual interests or for military, political, economic or diplomatic gain.

Every insurgent group passes through a critical phase where they require either an external sanctuary and or external assistance to survive. The LTTE was no exception. Geopolitics as well as domestic compulsions led India to support the Tamil insurgents of Sri Lanka. Geographically, India is only 22 miles away from the Jaffna peninsula. It is one hour by speed boat. Although Tamil insurgents benefited from this natural external base from the early 1970s, it was not until the riots of July 1983 that India became an active base for the Tamil groups to grow in number, strength and operational capability and capacity.

The India - Sri Lanka Tamil insurgency relationship has its origins in the 1970s. The initial contact between the Tamil Nadu government and Sri Lankan Tamil activists was established in 1972. A delegation from the Tamil Manavi Peravi, a group of Tamil students who believed in the armed struggle and committed towards securing an independent Tamil state in Sri Lanka, traveled to Madras and met E.V.R. Periya, the then Tamil Nadu leader (*note-12*). Periya told the four man delegation, "If you are unhappy in Sri Lanka come to South India. We will give you enough land to cultivate." During the 1970s, Tamil youth activists used Tamil Nadu as a sanctuary to evade arrest from the Sri Lanka police - this included Prabhakaran and many other politically as well as criminally active youth.

Relationship with India

From the late 1970s, the LTTE developed links with a number of Tamil Nadu political groups - they were comparatively small in organization and membership. The most significant of them were Dravida Kazhagam headed by Veramani, the Kamraj Congress headed by Nedumaran and the Pure Tamil Movement headed by Perinchintanarayanan. To date, the leaders as well as cadres remain strong supporters of the LTTE. Veeramani called a meeting of all his key party organizers throughout Tamil Nadu and asked them to support the LTTE. Nedumaran wrote a biography of Prabhakaran. Perinchintanarayanan gave his property for the use of the LTTE. Thereafter, the LTTE developed excellent relations with M.G. Ramachandran and M. Karunanidhi, who succeeded each other as chief ministers.

Although Tamil insurgents had established a few training camps in Tamil Nadu in 1982, there was no official assistance from the Central Government of India prior to August 1983. In the eyes of many Indian hard-liners, Sri Lanka since 1977 had stepped out of the non aligned orbit and had become an ally of the West. There were Israeli intelligence operatives, British counter insurgency experts, South African mercenaries, and rumors about offering Trincomalee, one of the finest deep water harbors to the US navy. Sri Lanka had good relations with Pakistan and China, two countries that had fought border wars with India and they were in the process of stepping up military assistance to Colombo. Further, President J.R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka did not enjoy with Premier Indira Gandhi the same warm relationship he had with her father, Premier Jawaharlal Nehru. After Premier Indira Gandhi, also the leader of the powerful Congress (I) Party, took a policy decision to support Sri Lankan northern insurgency from August 1983. The need to have leverage over Colombo was adequately demonstrated by the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the agency also responsible for advancing India's secret foreign policy goals. Within her inner circle, the decision was justified. Geopolitics and domestic compulsions validated the rationale. The Third Agency of RAW, a supra intelligence outfit, was entrusted with the task. Within a year, the number of Sri Lanka Tamil training camps in Tamil Nadu mushroomed to 32. By mid 1987, over 20,000 Sri Lankan Tamil insurgents had been provided sanctuary, finance, training and weapons either by the central government, state government of Tamil Nadu or by the insurgent groups themselves. While most of the initial training was confined to Indian military and paramilitary camps in Uttara Pradesh, specialized training were imparted by the Indian instructors attached to RAW to Sri Lankan insurgents in New Delhi, Bombay and Vishakhapatnam (*note-13*). The most secretive training was conducted in Chakrata, north of Dehra Dun, India's premier military academy for training service personnel, where RAW had also imparted training to Bangladesh, Pakistan and Tibetan dissidents (*note-14*).

With the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987, RAW assistance culminated. Rajiv Gandhi ordered the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to fight the LTTE, when it went back on its pledge to surrender its weapons. The LTTE-IPKF war, apparently deprived the LTTE of its invaluable base, India. But, Tamil Nadu assistance to the LTTE continued even after M.G. Ramachandran's death in December 1987. Tamil Nadu State assistance under the Karunanidhi Administration, despite the presence of the IPKF, continued for the LTTE. Although the LTTE was at war with India, Tamil Nadu still remained LTTE's main source of supplies.

The Indian Net

Throughout the IPKF episode and until Rajiv Gandhi assassination in 1991, the LTTE continued to maintain a substantial presence in India. When the law enforcement agencies stepped up surveillance, the LTTE moved a bulk of its cadres from Tamil Nadu to other towns such as Mysore, Bangalore and Bombay. Even at the height of the IPKF - LTTE confrontation, the LTTE had twelve sections in India to manage:

- (1) Intelligence
- (2) Communications
- (3) Arms Production
- (4) Procurement of explosives
- (5) Propaganda
- (6) Political work
- (7) Food and essential supplies
- (8) Medicines
- (9) Fuel supplies
- (10) Clothing
- (11) Transport
- (12) Finance and currency conversion

The LTTE had also converted Madras, the capital of Tamil Nadu, and nine other Tamil Nadu districts, into centers for war supplies to the LTTE. Each center was linked by a sophisticated wireless network. Individual units carried sanyo walkie talkie sets. The centers of war supplies and other activities were (*note-15*):

- (1) Dharmapuri: Procurement of explosives
- (2) Coimbatore: Arms and ammunition manufacturing
- (3) Salem: Explosives manufacturing and military clothing manufacturing.
- (4) Periya (Erode) Military clothing manufacturing
- (5) Vedaraniyam: Coastal area from where supplies were dispatched for the LTTE
- (6) Madurai: Transit area
- (7) Thanjavur; Communications center
- (8) Nagapattanam: Landing area for supplies from LTTE deep sea going ships
- (9) Rameswaram: Refugee arriving area and recruitment
- (10) Tiruchi: Treatment of wounded LTTE cadres
- (11) Tutocorin: LTTE trade in gold, silver, narcotics and other merchandise goods.
- (12) Madras: Liaison with Tamil Nadu political leaders.

Implications for India

The LTTE-India nexus did not secure the geopolitical security New Delhi needed from Sri Lanka. It weakened Indian as well as Sri Lankan domestic security. In many ways, the presence of a foreign military strengthened the fighting spirit of LTTE and weakened the anti-terrorist capability of the Sri Lankan forces, then engaged in an anti-subversive campaign in the South (*note-16*). The organization gained mastery of guerrilla warfare by fighting the fourth largest military in the world. The LTTE suffered heavy casualties but replenished their ranks and gained a confidence paralleled by the Viet Cong and the Afghan mujahidin. LTTE also innovated new weapons, mostly projectiles and mines. Johnny mine, the anti-personnel mine invented by Prabhakaran, has at least claimed 5,000 Indian and Sri Lankan war casualties. Many Tamil Nadu political leaders from Nedumaran to Gopalasamy and Ramakrishnan visited the LTTE jungle base - known as the one four base complex over the years - and expressed solidarity with Prabhakaran.

The role of the IPKF in Sri Lanka became a politically sensitive issue. When the IPKF returned to India, under the National Front government of V.P. Singh, the then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi did not visit the port of Madras to welcome the Indian soldier. Even after the IPKF departed the LTTE continued to maintain excellent relations with Tamil Nadu politicians. The LTTE had managed to preserve Tamil Nadu as a critical base by retaining the goodwill of the Tamil Nadu leaders.

In fact, when the LTTE hit teams under the one eyed Jack Sivarasan assassinated the anti-LTTE EPRLF leader Padmanabha and his colleagues in Tamil Nadu, chief minister Karunanidhi asked the Tamil Nadu police and the state agencies to turn a blind eye. A few months later, the LTTE used the very same infrastructure of the LTTE in Tamil Nadu to kill Rajiv Gandhi (*note-17*). The LTTE penetration of the Tamil Nadu polity was so good that a decision reached at a high level meeting comprising intelligence agencies in New Delhi about anti-LTTE operations was conveyed to the LTTE within 24 hours. Investigations revealed that the culprit was the then Tamil Nadu Home Secretary and at the instruction of Karunanidhi. The dismissal of Karunanidhi did not prevent the LTTE from continuing to operate in Tamil Nadu. The LTTE made a statement during the subsequent Jayalalitha Administration, "If the Tamil Nadu leadership cannot support the LTTE, at least we expect them to be neutral to the LTTE." This meant that LTTE operations should continue unhindered in the state of Tamil Nadu.

In retrospect, the LTTE - India relationship has been one of love and hate. It is a relationship that will have its ups and downs but a relationship that will nevertheless continue. Despite the fact that the LTTE eliminated Rajiv Gandhi, the last of the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty, there will always be a segment of the Tamil Nadu leaders and people that will support the LTTE. The contradiction stems from India's own structure - the diversity within India, particularly, the disparity in culture between the Indian Tamils and the rest of India's polity. The assassination of Rajiv Gandhi was imperative for the LTTE. If the LTTE did not, the IPKF that withdrew would have returned heralding another period of bloody fighting. Prabhakaran's calculus was right. As a leader, he had done his duty by his rank and file. By assassinating Rajiv Gandhi, he prevented the reintroduction of the IPKF to Sri Lanka (*note-18*). Even for Prabhakaran, it would have been a painful decision. Antagonizing India at the southernmost point of peninsular India meant the permanent closure of the door for creating Tamil Eelam and Prabhakaran becoming its ruler.

Non-LTTE Actors

While the LTTE international network grew from strength to strength, the activities of other Tamil insurgent groups such as PLOTE, TELO, EPRLF and EROS dwindled. There were three reasons for it.

First, their ideology was strictly not Tamil nationalism but a mixture of Marxist-Leninism (*note-19*). The LTTE had made the transition from Marxist Leninism to Tamil nationalism despite the fact that Anton Balasingham was a confirmed Marxist-Leninist and had extensively written and published on the subject. Whipping up Tamil nationalism and fighting the Sri Lankan security forces appealed to sections of the Tamil community over ideological indoctrination and limited or no action with only visions of a mass revolution.

Second, with the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987 and the introduction of 100,000 Indian peace keeping troops to Sri Lanka, all the Tamil insurgent groups entered the political mainstream except the LTTE. Although at first it appeared unrealistic to fight India, segments of the Tamil Diaspora were committed to supporting the armed struggle of the LTTE against the IPKF. Through concerted propaganda, the LTTE had projected into the minds of the Tamil Diaspora, that the LTTE could even fight India. Prior to mid 1987, the LTTE was the only group that projected itself both militarily and politically as capable of delivering an independent Tamil Eelam. Although many Tamils detested the IPKF - LTTE confrontation (because India had been a traditional ally of Sri Lankan Tamils) IPKF civilian killings highlighted by the LTTE international propaganda machinery generated resentment against India and the pro-Indian Sri Lankan Tamil groups and generated support for the LTTE.

Third, LTTE was the only group that systematically lobbied for Tamil Diaspora assistance and developed the organization to sustain international activity. When the fighting against the IPKF resumed, the network was already in place. Although the proposition was unrealistic to many, the Tamil Diaspora could not refuse the LTTE it had been supporting and funding for years. The rival Tamil groups such as PLOTE, EPRLF, TELO, EROS and ENDLF did not have the international organization.

It must be recalled that PLOTE started its international activities with a bang soon after the riots of July 1983. In fact, they purchased the first ship, Palavan. In 1984, a PLOTE delegation visited Mauritius and received a red carpet welcome from the government of Androo Jauganath. On that delegation with Uma Maheswaran was Dharmalingam Siddharthan, the son of a TULF parliamentarian, and currently the leader of PLOTE. Further, PLOTE had the largest number of cadres living in India. According to modest estimates, there were at least 10,000 PLOTE cadres in Tamil Nadu alone. Initially, TELO enjoyed greater patronage than the LTTE in India. TELO also had better training facilities at the beginning. But the LTTE checkmated all these groups by keeping their numbers small and a tight control to maintain discipline. Ruthlessness and efficiency forced the LTTE to ban all the other Tamil groups and hunt their leaders and cadres from 1984 onwards. Today, the LTTE claims that they are the sole representatives of the Tamil people, not only domestically but internationally, thereby dampening even the activities of rival Tamil groups overseas. Coercion is not an uncommon tool among the LTTE cadres operating overseas vis-à-vis Tamil civilians. These international developments demonstrated the ever changing dynamic between LTTE domestic policy and its impact on their international activity.

Finance Generation

Modern insurgent groups are developing the ability to raise funds in one theater, operate in another and fight in a third theater. Although the international intelligence and security community has yet to focus on the LTTE finance generation, the LTTE is the archetype (*note-20*). By late 1995, 40% of LTTE war budget was generated from overseas (*note-21*). Since the loss of Jaffna peninsula in early 1996, 60% of the LTTE war budget is being generated from overseas. The LTTE has been engaged in a number of ventures that continue to bring them a massive revenue. It is likely that funds generated this way will surpass the funds generated domestically or internationally from the Tamil Diaspora. This is not a trend confined to the LTTE but to other transnational groups as well. But the LTTE is a trendsetter in this arena. The LTTE has invested in stock and money markets, real estate and in restaurants throughout the West and East. Starting with restaurants in Tamil Nadu and Paris in 1983, the LTTE developed its business acumen. Thereafter, restaurants sprang up from London to Toronto and Cambodia. Today, the LTTE has a large number of shops in a number of capitals, cities and towns. They sell LTTE videos, newspapers and Asian spice. LTTE has also invested in a number of farms, finance companies and in other high profit ventures.

Trading in gold, laundering money and trafficking narcotics bring the LTTE substantial revenue that is needed to procure sophisticated weaponry (*note-22*). The SAM missiles procured from Cambodia cost the LTTE US \$ 1 million a piece (*note-23*). The gold that is collected in Jaffna - initially two sovereigns from each family for the war budget - is melted and ingots are formed and transported across the Palk Straits to Tamil Nadu. The ingots are sold by LTTE male and female couriers in Tiruchi, Coimbatore and Bombay markets. With the help of Thanjavur smugglers, the money is ploughed back to procure war materials. Supplies purchased in India are smuggled back to Sri Lanka from the Ramanathapuram to Thanjavur coastline to Jaffna and Talaimannar. The LTTE money laundering activities is not very different to the systems used by the Latin American narcotics

cartels (**note-24**). Money is invested in legitimate ventures that makes it difficult for security and intelligence agencies to monitor their investments, accounts, transfers and investments. Although, the LTTE narcotic trafficking operations remain highly secretive, Western and Asian security and intelligence agencies have since recently made some significant detection's from the Philippines to Germany and from Italy to Canada. It is believed that the LTTE transports heroin on board LTTE owned ships from Myanmar to Europe (**note-25**). The LTTE also has their own fleet of vehicles in many countries from Tamil Nadu to Ontario. They also play a role in providing passports, other papers, and also engage in human smuggling.

Like the Middle Eastern groups, notably the Hamas and the Hezbollah, the illegal and the legal components of the LTTE operation for the generation of finances overlap. Today, when money is collected by the Tamil Rehabilitation Organization (TRO), the rehabilitation wing of the LTTE, it is well known among the donors that the money is in fact spent not only on rehabilitation but also to procure weapons (**note-26**). It is an unwritten understanding both among the collectors and donors. During their early years, almost all the Tamil insurgent groups were totally dependent on robberies, extortion (they use the term expropriation) and donations. Later the Tamil groups developed a taste for soliciting funds overseas from individuals and organizations. They were effective in organizing food festivals, film shows or other cultural activities. From LTTE controlled and dominated areas, they also began to levy a tax. The LTTE profit considerably from businesses and trade. They also tax through immigration and emigration, transportation of commodities to and from the northeast and wherever money changes hands in substantial quantity and frequency. Karikalan, the head of the political wing for the Eastern province, earned a reputation among Colombo-based foreign missions and development-oriented International Non Governmental Organizations (INGOs) working in the northeast for having approached their field representatives to make donations. At one point, the TRO, received a substantial donation from the Government of Germany (**note-27**). Thereafter, Karikalan would take a special interest in demanding for contributions from either the Colombo-based missions or INGOs.

Shipping Network

LTTE overseas department for clandestine operations, headed by Kumaran Padmanathan, is also responsible for managing the highly secretive shipping network (**note-28**). Padmanathan, a product of the Jaffna campus, uses over 20 aliases and an equal number of passports. This organ of the LTTE, also known as the KP department, has mostly militarily untrained cadres. Even Padmanathan has not been trained militarily. This makes the operation of their department much easier. There are virtually no records of members of this department in the files of domestic and foreign security and intelligence agencies. But they are trained in other skills from forging to gun running, secret communication to investing. KP department is also responsible for managing the LTTE shipping network. The LTTE shipping network, that has reached a high degree of proficiency, is a model for other insurgent groups.

Except for the PLO and the IRA, the LTTE is the only insurgent group that owns and operates a fleet of deep sea going ships (**note-29**). Equipped with sophisticated radar and inmarsat for communication, the LTTE built its fleet from small beginnings. Today, the LTTE ships communicate with a land based inmarsat in Sri Lanka. The LTTE ships play a vital role in supplying explosives, arms, ammunition and other war related material to the theater of war.

The LTTE deep sea going operations began in 1984 after the purchase of Cholan from Singapore. Hitherto, the LTTE had only a naval capability to shuttle between India and Sri Lanka and a capacity to charter vessels. To finalize the Cholan purchase, Prabhakaran personally visited Singapore and Malaysia. During this period, the LTTE was also building a vessel called Kadalpura on the Kerala coast (**note-30**). Soranalingam, a double engineer, with expertise in aircraft/airframe and marine engineering supervised the construction (**note-31**). From 1985 onwards, the LTTE developed its fleet rapidly by actively purchasing vessels. Tamil insurgents had decided to purchase their own vessels after experiencing difficulties of chartering vessels. From 1983 to 1985, they lost into the hands of authorities, three vessels carrying significant consignments. In Salonika, Greece, a Liberian registered plane with a load of arms, in Ras Garib, Egypt, the ship IVYB with two and a half tonnes of armaments ran aground, and in Madras, Palavan was seized with Chinese weapons sold out of Hong Kong by Alexander Urban, a Czech born Australian operating out of Singapore.

Tamil militants have purchased explosives and weapons from a wide variety of sources - governments, from North Korea to Myanmar and the Ukraine, and from middlemen operating from Europe to Asia and the Middle East. Intelligence agencies with a global reach continue to monitor LTTE shipping activity quite closely but operationally could detect or prevent less than 20% of the weapon consignments from reaching the target. In fact, Illyana, an LTTE ship that unloaded weapons off Mulativu in October 1987, was monitored by Indian vessels entering the Rangoon harbor. Similarly Indian submarines, ships and aircraft's have tracked LTTE ships over the years. Aware of this, LTTE has yet managed to keep most of its shipping fleet intact. The deceptive shipping operations, indigenously developed, avoids detection and surveillance. Yahata transporting weapons and explosives changed its name to Ahat by painting off the first and the last letters of the ship's name upon nearing the South Asian wars.

After the LTTE lost Tamil Nadu as a semi-covert base in late 1987, the LTTE established a permanent naval base in Twante, an island off Myanmar, until late 1995. This was vital, because a transshipment point, determines sound logistics to security. While operating out of Myanmar, the LTTE also used Thailand, particularly the Pukhet area, as a back up base. Today, a bulk of LTTE shipping activity is carried out of South East Asia. The LTTE will always need a naval base in South Asia or South East Asia for its operations in the Central Indian Ocean Region.

For generating revenue, the ships also transports fertilizer, timber, flour, rice paddy, sugar, cement and other commercial goods (*note-32*). During the PA-LTTE peace talks, there were three shipments. The ship Sweeney transported 50 tons of TNT and 10 tons of RDX purchased from a chemical plant from Nicholave, a Black Sea port in the Ukraine. Only 300 to 400 kg of this quantity was used in early 1996 to devastate the heart of Colombo's financial district by the LTTE. Similarly, a consignment of SAM-7s procured from Cambodia via Thailand reached Sri Lanka. This was the most expensive military cargo, the LTTE had ever transported. On board was Padmanathan himself. The details of the third consignment are not yet known. To save high registration costs, the ships are registered in the flag giver countries of Panama, Honduras and Liberia, affectionately known as "Pan-ho-lib."

The unchecked expansion of the LTTE fleet has implications for regional and international security. From late 1983 to mid 1987, it was a belief shared by Sri Lankan defense, security and intelligence official that as long as India was used as an external base by the Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups, it would be impossible to destroy let alone pressurize the LTTE (*note-33*). During that formative period, the LTTE, was dependent largely on Tamil Nadu for its supplies to northern Sri Lanka. After the decline of official support from India, the LTTE has successfully replicated that network internationally. Instead of an hour long speed boat across the Palk Straits, deep sea going ships transport supplies procured throughout the world for the LTTE.

Evolution of the LTTE

With the expansion of the LTTE network overseas, the LTTE domestic structure has grown in strength and sophistication (*note-34*). But, some features of the LTTE never changed. Despite several offers for international mediation and attractive propositions both by India and Sri Lanka to resolve the political question, the LTTE remained rigid in its stand on Tamil Eelam.

In many ways, the LTTE did not evolve but revolved. At the heart of it was Prabhakaran, an innovative, calculating and a ruthless military genius. Although, he subsequently developed political sophistication, he never compromised his faith in violence as a means to reach a political goal. Unlike most other groups, the LTTE began as a military organization but in time developed the political structures. Like most revolutionary movements of today, the LTTE is not a political organization that developed a military capability. History has shown that it is a near impossibility for organizations that are inherently militant to enter the political mainstream. The leadership of such organizations think and act primarily militarily and secondarily politically. By virtue of their structural compulsions, such organizations prefer to fight continuously and win militarily. Such organizations feel uncomfortable to compete in a political environment.

At leadership level, Prabhakaran maintains tight control. He is the final authority on each and every major issue. Prabhakaran's decision has always gone unchallenged. If Prabhakaran is killed, will the LTTE die? Examining similar organizations, particularly the capability of their middle level leadership, after the death or arrest of their senior leaders, provide a vital clue. Did the JVP or the Sendero Luminoso die after the death of Wijeweera or the capture of Guzman? (*note-35*)

Although the death of Prabhakaran will be a massive blow to the LTTE, the middle level leadership of the LTTE is equally or more motivated than its senior level leadership. History shows that organizations like the LTTE cannot be easily eradicated. Despite their inability to meet their avowed goals and the massive suffering they have brought upon the Tamil public, segments of the Tamil people still believe in them and support them. For some, particularly for those who had lost a loved one during an ethnic riot or killed by a soldier, Prabhakaran is a demi-god.

As much as the moderate Tamil politicians have failed, successive governments in Colombo have not done their best for Sri Lanka. Even the best of Sri Lankan leaders have faltered. Colombo has failed to understand the aspirations of the Tamil people, the equation between the Tamil insurgents and the Tamil public, and finally, the importance of non military dimensions of counter insurgency. These dynamics have also impeded the government from dampening the Sri Lankan Tamil insurgent - Diaspora link. Governments have miserably failed to develop and implement non-military strategies primarily counter propaganda among the Diaspora and in the LTTE dominated areas of the northeast. To what degree has the Diaspora helped the LTTE to become resilient? The expansion of the Diaspora, the backbone of LTTE finance generation, has helped the LTTE to develop its range of contacts for procuring weapons too. What will be the outcome of allowing a Diaspora to expand and root in this manner? Will the LTTE become more confident and less amenable towards negotiation?

The expansion of the LTTE network overseas has brought them closer in contact with other insurgent groups. The LTTE has developed ideological, financial and technological linkages with other insurgent groups. Technologically, the LTTE has established links with the Assamese ULFA, Punjabi Sikh insurgents, Andhara Peoples War Group, the Kashmir mujahidin and several groups within and outside the region. Such groups exchange and purchase weaponry from diverse sources thereby contravening the established international arms control conventions and agreements. As insurgent groups develop their structures to raise funds in one location, operate from another location and fight in a third location, law enforcement agencies of governments are constrained from conducting extra-territorial operations.

Destabilizing Force?

Is the LTTE a destabilizing force in South Asia? Does LTTE interaction with foreign insurgent groups contribute to the instability and insecurity of nation-states beyond Sri Lanka? The region is fed from West, Central and South East Asia and Europe by small arms. In 1994, 50 tones of TNT and 10 tones of RDX were sold by a chemical plant in Ukraine to the LTTE. Did the LTTE share a fraction of these explosives with their South East Asian and South Asian counterparts? In 1995, a consignment of Chinese manufactured Surface to Air Missiles were sold by a group of corrupt Cambodian generals across the Cambodian - Thai border with the knowledge of a section of the corrupt Thai military. The LTTE as well as Khun Sa's Mong Tai Army had access to the sophisticated Thai and Cambodian arms markets. While the arms pipeline of the semi-covert multi-national anti-Soviet Afghan campaign continues to feed South Asia the LTTE has established relations with Gulbaddin Hekmatiyar's Hezbi-Islami (*note-36*). The solidarity between insurgent groups was best expressed when a Sikh insurgent group in Germany collected money for the family of Dhanu, the assassin of Rajiv Gandhi. The Sikh's claimed openly, "We have killed the mother, and you the son." The LTTE has also established links with at least 21 Tamil Nadu separatist groups. Although, these groups have only an electoral base of three million out of 60 million Tamils in India, if members of these groups are sufficiently motivated, politically and militarily trained, the damage they could do in Tamil Nadu is significant. Some of these groups are (*note-37*):

- (1) Tamil National Retrieval Force
- (2) Peoples War Group
- (3) Liberation Cuckoos
- (4) Peasants and Peoples Party
- (5) MGR Anna Dravida Munethra Kalaham of Thirunavakarasu
- (6) Tamil National Movement of Nedumaran
- (7) Indian Peoples Party
- (8) Center for the Campaign of Tamil Education
- (9) Thaliai Nagar Tamil Society
- (10) Movement of the Educated Front
- (11) Tamil Nadu Peoples Movement
- (12) Thileepan Society
- (13) Peoples Education Center
- (14) Tamil Nadu Socialist Party
- (15) Republic Party of India
- (16) Peoples Democratic Youth Front
- (17) Liberation Organization of the Oppressed People
- (18) World Peoples Progressive Front
- (19) Human Rights Organization
- (20) Organization for Social History
- (21) Marxist Periyar Socialist Party

Today, the LTTE is looking beyond India and South Asia. But the links established by the LTTE in Asia is not fully known. The security and intelligence cooperation between the Sri Lankan and other agencies in the region has not been adequately developed. In 1995, western intelligence and security agencies received information that the LTTE had established links with FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), a powerful Colombian insurgent group dealing in narcotics. In fact, it was believed that for the first time the LTTE had purchased vessels that could cross the Atlantic or the Pacific and reach Latin America. Although the LTTE has exchanged and procured weapons from a number of insurgent groups including the Khmer Rouge and maintained links with South Africa's ANCL, Namibia's SWAPO and Eritira-Ethiopia's EPLF and TPLF, very little is known about its Middle Eastern connections, except for the fact that Tamil insurgents had trained at least in Lebanon with Fatah, the militant

wing of the PLO and in the Syrian controlled Bekka Valley with PFLP. At these training camps, Tamil groups came into contact with a number of other groups, including the Japanese Red Army and the Kurdish PKK operating from Turkey.

The LTTE has also the potential to develop close operational cooperation with the Brotherhood through its links with the Afghan mujahidin and the Kashmiri mujahidin, two groups with which LTTE has had substantial technological links. Interestingly, the Muslim Brotherhood and its South Asian counter part Jamaati Islami sponsor wars of Islamic revival from Algeria to Egypt, Sudan to Saudi Arabia, Bosnia to Chechnya, Afghanistan to Kashmir, and Central Asia to Mindanao in the Philippines.

International Security Implications

Internationally, the LTTE has not only been active politically and economically. Their extensive political and economic presence has enabled them to be militarily active as well. The LTTE understood quite early that in order to expand their political and economic powerbase, they will have to strengthen their legal as well as extralegal capability outside Sri Lanka. Although small in number, the LTTE has assassinated Tamils in Europe, North America and in South Asia. Today, at least the law enforcement agencies of three European governments particularly prohibit Sri Lankan Tamils from carrying weapons on themselves.

Today, the main centers of LTTE activity are in London and Paris for Europe and New Jersey and Toronto for North America. The key propaganda centers using computers primarily the information super highway are in Texas (USA) and Norway. Although the LTTE has an international secretariat located on Katherine Road in London, the LTTE has decentralized much of its international activities and operations since 1991. The decentralization was due to the pressure placed on the LTTE by Britain soon after the Rajiv Gandhi assassination in May 1991. After the assassination, RAW stepped up surveillance on LTTE international operations. Aggressive lobbying by diplomats of the Indian foreign office and operatives of the RAW, India's premier external intelligence agency, led to the deportation of Sathasivam Krishnaswamy alias Kittu, the charismatic one legged one time Jaffna commander from London to Switzerland. The stepping up of surveillance by European security and intelligence agencies particularly at the request of the US on insurgent groups from the Middle East and the Kurdish PKK has made it difficult for the LTTE to sustain many of its operations in the West. As a consequence, the LTTE shifted most of its activities out of Britain. When Indian foreign service and intelligence service personnel began to mount pressure on the western government, the LTTE began to spread into Asia.

Network's Implications

Today, the LTTE has established offices and cells in over 38 countries, the latest being in Japan, South Africa and Botswana. For the survival of the LTTE, it is necessary for them to expand globally, because the LTTE had lost its most important external base of Tamil Nadu after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi. Instead of LTTE speed boats shuttling between India and Sri Lanka for its supplies, today the LTTE ships navigate internationally bringing supplies to feed its fighting machinery. In many ways, the network developed by the LTTE over the years in India has been replicated, developed and sustained globally.

From about 1992, the LTTE has been shifting its international operations from Western Europe to Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and to South East Asia. From about 1995, based on information that Western operatives had gathered, the LTTE operations in the US as well as Canada has come under close scrutiny. While shifting their activities out of the North Atlantic area, the LTTE has also made attempts to win over key individuals in Western governments. As North America and Europe is so vital to the LTTE, they have hired some of the best lawyers, public relations agencies and lobbied political leaders into supporting them. In Canada when the LTTE leader Suresh was arrested for extortion and collecting money to procure weapons, the LTTE hired some of the finest lawyers and arranged for Western academics who sympathized with their cause to justify before the Canadian court that the LTTE is not a terrorist but a liberation movement. When the US was moving the anti-terrorism legislation that will affect LTTE activities in the US, a reputed public relations firm in the US was consulted by the LTTE to counter lobby the bill. LTTE manipulated Tamil communities from Canada to Australia have campaigned for host country political leaders with the hope that they will support the Tamil cause once in power.

The shift from West to East, particularly to South East Asia and the Far East has enabled the LTTE to grow in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition to the naval base in Twante, the LTTE also trained members of the Tamil National Retrieval Force, a high profile Indian Tamil secessionist group, and dispatched them to India. Under pressure from the Sri Lankan government, the military junta in Myanmar forced the LTTE to vacate Twante by January 1996. The LTTE also developed difficulties of continuing their training in an island off Malaysia. This training, carried out in absolute secrecy, called "Singapore training" had helped the LTTE to compliment the RAW training in Vishakhapatnam. The LTTE had hired former Norwegian naval personnel to train LTTE cadres in underwater activities in the diving school. Meanwhile, the LTTE also developed a base in an island off Pukhet in Thailand. Surveillance in this area by RAW led an Indian submarine to mount surveillance on an LTTE ship Horizon operating

under the name of Julex Comex 3 transporting weapons to Sri Lanka via Pukhet. Julex Comex 3 was destroyed near the Sri Lankan coast of Muallivu in early 1996.

Fighting the network

Government of Sri Lanka has neither developed a systematic plan nor the organization to cripple the backbone of this network. The backbone, which is political propaganda, is aimed at building support for the creation of a separate state, the LTTE as an organization and Prabhakaran as its leader.

Since mid 1986, the government has begun to reflect on the network and fight the network. Strategically, LTTE procurement operations can be restrained by generating an excellent counter propaganda network. Tactically, counter propaganda should be conducted with the support of Sri Lankans living overseas (individually or through their associations) by the Sri Lankan foreign missions (*note-38*). For this, Sri Lanka's classical foreign policy role of liaison with governments must change. Sri Lanka must aim for an innovative foreign policy to meet the current challenges and future threats. At least 40% of the foreign policy budget and 40 % of the time of Sri Lankan diplomats should be geared to fighting LTTE propaganda and building support among Sri Lankan and foreign governments against the LTTE. This has not happened primarily due to two reasons.

First, policy and decision makers of the Government of Sri Lanka has not fully recognised the LTTE threat stemming from overseas. Many are not even aware that one out of every five Sri Lankan Tamils, live overseas. Even, well traveled Sri Lankan diplomats see only a part of that threat. They see it individually and not collectively - often country wise, at best by region, very few see the bigger global picture. It is because the Ministry of Defence or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not yet conducted a comprehensive study on the LTTE international network and developed a corresponding counter strategy. Towards this end an interministerial committee for defence and foreign affairs has been proposed (*note-39*). The committee, if formed will (a) assess the threat, (b) review government progress, and (c) task relevant agencies to produce and disseminate counter propaganda (*note-40*). Creating an interministerial operations room to monitor and rapidly respond to LTTE international procurement, funding, and propaganda has also been proposed (*note-41*).

Second, Sri Lankan diplomats have not been trained to conduct counter propaganda by personnel drawn from the Directorate of Military Intelligence and the National Intelligence Bureau. Although proposed, the Bandaranaike International Diplomatic Training Institute, established in early 1996, has yet to educate Sri Lankan diplomats on the LTTE history, organization, and operation. Most Sri Lankan diplomats are not aware that EROS has two factions. The EROS Raji Shankar faction support the government and the EROS Balkumar faction work with the LTTE. Sri Lankan diplomats cannot be expected to play a critical role without a thorough grounding in terrorism. If this is accomplished, Sri Lankan diplomats can play a leading role in building international support to fight terrorism, not only in South Asia but, throughout the world.

Government Response

The lack of international and regional interagency and security cooperation has brought about this predicament. Sri Lankan agencies have been weak in their efforts to develop frontline intelligence on the LTTE international as well as the domestic operations. The lack of political commitment to embark on high risk operations both overseas and domestic is seen as a major impediment to weakening the LTTE.

At a military level, the government forces continue to fight an unconventional war, in a conventional mode. The need to transform the national security doctrine, training and weaponry to meet the growing internal threat has been long felt. But, to date a bulk of Sri Lankan troops are being trained to fight across clear battle lines. The pace at which, the counter insurgency component is being developed, is slow and inadequate to meet the growing threat.

Further, the government continues to chase the military option. Government has failed to expand its activities in the non-military counter-insurgency spectrum. The government has failed to develop the political, socio-economic and international dimensions of counter insurgency. This has been largely due to the inability of the national security apparatus to integrate the military and non-military dimensions of insurgency. The development of an integrated and a unified strategy is seen as a major requirement.

Bringing the civilian and military branches to work together in the recently recovered Jaffna peninsula has met with internal difficulties. Many believe that the postings to the north of public officials are based on political colour or as a punishment transfer. On the contrary, the most able and the most dedicated public officials must be posted to the north. The militarily recovered north

will be lost if the support of the Tamil public cannot be secured politically and economically. The half a million Tamils in the peninsula influence at least two hundred thousand Tamils living overseas.

At a political level, the government has failed to develop and implement political strategies to provide an alternative path to the Tamil people from being sucked into the gun culture. The package is attractive to many Tamils but even they question whether it will see the light of day? What is required is not grand plans but immediate measures to alleviate the suffering of the people of the northeast.

The domestic Tamils continuously grade the genuine sincerity of the government's attitude towards resolving the current ethnic crisis. The international Tamil community reacts both according to the response of their kith and kin in Sri Lanka and to the plea of the LTTE. These are the very dynamics the government has failed to shift. As long as the status-quo remain, the exodus of the Tamils from Sri Lanka should come as no surprise. If the insurgency continues more people will join the exodus. The alternative is an unhappy one, often a traumatic one. One generation has already seen and become influenced by nothing but war, anti-government and pro-LTTE propaganda, and anti-Sinhala and pro-Tamil nationalist views. A boy or a girl who was born in 1970, would have heard only of violence against the Tamils since he was ten years old. By the age of 15, he would have witnessed violence. By the time he reached 25, he or a member of his immediate or greater family would have experienced violence. Had the compulsions not driven him towards insurgency by that time, he would have actively or passively suffered from the day to day consequences of Eelam War I, II and III. One generation, has been completely wasted by war. The Sri Lankan political leaders and the bureaucrats have not done their best to end war in Sri Lanka.

Domestic Response

There has been no marked response of the non-governmental community to the internationalization of the Sri Lankan Tamil conflict. It has been, more or less, an extension of their attitude to the domestic developments. Some question whether they have been numbed by war. Others characterize this as a very Sri Lankan attitude.

The non-governmental community - commercial, social and religious leaders, and academics, scholars and media personnel - has not realized that they have a major role to play when the security of their country is at stake. Economic diplomacy as a tool in conflict resolution is gathering momentum throughout the world. Economics can build broken bridges. Economics cut across ethnicity and religiosity. For ethnic and religious based conflicts, military solutions are increasingly seen as temporary solutions. Economics offer permanent solutions. Entrepreneurs and other business leaders can pressurize governments, communities and even groups committed to violence to end war. Most leaders of this category in Sri Lanka have decided to play a marginal or non role either in the prosecution of the war or in the peace and reconciliation process.

In the Sri Lankan context, social and religious leaders have either not asserted their rights or they have chosen sides. They must be above ethnic polarization. What has adversely affected ethnic and religious communities are the very campaigns to advance their interests. A closer look at the plight of both the Tamil and the Sinhala communities demonstrate this fact. The era of working for "my community" is gone. From Bosnia to Jaffna, religious and ethnic nationalisms have devastated people and their interests beyond comprehension. Social and religious leaders, must generate the will to rise above ethnicity and religiosity, in their endeavor to serve their people and their countries. There has been no effort by any of these leaders to address the Tamil Diaspora and lobby them into generating a negotiated settlement.

A majority of Sri Lankan scholars and academics live in their ivory towers. They have not ventured out to capture the tragedy and trauma of the intermittent insurrections and analyze their causes. A vast majority of them have not made any input to government policy. There is a dire need to fully assess the impact of the activities of the Sri Lankan Diaspora on the national security of Sri Lanka. This has escaped the minds of even the best of Sri Lankan scholars and academics. It is research that should be best conducted by independent academics and scholars because they would have greater insight into the Diaspora. Research in a nation like Sri Lanka, torn apart by conflict, must focus on dampening violence. The scholars and academics have a major obligation to contribute to the national harmony of their country if not the region and the world.

Sinhalese and Tamil dons in particular, have not focused on the international implication of a domestic insurgency or the impact of the Diaspora on the domestic situation. Instead, many of them have continued to pursue their traditional disciplines of research and writing. Sri Lankan scholars and academics, instead of working on subjects that have no or little application to the national development of Sri Lanka, must conduct frontline research both on the ethnic conflict and its vicious byproduct - the insurgency. They must learn from other countries. Scholars and academics in the developed countries would work closely with the government. They will be formally and informally advising the government on the modifications required in their national policies to govern better and more effectively. Working in isolation with data generated from newspaper accounts and published reports cannot

produce first rate research. Field research is critical for penetrating analyses. While, departing from this monotonous tradition of working strictly in their disciplines and confined to their homes, libraries, departments and conferences, Sri Lankan scholars and academics must begin to explore ways and means of becoming more useful to the country. Some of the best minds in the government in the developed world are academics and scholars. They are not classical bureaucrats unable to meet the emerging challenges. They are innovative in their approach, multidisciplinary in their thinking and cross culturally amenable.

The mass media in Sri Lanka has improved dramatically in the recent years. They have been able to write accurate accounts of developments in the northeast and overseas on the ethnic issue. However, they have to move beyond reporting to analysis and advocacy. Although, media is not expected to take a rigid position and only report events as they occur, the media in a developing country has a more responsible role to play. The Sri Lankan media barons must reflect on this need .

Sri Lankan news media has failed to educate the Sri Lankan public on terrorism. The average Sri Lankan is not alert to the destruction of terrorism. A civilian will often not be sensitized to alerting a law enforcement official to an unclaimed parcel in a public place. Similarly, the media has failed to educate them on the range of tools available in conflict management. The military option is only one road to combating rebellion. There are so many rebellions that have been resolved by negotiations. They have to be brought to light as well. The media, at the turn of the twentieth century, has role to guide leaders and lobby the public.

Peace Process

Organizations committed to peace have mushroomed in Colombo in the recent decade. Unfortunately, the focus of the peace industry has been "peace out of context." The leaders and members of these organizations have virtually no knowledge of the developments in the northeast. Therefore, they are vulnerable to manipulation by agents of insurgents or by insurgent propaganda. Many of these organizations have been infiltrated by other interest groups too. To retain their credibility, these groups must be politically neutral. To project their sincerity and commitment, they must work at the source of violence.

Those leaders and members who are truly committed to peace must realize that being a peace activist is as risky as being a law enforcement officer. In context, the peace activists, have to venture out of Colombo and work in the war-zone, in the border villages, and in areas vulnerable to disruption. Staging demonstrations, rallies, marches and conferences, in the capital of Colombo, will not help. It will only make the government harden their stand towards war and advocate war as a strategy towards peace. Genuinely committed peace activists have to travel and live in the war zone, meet insurgent leaders and stress the importance of peace to them. They have to meet the parents, whose children have been committed to violence, to dissuade them from doing so. Similarly, they should campaign to move the government into bringing about policies of equality. The bravest of the peace activists must play a role on the ground. They could facilitate prisoner exchange. They could dissuade combatants on both sides from refraining from fighting in build up areas that produce civilian casualties.

The macro view of peace is broader. Peace groups should be able to bring the government and the LTTE to the negotiating table. They should be able to pressurize governments that permit the LTTE to function in their countries, to exercise pressure on the LTTE to negotiate. Peace groups must reinforce the dialogue and the commitment of both parties to peace by participation.

International Community's Response

The International community's response to transnational insurgency has been weak. The LTTE along with several other insurgent groups have established offices and cells throughout the world. Most of these offices engage in disseminating propaganda and collecting money. In most countries the LTTE would collect money for the purchase of armaments under the guise of supporting rehabilitation. The LTTE has organized over 30 rallies and demonstrations in 1994 and 1995 in the West, including in front of the White House in Washington DC and the UN in New York. Ironically, the placards hoisted included photographs of Prabhakaran, who has taken the lives of two heads of government.

The US has played a leading role in the Middle East and since recently in Latin America to dampen terrorist activity. However, the US has played a key role only when it directly affected US security interests. Due to US interests in Turkey, Washington lobbied its European allies to close down Kurdish PKK offices in Europe, particularly after PKK firebombed Turkish diplomatic and tourist offices. Similarly, the US extended assistance to the government in Peru after Sendero Luminoso began to deal in narcotics in a big way. The US, despite the poor human rights record of the Myanmar military junta, started supporting the military regime to fight the drug lords engaged in producing narcotics that is threatening US interests. US assistance to fight the LTTE has been small

- the Sri Lankan government too has not lobbied the US government substantially to secure a high degree of US military, security and intelligence cooperation.

However, the US has realized the emerging dangers of transnational terrorism. The Western world as a whole has suffered as a consequence of conflicts in the Middle East. With the recent developments in the Middle East, governments of the developing world are attaching a high priority to security. In the years ahead, anti-terrorism legislation in countries of the developed world will make it difficult for groups like the LTTE to operate under the cover of political offices. However, the nature of terrorism is such that insurgent groups like the LTTE will develop new methods of operation to evade arrest.

The political dimension of insurgent groups have been equally hard to fight. How does a domestic government stop an insurgent group from transferring funds from a bank in Singapore to Dresden to buy explosives or from Westpack in Australia to a Swiss account to pay for an arms consignment? Modern insurgent groups are beginning to operate like multinational firms or like intelligence agencies with a global reach. Recent evidence confirm that the LTTE has manipulated a number of human rights groups in the West to supporting them. The LTTE has poured in money and requested its supporters to campaign for certain candidates in countries like Australia, England, India and Canada so that in the event they come into power, the LTTE could use them to advance LTTE goals. NGOs have been manipulated by the LTTE and their front organizations to pressurize the government. The LTTE has lobbied for the appointment of certain individuals who are pro LTTE to head the Sri Lanka NGO consortium. Further, the LTTE has developed relationships with officials who determine the yearly aid package from Sri Lanka. The Paris Aid Group meeting has become a forum to lobby for and against aid in Sri Lanka both by the LTTE and government lobbyists. LTTE has also secured the support of a number of intellectuals in the West like Peter Schalk of Uppsala University and human rights lawyers like Karen Parker to support them. Many of them have expressed their support to the LTTE at several meetings. The LTTE has also gained excellent access to media organizations from the newspapers in Canada to the BBC in London. The LTTE has also gained access to some world leaders through powerful business friends and other connections.

In the legislative and legal fronts, the international community is preparing to develop frameworks to regulate and dampen activities of groups like the LTTE. Individual governments are realizing and they ought to take action, either to step up surveillance or ban organizations with a transnational reach like the LTTE.

Despite the fact that the LTTE is not a banned organization in Sri Lanka, the LTTE has been proscribed by two governments - India renewed its two yearly ban in May of 1996, and Malaysia indefinitely. In Switzerland and in at least another two European countries, LTTE activity has led governments to ban Sri Lankans from carrying weapons on them. Australia came close to banning the LTTE in 1995, but the unwillingness of Colombo to ban the LTTE in Sri Lanka, precluded the Canberra government from moving in that direction. This is a security paradox - the government in Colombo has to leave its doors open for the LTTE to enter the mainstream while fighting them. Several countries have revised their anti-terrorist legislation and others are in the process of reviewing their legislative loop holes. The line between political action and military activity is very thin - this is a phenomenon that most political leaders both in the East and West have failed to understand.

Many of the modern conflicts are ethnic or religion-oriented. Often they cannot be resolved militarily. Third party mediation is required because such culturally based conflicts are deep rooted and protracted. Is peace making a line in the non political spectrum of counter insurgency? Peace is the absence of war but interludes of peace as a strategy has been used both by the insurgents to regroup, rearm and retrain themselves and take on the state exploiting the element of surprise.

Governments in the Asia-Pacific region believe that the LTTE is emerging as a major destabilizing force. As a group, the LTTE is at the cutting edge of technology. In Sri Lanka, the first rocket propelled grenade launcher was recovered from a LTTE camp. Similarly, night vision glasses were used for the first time in the Sri Lankan battlefield by the LTTE. The LTTE, at the forefront of insurgent technological innovation, has gained mastery in the use of dual technology. Before the Sri Lankan military, the LTTE purchased Global Positioning Satellite systems, to accurately target its projectiles. The LTTE also used a land based satellite system to communicate with its overseas cadres. The LTTE has used the world wide web and the internet to establish a sophisticated state-of-the-art propaganda as well as a communication system within its members and supporters. LTTE suicide bombers have been trained both in France and in Britain to fly light aircraft. These ultralights do not carry sufficient metal for radar detection. Further, they could take off from a short runway. It is likely that these aircraft laden with explosives will be used to take vital economic, political and military targets, reminiscent of the Kamikazis (*note-42*).

In many ways, the technology generated by the LTTE has been a model for many other groups. There has been technology transfer or technology emulation. Today, suicide bomb technology is used by the Hamas, Algerian FIS, Kurdish PKK and the Punjabi Sikh insurgents. The LTTE body suit is more advanced than the body suits used by any of the other groups. The Western agencies watch a possible transfer of suicide technology from the LTTE particularly to the Middle Eastern groups, where the suicide bomb

technology is still very rudimentary compared to their South Asian counterparts. Can the LTTE conduct a suicide strike for another militant group for ideological or financial reasons?

Although the LTTE has not conducted significant military strikes outside Sri Lanka and India, it has the potential to do so. The LTTE has a worldwide reach and a worldwide presence. The LTTE has assassinated a handful of opponents in Switzerland, France, Germany, Britain and in Canada. Although it has not yet conducted transnational terrorist strikes to the scale of the Palestinian, Armenian, Kurdish and other Middle Eastern groups, it has the potential to do so. The LTTE arms purchasing operations to finance generation projects can become the model for some groups. To combat groups like the LTTE new security structures will have to be developed. The idea of developing transnational forces to combat transnational terrorism is fast becoming one of the post-Cold war security imperatives. Considering the recent organizational and operational developments, is the LTTE a destabilizing force in the South Asian region? Is the LTTE a destabilizing force in the rest of Asia Pacific? Is the LTTE a destabilizing force internationally ?

Although the international community will never allow a major inter state war, the international community should realize that intrastate wars have significant spill over effects that can complicate regional and international security to a very high degree. The 21st century insurgent groups will be very different from the twentieth century insurgents. Until recently, technology doubled every 25 years. Today, technology doubles every year. If not regulated and controlled, insurgents empowered by subnational groups will begin to use technology the same way governments use them. After the end of the Cold War, the porosity of the boundaries has transformed the international system dramatically. Countries cannot live in isolation any more. What will ensure the security of a nation-state is not only internal stability but the stability of one's neighbor and the region. Therefore, security of the 21st century will have to be cooperative and collective and not isolationist and individual.