CHAPTER III
A bird's eye view of Sri Lanka's recorded history stretching over a period of over two thousand and five hundred years points to an almost continuous interaction between India and Sri Lanka and the impact of the India of Buddha, Asoka, the Guptas, the Cholas and the Pandyans, and nearer home, British India has had on this country. Thus the various people of Sri Lanka are connected with India in one way or another.¹

A study published in 1951 estimated that in 1948-50 there were approximately 3.9 million persons of Indian origin spread over fifty eight countries in five continents. The largest number in a single country was in Sri Lanka, more than Seven millions and the smallest number in Brazil.²

India's affinity with Sri Lanka is longstanding. The historical relationship, economic co-operation, social and cultural contracts between them have been by and large harmonious and mutually beneficial. South India, more particularly Tamilnadu,

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¹ Urmila Phadnis: Sri Lanka (World of today series), National Book Trust, New Delhi, 1973, p.93

has enriched its language, literature, religion and philosophy over a long period of history. The people of the Southern districts of Tamilnadu were quite at home whenever they visited Srilanka. The economic, social, and cultural ties enabled the settlement of South Indians in Srilanka from the earlier days long before the migration of workers began. But the settlement of the plantation workers the Indian Tamils, has been a unique problem and a dismal story.³

India's role in relation to the Indian Tamils living in Srilanka may be deemed to have commenced in 1939 when Jawaharlal Nehru was deputed by the Indian National Congress to study their question. He negotiated with the "Sinhala only" Board of Ministers in connection with the Indian labour problems. Thus the Indian migrants in Srilanka influenced India's role very significantly even in the colonial times.

Later in 1945, Nehru emphasizing the ethnic, linguistic and cultural unity of India and Srilanka, had suggested the formation of a Federation of autonomous units of India and Srilanka.⁴ Later however he withdraw the suggestion and said in a special meeting to the Srilankan government that India

would treat Srilanka as a friendly country. Therefore since India became free, she has never interfered in Srilankan affairs or encroached on her sovereignty. Almost every Prime Minister of India has assured Srilanka from time to time that India has no intentions to harm her sovereignty and territorial integrity. India has intervened in Srilanka, directly or indirectly only when the political system of that country has been threatened.

K.M. Pannikar once advocated the strategic unity of India, Burma and Srilanka as one of the pre-requisites for a realistic policy of Indian defence. But Pannikar's view was objected to by the Srilankans. In 1954, Kotelawala, the then Prime Minister asserted that Pannikar's statement was "Monarace Doctrine in Asia". K.B. Vaidya, another specialist and expert writer on Indian Naval defence said in 1949: "The first and primary consideration is that both Burma and Ceylon must form with India basic federation for mutual defence, whether they like it or not. It is necessary for their security."

The strategic location of Srilanka has influenced Indo-Srilankan relations. Srilanka is located at the Southern tip.
of the Indian peninsula. Only a narrow stretch of water the
path strait separates them. This strait is not wider than 20
miles in certain places. There is great disparity between the
two countries in their size. India is 50 times of Sri Lanka in
size. And, India's population is 43 times more than that of
the other country. These facts make for great disparity in
power between the two countries.

In spite of repeated assurances from Indian Prime Minis-
ters from Nehru onwards that India would not interfere with
Sri Lanka's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and would
always have only peaceful intentions with her neighbours,
there have been misgivings about India in Sri Lanka. And Sri-
lankan politicians have tended to create in the minds of their
people a fear psychosis of danger from India.

India and Sri Lanka have been members of the Commonwealth,
the Non-Aligned movement, and the South Asian State Conference.
In the past both of them took a common view on many inter-
national issues such as the question of Indonesian Independence,
the attack of Britain and France on Egypt, Suez Canal in 1956,
and USSR's intervention in Hungary. They also shared a
common view on the liberation of colonies, disarmament, and
resistence to regional military pacts. Both were members of
the Colombo Powers, which in 1954 considered the Indo-Chinese
problem and sponsored the Bandung conference, where the five
principles (Panchasheel) of peaceful co-existence were adopted.
The two countries were in close touch with each other when Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal. Sri Lanka strongly supported the measure. India also supported Egypt. A plan was put forward by the United States secretary, J F Dulles for an International Operation Board. It was opposed both by India and Sri Lanka along with the Soviet Union and Indonesia. Another proposal to set up a Suez Canal Users Association was also condemned by Sri Lanka, as a grand step towards war. 8

Throughout this period, i.e., July to October 1959 when the crisis in West Asia was developing, Mrs Bandaranaike kept herself in close touch with India. On September 15, 1960 Nehru conferred with the representatives of Pakistan, Indonesia, Burma and Sri Lanka in New Delhi and requested these powers to keep in close contact with one another. Finally when Israel's invasion of the Sinai Peninsula took place in October, 1956 and there was joint action by France and Britain against Egypt in the Suez Canal Zone, it roused a sharp reaction in India and Sri Lanka on 31-10-1956. Pt Nehru issued a strongly worded statement, denouncing the action of Britain, France and Israel, and also gave a warning that the uncalled for attack would have far reaching consequences in Asia and Africa. 9 On the same day Pt Nehru called the representatives of Egypt, Britain, France, the U S S.R. and Sri Lanka to discuss

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8 New York Times, 19-8-1956, p 7
9 New York Times, 14 September, 1956, p 6
the situation in West Asia. In Srilanka, the political circles strongly expressed disappointment over the developments in Egypt.

A meeting of the Prime Ministers of Colombo Powers was held in New Delhi on November 12-14, 1956, along with other Asian Prime Ministers, they issued a joint communiqué which expressed their distress and strong disapproval of the aggression and intervention of great powers against weaker countries. Srilanka fully co-operated with India. A result of the Suez crisis was that Srilanka's Commonwealth Association underwent a significant change. And Srilanka which strongly opposed the policy of the senior members of the Commonwealth, moved closer to India during the period before and after the invasion of Egypt. Similarly in 1967 when war broke out over the rights of passage in the Gulf of Aquaba and the Strait of Taiwan, India and Srilanka supported the Arab Countries.

This does not mean that there were no differences between the two countries on various other issues. Even during the Bandung Conference, Pt Nehru had differed from Kotelawala on the question of "Communist Colonialism." Apart from the question of people of Indian origin, the first issue to crop up between the countries was the question, to whom did the Island of Kachcha Thivu in the Palk Strait, belong. In March, 1956, India extended the boundary of her territorial waters.

New York Times, 1, November 1956, p 9
from the conventional three miles to six miles, and later on extended it further to 100 nautical miles. This was done specifically with the object of protecting fishing and other living resources of Indian fishermen. This proclamation would have covered Srilanka's area also. Srilanka also issued a proclamation extending the boundary of her territorial waters to six nautical miles, claiming fishing rights over a contiguous area of 100 miles of her territorial waters. In 1967, both countries extended their territorial areas up to 12 miles. The dispute over Kacha-Thivu, an uninhabited coral island with 1 sq. mile area, existed before 1967. The Government of Madras claimed the island as it belonged to the erstwhile princely Zamindar of Ramanathapuram which was taken over by the then Madras Government under the Zamindari Abolition Act. The Government of Srilanka too laid claim to it as it fell under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church of Jaffna and had been used as a naval bombardment range under the Ceylon Defence Regulation during the Second World War. Extension of Territorial waters by both countries led to an overlapping of the territorial waters both in the Palk Straits and the Palk Bay.\textsuperscript{11}

After protracted talks and negotiation between the two countries an agreement was signed on June 26, 1974, demarcating their maritime boundary in the Palk Strait and it became effective from 9th July 1974. Though Kachcha Thivu was not mentioned.

in the agreement, it fell on the Sri Lankan side of the boundary agreed upon by the two countries. The agreement demarcated boundary in the sea from a point about 18 nautical miles north of Point Pedro in the Palk Strait to Adam's Bridge, which accounted for a distance of approximately 86 nautical miles. The agreement accepted each country's sovereignty and exclusive jurisdiction over the land and water on its side of the boundary line. The vessels of each country were to enjoy in each other's water the right of navigation as they had traditionally enjoyed. This agreement also resolved the question of overlapping of jurisdiction created by the extension by both countries of their territorial jurisdiction in 1967.\footnote{See appendix 5.}

Another maritime boundary agreement affecting the boundary in the Gulf of Mannar and the Bay of Bengal was signed in 1976. The agreement defined the marine area in the Gulf of Mannar by latitude and longitude at 13 points which were equidistant from the coast of the two countries. The line connecting their point constituted the maritime boundary in the Gulf of Mannar. Under this agreement each party was also required to respect the rights of navigation through its territorial sea and exclusive economic zone in accordance with the laws and regulations and rules of international law. This delimitation of the international boundary is considered as a landmark in Indo-Sri Lankan relations and culmination of many years of negotiation between the two countries.
The Indo-Srilankan relations got strained when China attacked India in October, 1962 and Srilanka did not criticise the attack and failed to brand China as the aggressor. Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike resisted the pressure to do so, but took the initiative in summoning the Colombo Conference of the six non-aligned nations, to explore ways and means of bringing India and China to meet at a conference to settle their boundary dispute. The Colombo conference made some proposals to solve the border dispute between India and China. Srilanka's Prime Minister Bandaranaike along with the Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr. Subandrio went to Peking to explain the proposals and persuade China to accept them, which China did. In January 1963, Mrs Bandaranaike and the representatives of the United-Arab-Republic and China came to India with these proposals. India too accepted them in their totality.

Though the mediation by the non-aligned powers did not lead to a solution of the conflict, it provided time to the disputants to subject their conflicting claims to a calm and dispassionate study by a body of impartial nations. Srilanka's role as a peace-maker in the Sino-Indian conflict was motivated by her sincere desire to prevent the continuation of hostilities between India and China.

Following this development Srilanka entered into a maritime agreement with China, and gave China the status of the most
favoured nation and provided facilities for Chinese Warships, knowing fully that it was against Indian interests. Its implications for India were explained by Ravi Kaul, a former Commander of the Indian Navy. He said: "Srilanka is as important strategically to India as Eire is to the United Kingdom or Taiwan to China. As long as Srilanka is friendly or even neutral, India has nothing to worry, but if there be any danger of the island falling under the domination of a power hostile to India, India cannot tolerate such a situation endangering her territorial integrity." So this agreement with China, when the Sino-Indian relations were at a low ebb, became a matter of grave concern for India.

In March 1971, there was an insurgency in almost the whole of Srilanka. The American Embassy was attacked, and 1/4 of the police force in the country was killed. A state of emergency was declared on 16 March, 1971. Mrs Bandaranaike in a broadcast to the nation said that certain parties were engaged in a movement known as the Guevara movement which aimed at overthrowing the democratically elected Government. She also appealed to many countries, including India for help. India responded favourably.

The Indo-Srilankan relations suffered another setback during the Bangladesh War in December 1971, during which...

the Srilankan Government granted air facilities to West Pakistan through Colombo from to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) The Government of India stopped Pakistani overflights through India as it was believed that Pakistani troops were being transported to east Pakistan in the disguise of civilians. The Srilankan plea was that she wanted to observe neutrality in the conflict and maintain friendly relations with Pakistan Another reason revealed by political analysis was Srilanka's fear that her integrity might be threatened if the integrity of Pakistan was endangered Thereby Srilanka effectively supported the ruthless suppression of the then East Pakistan She considered it as an internal matter of Pakistan 14 She did not even recognize Bangladesh, until March, 1971 Though these events did not affect Indo-Srilankan relations very seriously, in the process, however Srilanka did offend Indian susceptibilities R.Subrahmanyam, a reputed Indian defence analyst, writing in the Indian and Foreign Review said: "There is no reciprocity commitment between India and its neighbour in regard to each other's security. Mrs Bandaranaike got Indian help when Srilanka was in deep trouble during the JVP insurgency, but repaid her debt by permitting the ferrying of Pakistani troops to Bangladesh to continue their genocide." 15

14 Times of India, New Delhi, 15-11-1956
15 The Hindu, Madras, 17-3-1971
Indian and Sri Lanka have shared a common outlook on such important issues as non-alignment and declaration of the Indian ocean as a zone of peace. India and Sri Lanka were much concerned to preserve the Indian Ocean as an area of peace. Both countries realised the great Powers' activity in the Indian Ocean as a threat to the peace and integrity of the littoral, hinterland and island state in the area. India strongly supported Sri Lanka's move on the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace in the Lusaka Summit in 1970 as well as in the United Nations. The UN adopted a resolution to the effect in its 26th Session in 1971.

Another difference cropped up between the countries over the events in Afghanistan. Whereas Sri Lanka condemned outright the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, India was non-committal and non-critical.

But, ever since the question of the Tamils' demand for Eelam in Sri Lanka came up, there has been an unprecedented change in Indo-Sri Lankan relations. It has created a high Gulf in their generally cordial relationship. In the 1950's there was hardly any problem between India and Sri Lanka but for the question of citizenship to the people of Indian origin, mostly Tamils. India remained aloof from the domestic developments in Sri Lanka over the Tamil Ethnic issue. Many ethnic riots had been taking place between the Sinhalas and the Tamils since 1956. Sometimes the Indian Tamils and Indians in that
country suffered a lot, yet the Government of India did not go beyond issuing a curtly worded statement expressing its concern over the happenings in Sri Lanka. Though the Sinhala-Tamil conflict in Sri Lanka had been going on for the last 30 years, yet India did not directly involve herself in it. On the other hand, during the Janata regime, Prime Minister Morarji Desai publicly criticised those who were demanding a separate state for the Tamils in Sri Lanka. In 1978, responding to a Sri Lankan Tamil who sought his opinion about a "Growing movement in Sri Lanka to press for a federation with India, Desai declared, "I do not encourage them. They should not do this. They are Ceylonese and not Tamils." 

The July, 1983 riots in Sri Lanka involved India for the first time in the Sinhala-Tamil conflict. Because the Tamils of Indian origin, and Indian Passport holders, were seriously affected by them, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi expressed her deep concern over them, and sent her Foreign Minister to Colombo on 28th July 1983. He was advised not to visit the refugee camp. He had discussions with President Jayawardenene and his counterpart A C S Hameed.

After the return of her Foreign Minister, Indira Gandhi gave her Government's assessment of the situation in Sri Lanka.

16 Quoted in Sri Lanka Guardian, Volume 4(1), March 1, 1982
17 Vaidik Bharatiya Vaidya Parishad 1980, New Delhi, pp. 33 & 34
and on the other hand, She told the Srilankan President that the problem of Tamils was a matter, in which India could not be treated as just another country. It was a matter which concerned both India and Srilanka. She made it clear that India supported the territorial integrity of Srilanka and believed in the policy of non-intervention in her domestic affairs.

Since the July 1983 riots, Srilanka's Foreign policy has been taking a shape which cannot be called friendly towards India. Within three days after the Indian Foreign Minister returned from Srilanka in July the srilankan Government made a request for military assistance to the USA, the UK, Pakistan and Bangladesh. This report was contradicted by the Srilankan Foreign Minister who was in Delhi at that time to attend a meeting of the S A A R C. The President of Srilanka also contracted the report, and the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and Bangladesh also denied that there was any such request to them. But the British Foreign Office confirmed that such requests had been made by the srilankan Government. Though India felt embittered, Mrs. Indira Gandhi maintained that no outside power should meddle in Srilanka.

Some of the foreign policy measures adopted by the srilankan Government directly affected the security in this area,

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19 The Times of India, 6-8-1983.
20 Report in Times of India, New Delhi, 3-8-1983.
and that of India in particular. The Revival of the Defence treaty with the U K, the Trincomalee Tank Farm Deal, expansion of the scope of Voice of America, Srilanka's collaboration with Israel in SAS and many such other steps led to a disharmonious relationship between India and Srilanka.

Certain inconsistencies in Srilanka's stand were noticed by India. On one hand Srilanka supported India's plea for making the Indian Ocean 'a zone of peace'. On another, during the Non-Aligned Conference in March, 1983, she pleaded to delink the proposal for the restoration of Diego Garcia to Mauritius from the demand to demilitarise the Indian Ocean 21. This was directly opposed to the Indian view on it. Further it indicated that Srilanka was in favour of an American base in the Indian ocean in the vicinity of India. The U S. Defence Secretary Casper Weinberger made an unscheduled visit to Srilanka. This roused certain misgivings as he was the first Foreign dignitary to visit Srilanka after the July 1983 ethnic riot. President Reagan's Ambassador at large visited Srilanka ostensibly to talk with President Jayawardene on matters of mutual interest in the international situation 22. The request by the Srilankan Government for military aid was conceded by the U S. Government. This was announced in Colombo by the Chairman of the Defence Appropriation Committee Mr. J. Abbabbo 23. Mr Abbabbo also stated that the visit of his delegation

21. Reported in Indian Express, New Delhi, 6-11-1983
22. Times of India, New Delhi, 10 November, 1983
23. Statesman, New Delhi, 18 January, 1984
to Sri Lanka was "specially aimed at assuring the Sri Lanka Government of the U.S. support for democracy in the Island." Jaya-wardene went to the U.S.A and met President Reagan. It was reported that Jayawardene sought Reagan's support in curbing terrorism in his country. Though he got Reagan's full support yet President Reagan pleaded for a peaceful solution and appreciation of India's effort in this regard.

These policies of Sri Lanka could not be said to be in conformity with her profession of non-alignment. She was clearly moving into the orbit of the Western power block, as some of her actions proved. For example, the Jayawardene government in 1981 lifted the nine-year old ban on foreign ships using the facilities at the Trincomalee harbour. Several U.S. Navy ships came to Trincomalee. The leader of the S.L.F. Party, Sirimavo Bandaranaike also warned the Government against turning Trincomalee into a U.S. Naval base. The then Indian Foreign Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, also expressed in a guarded language the concern of the Government of India over this issue. He said that India considered the existence of any foreign military or naval base in the region as a threat to peace and tranquility and that she feared that it would have an adverse effect on India's security arrangement.

24 Times of India, New Delhi, 16 November, 1981
26 Times of India, New Delhi, 13th October, 1981.
27 Statesman, New Delhi, 28 November, 1981.
The Srilankan Government was shaken by the activities of the Tamil militants and felt that her army was not competent to fight them. After the 1983 July riot, Jayawardene was making frantic appeals for help to several countries including China, Pakistan, Britain and Israel to contain the Tamil militants. Specially hired mercenaries from Britain's Commando Organisation Special Air Service (SAS) were brought. They came via the Sultanate of Oman to train the Srilankan soldiers to fight the Tamil Tigers. A delegation of Chinese Air Force Officers paid a visit to Colombo in July, 1984. The Srilankan Naval Chief and Foreign Minister visited Pakistan. The Pakistan Foreign Minister also went to Colombo, while returning from the S A A R conference in the Maldives. As the military might of its army improved, the Srilanka Government laid emphasis on a military solution to the Tamil problem. In an interview, with John Mills of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, which was broadcast on April 18, 1986, Jayawardene was asked whether a military solution was possible to a political problem. Jayawardene replied "We must have a military solution, what Rajiv is doing in Punjab."

The question of Tamil Elam, which has continued to exert considerable weight on Indo-Srilankan relations may be considered.

now it is an issue which stands in the way of friendly rela-
tions between the two countries. The Srilankan Tamil leaders
in a bid to internationalise their cause sought the support
of political parties of Tamil Nadu in India. The D.M.K under
the leadership of Karunanidhi was very sympathetic towards
their cause. He organised public meetings in honour of Cheona-
yakam and also welcomed other leaders of the Federal Party
of Srilanka. Dr R. Janarathanan who was President of the
World Tamil Congress took an active role in support of the
Tamils of Srilanka. Though the Government in Tamil Nadu changed
after the 1977 elections sympathy for the Srilankan Tamils
continued. The Srilanka Government believed that the terro-
rists and other criminals took shelter in South India. In such
a situation the attitude of the Government of India and of the
Government of Tamil Nadu to the Tamil question of Srilanka,
especially the demand for Elam, became a matter of fundamental
concern for the Srilankan Government.

Not only the Indian Prime Ministers, Morarji Desal and
Indira Gandhi had flatly declined as pointed out already, to
intervene on behalf of the Tamils in Srilanka, other officials
also expressed a similar view. The Indian High Commissioner
in Srilanka Mr. Thomas Abraham told a meeting in Jaffna on
24, June 1979, that though governments had changed in India
and Srilanka from time to time, friendly relations had always
existed between the two countries. He said that India would
never support the demand of the T U L F for a separate state in Srilanka. Similarly, when the Fifth Tamil Language Conference was held at Madurai in 1981, Amrithalingam the T U L F leader and politician attempted to exploit the occasion to enlist the sympathy and support of the gathering for Elam, M G Ramachandran, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, objected to this and declared that the Conference would not be allowed to be used as a platform by any one to propagate a political ideology. He also declared that the Tamil Nadu Government would not interfere in the internal affairs of another country.

On the other hand, Amrithalingam while addressing the Madras Tamil Friendship Association after the Conference, was reported to have said that just as India had helped in the Struggle of Bangladesh, she should come forward to help the Tamils of Srilanka in their struggle. As could be expected there was a sharp reaction in Srilanka, and a no confidence motion was moved against Amrithalingam who was also leader of the opposition in Srilanka. When this motion was being debated, most outrageous statements were made by the Treasury Benches against him. A member went as far as to suggest that there should be a public shipping of the leader of opposition and dumping of his body in the sea. Such irresponsible statements in Parliament provided new stimulus to the Simhalese.

31 The Hindu, Madras, January 9, 1981
32 The Hindu, Madras, 11 January, 1981
rioters who let loose a reign of terror against the Tamil settlements. The Indian Tamils settled in the Eastern province were the worst victims.

These 1981 riots proved to be a cementing force between the Jaffna Tamils and the Plantation Tamils who still then remained rather apart. Communal violence afterwards increased. Sinhalese mobs attacked and set fire to the T U L F offices, shops, the residence of the Jaffna M P, and the public library in Jaffna. The communal disturbances in Srilanka led to an adverse reaction in Tamil Nadu. It led to a series of protests in Tamil Nadu, in which all political parties joined. An all-party meeting was organised by the Sheriff of Madras. While condemning the violence in Srilanka against the Tamils, the meeting urged the Government of India to raise the issue in the U N O. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu stuck to his earlier stand that it was a foreign issue in which the State Government could not do anything. However, he met the Prime Minister and Home Minister in Delhi and made a request for the security of Tamils in Srilanka. A peaceful hartal was observed in Madras on 12th June, 1981. The State Government also passed a resolution condemning violence against the Tamils. Till then, there was no talk of any intervention or use of good offices by India.

34. The Hindu, Madras, 11 January, 1981.
In Srilanka itself the Government tried to subdue the Tamils by the use of force. But it failed, or rather its efforts recoiled on itself because the Government alienated itself from the Tamil people. The Army and the police were hated. The Tamil militants gained enormous sympathy and popularity among the Tamils in general. The moderate T U L F went down in the public eye. A new emotional link was forged between the Srilankan Tamils and the Tamils of Indian origin.

The T U L F leadership participated in the talks initiated by the Srilankan President to solve the ethnic issue, which failed to achieve anything. The militants were disillusioned with the T U L F politicians and mounted an attack on those Tamil leaders who collaborated with the Government. They looted and burned Government property and disrupted the local elections. The Srilankan army took action and wiped out some of the hard core militants. The Gandhian society was attacked because in their view it aided and abetted terrorism.

The 23 July, 1983 communal riots, which were provoked by the killing of 13 soldiers, brought about a total breakdown of the political dialogue between the Sinhalas and Tamil people in Srilanka. The death toll was set at 387 according to the Government of Srilanka but it might still be higher. The rioters who were organised and instigated to attack the Tamils, and their property, were believed to be employees of Government
Minister and have the support of the national cabinet. This reflected a struggle for power within the governing UNP.

After the July 1983 riot, the TULF ruled out any possibility of participation in the All Party Conference (APC). On the other hand, the TULF Conference at Mannar, decided that all the TULF MPs should resign. Before they could resign, the Government passed an amendment that those who advocated secession would forfeit civic rights. All doors for a dialogue between the TULF and other Tamils, and the Government were closed.  

Since the July 1983 riots, all unofficial efforts failed to start negotiations between the Sinhala and Tamil leaders, so that their viewpoints could come closer. The initiative taken by A R Ariya Ratne, a Sarvodaya leader, in October 1983, and again by Shri Balasurije, a Christian priest, in June 1984 to start a dialogue between the different communities, did not make much headway. A seminar was held under the auspices of the Srilanka Government which was attended by Sinhala intellectuals as well as Tamils. The Seminar made a number of suggestions: withdrawal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, withdrawal of armed forces from the Tamil areas, grant of an amnesty for militant Tamil political leaders and setting up a special tribunal to enquire into violation of human rights.

35 The Hindu, Madras, 25th November, 1983
rights. These bold suggestions which had the support of many Sinhala intellectuals, inspite of the prevailing anti-Tamil sentiment wave, did not evoke any positive response in the ethnically torn island.

Negotiations continued between the Government of India, Government of Sri Lanka, the T U L F, and the Tamil militants, but they did not make much progress. The efforts of the Indian Prime Minister, and Shri Dinesh Singh, the then Foreign Minister, met with little success. A bomb blast in the crowded Colombo market killed many civilians, for which the L T T E disowned any responsibility. It was said that an Israeli experts had done this to make it as an excuse for retaliation against the Tamils. Whatever the truth might be, this incident was followed by protest by the Sinhala. The Jaffna Peninsula to wipe out the terrorist element. Rajiv Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India regretted that the Sri Lankan Government had abandoned its own committed position to find a negotiated settlement to the ethnic issue of the Island. He issued an appeal to the International community urging to bring pressure on the Jayawardene Government to end military attack on innocent Tamil civilians.

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36 The Times of India, New Delhi, 29 May, 1987
Earlier, the Srilanka Government had imposed an embargo on movement of goods supply to the Jaffna Peninsula, as the L T T E had declared its intention to announce its independence unilaterally.

The Government of India conveyed to the Srilanka Government that fierce attack on Jaffna would have far-reaching consequences on its unity Tamil Nadu Government also feared that this assault would force Tamils from that region to flee to India as refugees.

Jayawardene had protested against the grant of Rupees 4 crores to the L T T E and E R O S made by the Tamil Nadu government, because he feared that the fund would be utilised by the militants to buy arms. Rajiv Gandhi, was most hurt because India was patiently working for a political solution to the ethnic problem. He described the military action as "calculated and cold-blooded slaughter of thousands of the civilians." On the other hand, Jayawardane described the army operation as 'war' while addressing a public meeting. The Tamils in Srilanka and in India were hoping that Government of India would step in and use her good offices to save the situation.

37 The effort made by Government of India for solution of the Ethnic Problem.

38 The Hindu, Madras, May 29, 1987
Mr Jayawardene rejected Prime Minister Gandhi's appeal for restraint and instead asked him to restrain the LTTE. and EROS. The Sri Lankan Minister for Internal Security, Mr Lalit Athulathmudali, confirmed that the military offensive had been launched to bring the LTTE and EROS to the negotiating table. But the Government of India could not remain a passive spectator to the mass killing of innocent Tamils. The Tamils in India were watching with anxiety Government of India's apparent lack of action.

Inspite of Government of India's request, the military operation continued in Jaffna, and thousands of civilians were killed. Bombers, helicopters, and gunships were used to bomb the area, besides mortar and artillery of infantry. The Tamil militants also killed 32 Buddhist priests on June 1, 1987.39

The Government of India decided to send aid to the civilians in Jaffna on humanitarian grounds. An emergency session of the Sri Lankan Parliament was called and the Sri Lankan Prime Minister stated that infringement on Sri Lanka's territorial waters by India would not be tolerated.40 This indicated that the mood of Colombo was tough and when Indian ships crossed the territorial waters they might be shot at. Inspite of the hostile reaction of Sri Lanka to the Indian announcement, Government of India made preparations to send relief goods in consultation with the Red Cross officials.

39 The Hindu, Madras, 26-2-1987
40 The Times of India, New Delhi, 46, 1987.
The Government of India warned the Srilankan Government that India would not remain, an indifferent spectator to the plight of the Tamils in Jaffna 19 boats sailed on June 2, 1987 but had to return to Rameshwaram, faced by the implicit threat held out by the Srilankan Navy. On humanitarian grounds, India was prompted to send relief goods. The members of the Security Council of the U.N., were also informed of the step. Srilanka diplomats met the Secretary-General and members of the Security Council and told the meeting might be called off since India did not show restraint 41. Next day, the Government of India transport planes, escorted by fighter plane air-dropped food and other supplies to the besieged Tamil population of Jaffna. The Srilanka Government first suggested consultation between the two Government to work out details of Indian relief material to be sent, but later on it backed out of it.

This air dropping of relief goods received unfavourable comment from the U.S.A and the British press. The U.S.A Government conveyed its regret over it through diplomatic channel. The press compared it with America's going to aid the Irish in Ulster. The British Government did not make any comment.

As a result of the air-dropping and violation of the air space of Srilanka by India, Srilanka decided to boycott the S.A.A.R.C. Conference, New Delhi on June 18, but offered to

41 Times of India, New Delhi, 66, 1987
discuss any future aid to the Tamils. The Government of Srilanka also declared that Military action would not be carried out to capture Jaffna and expressed its willingness to have negotiations on the ethnic problem. At the same time, it appealed to other nations for a suitable air defence system for Srilanka.

These incidents soured the relations between the two countries but India was still willing to mediate and bring about a political solution of the problem.

INDIA'S ROLE AS MEDIATOR

The dialogue between the Sinhalas and Tamils was reopened due to the mediatory role played by India. Mr G Parthasarathy was deputed as the special representative of Indian Prime Minister. He visited Srilanka twice, first in the month of August and second in the month of November, 1983. At first, the TULF Party leaders were unwilling to have a talk with the Srilankan Government. They wanted two fundamental guarantees: one to secure the safety of the lives and properties of Tamils in the island, and the other to maintain the integrity of their territory. On the other hand, the Srilankan President Mr Jayawardene came out with his own formula to solve Tamil's problem. He wanted that the TULF assured should give up its demand for a separate state. He assured them that power...
would be developed to the Zonal council which would be con-
tinuation of the D D C into the provincial council.
His scheme was subject to approval by a referendum in the
entire Island. He also wanted that Trincomalee should be admi-
nistered by the Central Government.

In January, 1984, Mr G Parthasarathi made his third
visit to Sri Lanka by which the remaining obstacles were cleared.
Almost all the major political parties and other influential
organisations attended the Party Conference which was held
on 10th January 1984 in Colombo. Along with parties like
the U N P., T U L F, and S.L F.P., representatives of Hindus,
Muslims, Christians and Buddhist Mahasangh attended the Confe-
rence. An agreed document was produced after consultation bet-
ween Jayawardene, Parthasarathi, and Amrithalingam.

The next meeting of the A P C was held on 20th March,
1984. The President stated that consensus had been reached
in the following areas:

There was a general consensus on the need for devolution
of Central power to enable the people’s participation in Govern-
ment at all levels, but no final understanding had been reached
as to the form of Government by which the devolution of powers
could be exercised.

43. The Hindu, Madras, December 1, 1983
44 Ibid, 13 January, 1984
45 The Hindu, Madras 21st March, 1984
With regard to the stateless persons of Indian origin, the Mahasangha favoured granting of citizenship to people of Indian origin.

In the APC meeting of 9th May 1984, the President announced his proposal to set up two committees, the first under the Chairmanship of Prema dasa the Prime Minister to work out detail of structure, powers and functions of the unit of devolution of power, and second under the Chairmanship of the Home Minister Devanayagam, to consider steps, that needed to be taken with regard to equalisation in education, employment, exercise of language rights.

In India, political changes took place. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, who also headed the Ministry of External Affairs, appointed Mr Romesh Bhandari as Secretary to the Foreign Affairs Ministry. He sent him to the neighbouring countries for establishing cordial relations with them. Bhandari visited Srilanka and met President Jayawardene. This was followed by a summit meeting between President Jayawardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi from 1st to 3rd June, 1985, in which they discussed the ethnic issue and its impact on bilateral relations. In the summit meeting both sides agreed that immediate steps should be taken to defuse the situation and create a proper climate which would be acceptable to all concerned within the framework of unity and integrity of Srilanka. Further
they agreed that all forms of violence should abate and finally cease. Every effort should be made for speedy restoration of normalcy in the Northern and Eastern provinces. This would be conducive to the early return of Sri Lankan refugees in India to Sri Lanka. In the joint communiqué issued, they affirmed once again the traditional friendship between the two countries, and decided to remain in close touch with each other. It is significant that this communiqué in maintaining that the solution to the Tamil problem should be within the framework of the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka, implied that in no case there should be a separate Tamil state.

This was followed by a conference at Thimpu on 13 July 1985, the capital of Bhutan, which is generally referred as the Thimpu Talks. The Sri Lanka delegation consisting of 10 members was led by Sri Lanka's President's brother, Mr. Hector Jayawardena. The 13-member Tamil delegation comprised two members from each of the five Tamil Liberation Groups, 3 representatives from the Tamil United Liberation Front, the moderate Tamil Group, and 5 Indian officials.

The Thimpu talks failed because the militants sent second rank leaders and Sri Lanka had no ministerial representation. The militants were to discuss cease fire and listen to the Sri Lankan proposals to settle the ethnic issue, which were no different from those put forward at the All Party Conference.
in Colombo the previous year. Even the moderate TULF members rejected the proposals, because there were among the Srilankan delegates military intelligence men, and restriction were imposed on Indian newspaper men. Had not the Indian officials persuaded them, they would have walked out of the conference. Meanwhile there was an attempt on President Jayawardene's life, four days after the Thimpu talks begun, allegedly by militants belonging to EROS to disrupt the talks. However the talks continued though clouded in uncertainty, despite India's determination and zeal to sustain the talks. The TULF members and the militants put forward their proposals: acceptance of Tamil homeland, right of self-determination, and full citizenship rights to all Tamils living in Srilanka etc.

At the Thimpu II Conference which began on 12 August 1985, Hector Jayawardene rejected these demands of the Tamils. But he said that negotiations had already taken place between the two Governments, and that in the APC meeting the Srilankan Government had already announced its intention to grant Srilankan citizenship to all stateless persons. He also maintained that to implement any agreement reached at this conference certain precondition had to be satisfied, such as the remuneration of all forms of militant action, surrender of arms and equipment etc. To the Tamil militants these were tall orders, and not acceptable.
In between the Thimpu I and II talks cease fire arrange-
ments were blatantly violated both by the Srilankan security
forces as well as by the Tamil militants The T U L F had
organised on its own Gandhian method of prayer and protest
fast to mourn and honour the innocent Tamils killed But the
Tamil militant groups ridiculed and disturbed such meetings
and forced them to break their fast

When the talks at Thimpu failed, as the militants walked
out of the Conference, the Tamil delegates ignored the Prime
Minister's invitation to New Delhi for further discussions and
returned to Madras This led to the deportation of three Tamil
militant leaders One had already left It raised a series of
protests all over India This was an erratic behaviour it was
also a bad downright policy it meant playing straight into
Colombo's hands, confirming in its eyes the wisdom of the
strategy of pitting the guerillas against New Delhi and getting
the Government of India to exert pressure on the militants
to make more and more concessions

After the Thimpu talks failed, the Government of India
prevailed upon the Srilanka Government to grant some basic
concessions to the Tamils A working paper was prepared during
the discussions between the chief negotiator, H. Jayawardene,
and the Indian official Having agreed to examine the new work-
ing paper, President Jayawardene placed these proposals before
a conference of the political parties, which was attended by
24 delegates. It retained the unitary character of the Constitution and did not provide for the merger of Northern and Eastern provinces.

Meanwhile violence between the Sri Lankan security forces and the Tamil militants assumed alarming dimensions. The Sri Lankan forces were using the newly acquired sophisticated weapons for raid on the militants' camps in Jaffna. The Militants were giving suitable reply. The Colombo officials seemed to believe that if they showed military superiority, they might be able to strike a better bargain with the militants. But this could and did stiffen the militants' attitude as well.

The Sri Lankan Government described the refusal of the Tamil front to put forward its alternative solution as a sign that it would not settle for anything less than Eelam and that it was totally committed to an armed struggle. But this was a wrong assumption and unfair to the Tamil front. It is but natural that the Tamil groups did not to commit themselves in writing to anything which would deprive them of the use of the Tamil Eelam demand as a bargaining counter. They did not give up their hope for a compromise solution. They still wanted Indian participation in the negotiation process.

The Sri Lankan Government later on offered to split the present Eastern province into 3 provinces and include the Tamil

46 The Hindu, Madras, November 18, 1986
majority Batticaloa. It was conveyed to Mr V Prabhakara, leader of the LTTE the key player in any move that might bring about a political solution.

Jayawardene and his Foreign Minister S Hameed came to Bangalore to attend meeting of S A A R C the Indian Prime Minister had a meeting with Prabhakaran A Balasurya and M L Thilagar were flown to Bangalore for a talk. The preliminary indications were that Mr Prabhakaran's response was negative as the offer made was inadequate. They had hinted to the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu that political settlement would have to be based on the recognition of an independent Tamil Homeland comprising the entire Northern and Eastern provinces. This was not a pre-condition, but a fundamental position of the Tamils. In discussion most of the time was devoted to a quest of Tamil homeland. There was no meeting point among the participants.

Sri Lanka holds some unique features. It is an island strategically located in the Indian Ocean. It has two important harbours, Colombo and Trincomalee, the latter has been providing rest and recreation facility, to the US navy. India, Sri Lanka's only neighbour, has had close security links with it ever since the colonial days. Although Sri Lanka does not have a formal treaty with India, like Nepal or Bangladesh, it has always

47 The Hindu, Madras, November 17, 1986
48 The Hindu, Madras, November 18, 1986
shared India's world view. At the same time Srilanka has kept clear of Indo-Pakistan and Sino-Indian problems. The active support that it has given India's proposal to turn the India Ocean into a zone of peace indicates its shared concern with India about great power rivalry in the area and its impact on South Asian countries.

India is an inevitable factor in Srilanka's world outlook. There are two crucial factors in the Srilankan foreign policy, her freedom to pursue a foreign policy clearly injurious to India's interests is limited by considerations of its own national interests, secondly, her ties with the Commonwealth, the non-aligned movement, Pakistan and China are useful tools to counter-balance her unequal relationship with India. 49

Both India and Srilanka, as noted already, have had common approaches on such, important issues as Indonesian independence (1949), the Suez crisis (1956), Hungary (1956), disarmament, the status of military pacts, etc. Yet in matters of India's relations with Pakistan and China Srilanka has exhibited the classical diplomacy of a small power. She has steered herself clear of the Kashmir issue and has observed an overall neutrality in the Indo-Pakistan wars.

The Indian "responsibility" rested on two important principles. One, non-interference in domestic affairs of other

countries and respect for national sovereignty and two, opposition to extra-regional intervention in the regional state system of South Asia. Both these have had certain qualifications which were expressed intermittently. For example, Nehru and K.M. Panikar at one time had talked of integrating Srilanka in a close security network with India. Similarly, speaking in the Indian Parliament during the visit of the King of Nepal, Nehru stated that "much as we stand for the independence of Nepal, we cannot allow anything to go wrong there, because that would be a risk to our own security." More recently responding to the crisis in Bangladesh caused by the assassination of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, India reiterated that India was vitally interested in the security, integrity and sovereignty of such small powers.

The Indian role in the Srilankan crisis needs to be understood in the context of the framework of India's South Asian policy. Maintenance of the stability and preserving the integrity of the small powers of South Asia is a legitimate national interest for India. In the early 1980's, the Indian stand had been that of a concerned power and as such India exerted diplomatic pressure on the Srilankan Government to resolve the crisis. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had asserted that India could not be a silent observer of the happenings in Srilanka. India did not support the separatist demands in that country but remained fully aware of the humanitarian considerations of the
problems. The second phase of Indian interest in the Srilankan crisis came in response to the attempts made by Srilanka to seek help from the US, the UK, Pakistan and Bangladesh for maintenance of law and order. India cautioned these foreign powers to stay clear of the crisis, and sent her special envoy to conduct negotiations in Colombo.

The "Indo-Srilanka Agreement to Establish Peace and Normalcy in Srilanka" signed on July 29, 1987 by President Jayawardene and Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi attempted to balance the demands of the Tamils for autonomy with the imperatives of retaining the sovereignty of Srilanka.

One year and four months have passed since the agreement was signed and, events in Srilanka of the past year continue to remain fresh in the memory of readers. This article does not attempt to evaluate the military campaign, the thrust remains the political and strategic implications of the Indian action, the IPKF being one most crucial component of it.

Simultaneously, some long term plans need to be evolved for maintaining order after the eventual withdrawal of the IPKF.

A stable and integrated Srilanka is crucial to India's security. As a regional power India would have to take the primary responsibility for initiating a plan of action.
The former Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi was coming to address a series of Election meetings in Tamil Nadu on May 21st for the elections to be held on May 26 within two hours of his landing at Madras he was killed on explosion at Sri Perumbudur about 40 KMS from the Madras City A woman was later discovered to have worn belt bomb bent to touch his feet and trigged the explosives packed with steel pillers in the belt Both Rajiv Gandhi and she died instantaneously Sixteen others who were within 15 feet radius also died The SIT got on the job arrested a family of three members who had helped the killers squad Bhagyanadhan his mother Padma and sister Nalini were among the first to be caught But the first srilankan Tamil and the LTTE member to be robbed was Murugan He had married Nalini four days after the assassination After this initial break through the SIT appeared to have reached a dead end for some time Sivarasan and Subha still a large in Tamil Nadu

The plot resembled a Crime fiction story or that of a Thriller film An LTTE assassination squad from Jaffna coming all the way to Madras killing India's former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at an election meeting its members going into hiding then either getting caught or killing themselves one after another At last Sivarasan and Subha the most wanted suspected in the case had been traced This residence goes to special investigation team (SIT) set up by the Government
of India, the CBI and the police forces of both Tamilnadu and Karnataka Subha and Sivarasan five others committing suicide in Bangalore on August 20 the key conspirators in the plot also seems to have been wiped out.

Another question seems to be, now that there is enough evidence to establish the LTTE hand, how is the Government of India going to reach the militant organisation? Can India tolerate such interference in its domestic process and allow a foreign terrorist group to kill a National leader at will, and get away with it? It is for the P V Narasimha Rao Government to decide on the future course of action 50

How have the relations with the neighbours fared in the first six months of P V Narasimha Rao, Government? There is a positive turn in the ties with Nepal, cordiality has been maintained with Bangladesh, and a drift averted as regards Srilanka. The neighbourhood diplomacy will continue to require New Delhi's special attention.

The postponement of the SAARF Summit in November 1991 threatened to leave a permanent scar on Indo-Srilanka relations. The establishment in Colombo and its supporters saw it as a conspiracy on the part of India. Because of its pique over the Srilankan President, Mr R. Premadasa's insistence on the

50 The Hindu, Madras, Saturday, 7, 1991, p 10
withdrawal of the Indian Peace Keeping Force. New Delhi wanted to teach him a lesson was the refrain of the official comments in Colombo. As a result, the bilateral ties not particularly strong otherwise were subjected to additional strain. That mercifully turned into a temporary phase and the unsavoury episode was forgotten after last week's rescheduled one day summit. The Prime Minister utilised the opportunity of his Colombo visit for meeting with Mr. Premadasa but it was brief and the two leaders did not appear to have taken up any of the bilateral problems at length. There is nothing to suggest that the frostiness the hallmark of the Premadasa relations with the successive Prime Ministers of India is a thing of the past. That has been an unpleasant feature of the bilateral dealings ever since in Premadasa assumed office. The personal equations of the past between Rajiv Gandhi and Mr. J.R. Jayawardene, Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Indira Gandhi (and earlier with Lal Bahadur Sastri) have been elusive for over the years and they could not but serve as a negative input.

The relations at the political level continue to be bedevilled by misunderstandings by Mr. Premadasa's admission that his Government has supplied arms to the LTTE with a view to helping to counter the para-military force. Perceived to be New Delhi's creation added to mutual distrust at a time when the country was not out of the trauma of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination.  

51 Katyal, K.K., "Ties with neighbours - positive signs", The Hindu, Madras dated December 30, 1991, p.8
How to break the ice is the problem now. There is undoubtedly a case for generosity by India, the bigger country, but even generosity needs a conducive atmosphere.

India's political agenda is in three parts, first as a protector of the Srilankan Tamils, second as a power that alone is capable of bringing peace to Srilanka, and third but no less important as a regional super-power with geo-political interests.

How far has India fulfilled its responsibility as the protector of the Srilankan Tamils? Paradoxically, India has got bogged down in a war with the Tamil Tigers. Jaffna was free from the Tigers' control by the end of October 1987. But there after the continuing Indo-Tamil war became a battle of attrition in both military and political terms.

Militarily India is infinitely superior to the Tigers, but the latter have the advantage of waging Guerilla War on the home terrain. So despite India's best efforts she has not so far succeeded in distancing the Srilankan Tamils from the Tigers. No doubt, India has claimed with some justification that the people have obeyed the dictates of the Tigers more out of chilling fear of reprisal than out of any cheerful realities, yet the very fact that the ordinary people still fear reprisal from the Tigers only shows that they do not have enough confidence with the Indian Peace Keeping Force as their
protector in political terms also India has not played the part of a protector with any visible success so far. Here India is not to blame directly because the Tigers have upset all the time tables envisaged in the Rajiv Gandhi – Jayawardene accord. Delhi is certainly trying hard. But much would also depend on Sri Lankans rightful time hours.