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IN CONFLICT AND LESSON FOR
FUTURE GENERATIONS**

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Resumen:

El propósito principal de este artículo es proporcionar una perspectiva sobre la importancia de la seguridad y la estabilidad de un país. El documento examina las diferencias de las insurrecciones que afectaron al norte y sur de Sri Lanka y como afectaron al propio país y los países vecinos como consecuencia del ciclo de violencia generado. El análisis de los momentos decisivos en los conflictos, los esfuerzos para reducir el riesgo de un nuevo conflicto y la manera de encontrar un futuro más tolerante después de la guerra es una lección para las generaciones futuras.

Palabras claves: Conflicto, Pos conflicto, Violencia, Seguridad, Separatismo, Sri Lanka.

Abstract:

The main purpose of this article is to provide a perspective about the importance of security and stability of a country. The paper examines some of the different ways Sri Lankans Northern and Southern insurrections affected the country and neighbouring countries as result of cycle of violence. Sri Lankans decisive moments in conflict, reducing the risk of another conflict and how to find a more tolerant future after war is a lesson for future generations.

Keywords: Conflict, Post-Conflict, Violence, Security, Separatism, Sri Lanka.

* **NOTE:** The ideas contained in the Opinion Documents are responsibility of the writers and don't necessarily reflect the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE) or the Ministry of Defense's opinions.

Sri Lanka located thirty kilometres off the southern coast of India has passed through several stages during its history. The great theme of modern Sri Lankans post-independence history was the conflict which had prevailed for nearly three decades. Two years after the long, drawn-out civil war ended the country's economy grew at 7.2 per cent GDP according to "the Asian Development Out Look (ADO) 2012" the annual flagship publication of the Asian development Bank (ADB). The country maintains a sense of identity with a divinely determine past moving towards a bright future. The unfolding crisis has not been kind to the Sri Lankans during the Southern and Northern insurrections are of tremendous importance to the South Asian countries. These insurrections have shaken the people of Sri Lanka and the region. Unstable Sri Lanka could influence its neighbours India and the Maldives. Unrest in Sri Lanka can put the future of key Indian allies, like the US and western bloc in doubt. There is growing tension between Tamil Nadu state of India and the Sri Lanka as a result of Sri Lanka's perceived interference with the Tamil community living in the Island country. To understand the countries conflict it is important to review the geography, race, history, religions, economic and politics of the uprisings and separatist movements of Sri Lanka .Sri Lankans conflict is divided into Northern and Southern insurrections. 1971 youth uprising, the cycle of violence after the killing of 13 Sri Lankan government soldiers in 1983, the Indian intervention in the Sri Lankan Civil War in mid-80's ,the Norwegian brokered Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) and ending of the thirty year conflict in May 2009 marked the decisive moments.

SOUTHERN INSURRECTION

The major political conflict in Sri Lanka in the post-Independence history was originated in early 1970s. During the era of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandranayake a widespread revolt broke out under the leadership of Rohana Wijeweera. The 1971 youth uprising led by Marxist political group known as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) led by Rohana Wijeweera was the first major political unrest in Sri Lanka. By the late the 1980s the JVP had started a second insurrection lasting from 1987 to 1989. Both of these uprisings were

suppressed but the grievances remained and continued. These two uprisings spread out to almost all the provinces except to Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country.

NORTHERN INSURRECTION

According to Abeyratne (2003), the conflict between Tamil people and Government has a long history that goes to colonial period, but it has some economic reasons. The Sri Lankan Northern insurrection conflict was proved to be an extremely sobering experience which caused so much suffering for the people of the country. In 2009, Sri Lanka Government was able to achieve victory over terrorism that had changed the countries' socio and economic conditions for many years.

The Northern Province of Sri Lanka is divided into five administrative districts Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya. The Eastern Province is divided into three administrative districts, Ampara, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. Initially the Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka materialized after the passing of the Vaddukoddai Resolution led by the leaders of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in 1976 (Sabaratnam, 2010). In this resolution they have declared that their intention was to create a separate area for Tamils in Sri Lanka. With this background separatist movement of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) led by Velupillai Prabhakaran was started with its full strength in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in Sri Lanka (World Bank, 2004). The on-going violence turned into a cycle of violence in 1983 after the killing of 13 Sri Lankan government soldiers in the Northern Province. There after Tamil separatist movement with the label of ethnic conflict which ultimately got transformed into a civil war began in mid-70s. The guerrilla war in the North and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka was much a multi sided civil resistance. This conflict in Sri Lanka from early 1980s to late 90s experienced incalculable damage economically, politically and socially.

India had more regional ambitions. India became more actively involved in the late 1980s. The Indian intervention in the Sri Lankan Civil War was the deployment of the Indian Peace

Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka intended to perform peacekeeping. The Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord was an accord signed in Colombo on 29 July, 1987, between Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayewardene. On 14 November 1987 the Sri Lankan Parliament passed the 13th Amendment to the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka and the Provincial Councils Act No 42 of 1987, establishing provincial councils. This led to an uprising by the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in the south, which was put down bloodily over the next two years. Between 1988 and 2006 the province was temporarily merged with the Eastern Province to form the North Eastern Province. The IPKF fought numerous battles against the LTTE. Calls for withdrawal of the IPKF grew from the Ranasinghe Premadasa government and from the LTTE. In December 1989, the new Prime Minister V. P. Singh of India ordered the withdrawal of the IPKF, from Sri Lanka on 24 March 1990 after 32-month presence of the IPKF. Support for the LTTE in India dropped considerably in 1991, after the assassination of Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi by a female suicide bomber. The new government headed by Chandrika Kumaratunga, then pursued a policy of "war for peace". The Government troops initially cut off the peninsula from the rest of the island, and then after 7 weeks of heavy fighting succeeded in bringing Jaffna under government control for the first time in nearly a decade. On 22 April 2000, the Elephant Pass military complex, which had separated the Jaffna peninsula from the Vanni mainland for 17 years, completely fell to the hands of the LTTE. Sri Lankan economy was adversely affected in 2001 due to civil war between government forces and the LTTE, especially with the attack on country's International Airport by the LTTE. This incident occurred at a time when country was experiencing floods and drought conditions. In 2002 Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) entered into a peace process with the LTTE through a Norwegian brokered Cease Fire Agreement (CFA). The subsequent suspension of war was seen as a great achievement in the peace process. The last window of opportunity for peace emerged aftermath of the tsunami that struck Sri Lanka in December 2004. It was a fitful peace and the prospect for the Island nation was gloomy. Chronic civil violence and instability, scarcely to be distinguished from war. The peace process was fragile and was unsuccessful as a result of LTTE having used the agreement for its benefit and continued with war activities especially mass killing of innocent people. The limited potential for progress towards peace between the GOSL and

the LTTE diminished as instability continued. The new Sri Lankan Government headed by President Mahinda Rajapakse that came into power in 2005 framed the conflict as a “terrorist problem”, to be solved through military means. A new crisis leading to the first large-scale fighting since signing of the ceasefire occurred when the LTTE closed the sluice gates of the Mavil Aru reservoir. Mavil Aru is the waterway that provides water to some regions of eastern parts of Sri Lanka. For two years Sri Lanka had avoided the terror of war. Now the war was to come with a terrible vengeance to the island nation. The bloody guerilla war would go on. The LTTE made vigorous fights throughout the war with the GOSL military. The LTTE was unable to resist the GOSL military offensive that started in 2006. It continued for nearly three years ending on May 2009 after the government forces liberated the areas controlled by the LTTE. On 19 May 2009 President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared that Sri Lanka is liberated from terrorism. Both the number of civilian casualties in the Northern and Southern insurrection has been subject to intense debate. The Sri Lankan civil war was very costly in terms of human lives lost. The total economic cost of the 26-year war is estimated at US\$ 200 billion (2009). Slow growth of the GDP, unemployment, frustration of educated youth entering the labour market were found to be the main economic issues for the political and economic conflicts in the country. Today the emphasis has shifted somewhat in the direction of economic growth. In the past four years after the conflict ended real boom took place and the Sri Lankan economy grew at a spectacular rate. In certain areas, life in Sri Lanka has achieved the comfortable middle class status, but for some not yet achieved.

After the conflict ended there have been significant positive developments in Sri Lanka. According to the provincial contribution figures to the country's GDP, Northern Province (NP) was the least contributor to the country since 1996. It indicates that the Northern Province is the least developed province in the country till the war ended. The Northern Province contribution to the national GDP from 2009 and in 2010 was 3.0 and 3.4 per cent of GDP. Northern Province being an agricultural dominant province, where agricultural sector is 25.9% and trade sector comes next to it is 19.3 per cent. Most of the people engaged in service sector covering 31.2 per cent of the total (Central Bank of Sri Lanka-Economic and

Social Statistics) According to the Household Income and Expenditure Surveys, there has been a significant drop in the poverty Head Count Index, from 28.1 per cent in 2002 to 8.9 per cent by 2009/2010 (Department of Census and Statistics,) at the national level. Past and present governments of Sri Lanka have tried verity of remedies and reforms to bring about reconciliation, but always without success.

CHALLENGES

However, some challenges remain to be addressed. The issue of economic inequality radicalization due to groups personal grievances, extremism (represented on both sides of the political spectrum), radicalism, fundamentalism, and fanaticism.

Nevertheless, in whatever form it is important to note that the conflict in Sri Lanka, which affected a large proportion of the country, was not a reason due only to politics. It is also due to other reasons. There are five key theoretical as well as practical elements involved in developing a conflict affected areas:

- 1) Understanding the conflict,
- 2) Interaction of peace building and development,
- 3) Managing development processes,
- 4) Building government capacities in developing conflict areas, and
- 5) Government policy reforms.

They are the main elements to ascertaining the factors of socio and economic development in conflict affected areas.

CONCLUSION

According to Reychler and Langer (2006), post conflict development is the significant task of transition from war to peace and economic development. In this process a Government has to consider several things including re-establishment of democracy, decentralisation and liberalisation if necessary. With the end of three-decades of conflict in Sri Lanka, the country is now in a position to boost economic growth and achieve equitable and sustainable human development creating contacts with democratic attitudes; adopting reconciliation to bring the emotionally divided ethnicities .It will slowly ease the bonds through closer geographic links, industrialism, modernity and material progress. These factors could be turned to advantage of a united Sri Lanka with stable economic and security conditions.

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