Assessing Peace: An Inter-ethnic and Inter-religious Grassroots Approach to Peace Building in Sri Lanka

Second consultation

Organised by The Life & Peace Institute
In collaboration with The Inter Religious Peace Foundation

This report is compiled and edited by Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera and Mr. Ajith Rupasinghe

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Introduction

When the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) organized a series of Consultations in partnership with the Inter Religious Peace Foundation (IRPF), the main intention was for LPI to share its experience in peacebuilding with the Sri Lankans in order for them to find a way towards lasting peace with justice. It is with that intention that we invited a few representatives from Sri Lanka to meet with a few representatives, the majority of whom were Tamils, from abroad to come together, to confer and discern a way to find a solution to the on-going conflict and war. It was a fruitful meeting and provided an opportunity to share hurt, pain, frustrations, disappointments, hopes and dreams. This encounter became useful to raise critical questions and also to question dogmatic positions.

Dr. Chandrakanthan’s paper poses a challenge to the Sri Lankans, especially to the Sinhalese when he raises the question: “can two nationalisms that are mutually exclusive, historically hostile, politically irreconcilable, religiously antagonistic, socially incompatible, economically adversarial, ethnically belligerent and culturally intolerant, co-exist within a unified, single sovereign national entity?”1 This is a challenge to all those who are committed to the cause of finding a just and peaceful solution to the brutal conflict which is consuming the entire nation. This is not a theoretical question but a pragmatic one. The answer to this question will determine to a great extent the solution we seek. Can the Sinhalese be magnanimous enough “to go beyond the proposals that have failed to achieve a solution to our ethnic problem”2 and workout together a solution which gives the Tamils the dignity and the right to self governance? Today Sri Lanka is at the crossroads of its history and if the opportunity is not grasped with creativity and innovation to the fullest by all sectors of society, especially politicians, religious leaders, the business community and trade unionists to find a lasting solution to solve the ethnic conflict and the ongoing war, then we have reached the point of no return and whatever is proposed as a solution by another generation of Sri Lankans will be too little and certainly too late.

Ajith Rupasinghe, after a critical analysis of the present situation makes a proposal or points a way forward from the present impass when he says: “the solution, I believe, is to build the political will to restructure the state. It is preferable, I believe that this be done based on the theme of one country, one state for each and all equally, and to evolve the new institutions which will provide for the dignity, equality, security and autonomy of all the nations and communities within a united Sri Lanka. The sharing of political power at the centre on the basis of equality should form the principle for establishing a secure and stable system of shared sovereignty at the regional and local level which respects the territorial integrity of all nations and communities without any form of internal discrimination. Such a constitutional order and settlement requires the recognition, on principle, of the right of self-determination of the Tamil nation accomodated in consonance with the democratic rights

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and aspirations of all the nations and communities and the people of Sri Lanka.”

One could see his political vision as an imaginative radical step forward in the right direction and far beyond the proposals put forward by Sinhala dominated governments so far. It is a radical step from the point of view of the Sinhalese and a solution within a unitary constitutional framework with the right to self-determination. But, does it meet the expectations of the Tamils or do they see it in terms of being too late? Is it too late, just on time or have we reached the stage where separation with the right for statehood is the only way out? These are critical issues and one needs to probe deeper into them and we believe the fora provided by LPI can be the place to wrestle with these questions. In fact, some of these critical issues will be taken for discussion at the next Consultation.

The task of transforming the conflict, working for the healing of a nation, has to be undertaken by a conscientized mass of people, politicians, religious communities, and civil society groups. We have witnessed in many situations that when these and others come together and forge an alliance, a movement for peace and justice comes to birth. In Sri Lanka we have not witnessed so far the presence of a vibrant peace movement willing to take risks, prepared to break barriers and go beyond the status quo or a peace movement that can become the conscience of the nation. What we see is a fragmented movement pulling in different directions.

Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham highlights the predicament of the peace movement from his perspective when he writes “Unfortunately, peace organizations have too often been used by the government as a pawn in its struggle against the LTTE. It must be admitted that peace organizations have not only failed to bring about peace or justice in Sri Lanka, but have indeed supported the very oppression of the Tamils that gave rise to the war. Many peace organizations have supported the fraudulent and bankrupt policy of war for peace. And they have failed to remain neutral in the conflict, as an independent party should be”. Some of the reasons he gives for the present predicament of the peace movement are that “The current power and organizational structure of the state serve the interests of many of the members of the peace organizations. They support it because they survive and thrive in the current system. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are serving themselves...The other judgement one can make about peace organizations is that they neither understood nor sought to understand the extent of Tamil suffering”.

This is a strong criticism on the Southern peace initiatives and upon which some of us may not agree. It is one thing to disagree with Karunian’s comments but totally another to give an account as to why the advocates for peace and justice are very often silent while the voices in support of war are loud and clear. The question is: why have we failed to overcome the culture of violence with a culture of peace?

One could, without generalizing, say that Sri Lankans are good at debate, analysis, rhetoric, holding seminars and conferences. On the issue of the ethnic conflict we have done that exercise very well.

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5 Ibid.
Although we have done that part effectively, we have failed to get our act together and move beyond analysis to praxis. In other words, we have failed miserably to use the analysis to make a breakthrough to transform the culture of violence and mobilize the nation for the task of peacebuilding.

This is a challenge to all Sri Lankans, but especially to the religious hierarchy and the adherents of these religions, as to why they go along with a culture of violence and war despite of it being contrary to the teachings and the vision of the founders of the religions. Why do we perpetuate a culture where we blame the politicians, the security forces and the police for violence and corruption and do almost nothing to change that power base? Perhaps the worst aspect of this culture is having complained about it and in spite of this, continuing to hand over all responsibility and the destiny of the nation to them, turning them into a cult of gods.

The time has come for people to think, to strategize and to act in order to retain the power of the people at the people’s level rather than transferring it to the hands of the politicians. In other words, how do we ensure a system of governance where those in authority become accountable to the people. To put it simply, when in the recent history of the Sri Lankan polity, did a politician or a person in authority resign or abdicate from positions of power because his/her credibility was at stake?

The purpose for focusing the challenge on religious communities in Sri Lanka is twofold. First, we believe in the Sri Lankan context; religions, especially Buddhism, play an important role in influencing the thinking of the people either positively or negatively. Apart from this, Sri Lankans, irrespective of their religious affiliation, boast about their culture, civilization and take pride in the influence of their religious heritage on their formation and way of life. Therefore, the challenge to the devotees of these religions and to those who preach the fundamentals of these religions is: how do we critically distance ourselves and denounce religions when they become distorted, manipulated and coopted by dominant ideologies and their teachings are abused and the practice becomes corrupt? Do we keep quiet about it or do we work for the reformation of our respective religious institutions?

Secondly, we also believe religious establishments in Sri Lanka can mobilize people in large numbers to achieve specified goals. Religions have functioned in that way in the past and they still have the potential and the capacity to do it if they so desire. We believe the liberating spiritualities of all the religions practiced in Sri Lanka are rooted in peace, love, compassion, justice and kindness. Therefore the question is: because religions still have the influence over the majority of people why can’t these religious institutions use that influence to mobilize the masses for peace rather than for war? To support the war may be the most popular thing to do in the present context. But in the years to come religions in Sri Lanka will be judged by the people, especially by the victims of war, the poor, the refugees and their descendants, as institutions of violence or as religions which advocated human sacrifice or kept silent when the innocent were sacrificed at the altar of war for the satisfaction of a few powerful elite. The people in Sri Lanka will judge the religions and those who maintain the cult of religion for not telling the truth to the people and for not unmasking the deception of those who spoke about the war as the salvation for the nation.

LPI knows from experiences gathered from different parts of the world that religions can either fuel conflict or work towards the transformation of a conflict. When LPI entered into a working
partnership with the IRPF, we were convinced that we should make the inter-religious dimension the entry point to the Conflict in Sri Lanka and to use the positive and transforming spiritualities of these religions to work towards transforming the conflict. IRPF has the respect and the confidence of many religious leaders and we hope that all those committed to issues of peace and justice will work with the IRPF and similar organizations to achieve the goal of lasting and sustainable peace. We hope that the IRPF will develop its work and expand its capacity and become a self-giving movement and work for the transformation of a culture of war and violence to one of peace, justice, mercy, compassion and enlightenment.

Lastly, we wish to say that we received all the papers presented at the Consultation except those presented by Messrs. M. A. Rahuman and S. Balakrishnan. But, in the analytical report where we have quoted them we have tried to be faithful to their oral presentations.

Rienzie Perera
Research Director
Life & Peace Institute
Analytical Report
From the Consultation between the Sri Lankan Diaspora/Expatriates and Representatives of Sri Lankan Civil Society

1.0 Introduction.
The following is a report of the Second Consultation in a series of three consultations identified by the Assessing Peace project. The Second Consultation was conceived as an ideological engagement. An engagement by groups living in widely different circumstances and with divergent and seemingly irreconcilable perceptions of reality, coming together to overcome barricades of division and distrust and combining strengths and resources to search for a just peace. It was designed as critical, constructive ideological and intellectual engagements, in the manner of a ‘rehearsal’. A ‘rehearsal’ in negotiating deeply felt differences and working out a common ground, a common framework and group consensus for building the bridges of democratic coexistence and by all parties working together towards a just and lasting political settlement.

In terms of structure, content, method and objectives, the Second Consultation constituted a follow-up to the First Consultation and a springboard for framing the Third. Whereas the 1st Consultation had involved Sri Lankan grassroots civil society activists from the various ethnic and religious communities, the 2nd brought together representatives of the Sri Lankan Diaspora and of Sri Lankan Civil Society, along with international conflict resolution specialists. The spirit and purpose of the 2nd Consultation has been stated most succinctly by Dr Rienzie Perera. It is worth noting at length since it situates the context in which the outputs of the 2nd Consultation have to be synthesised.

“As we have planned three Consultations we would like to see that the issues and ideas which emerged at the earlier Consultation flow to make the necessary linkages and enrich the dialogue. Therefore one should not see these Consultations as isolated events but connected one to the other, leading to the overall goal of conflict transformation and the search for lasting peace enshrined in a political framework.

As Sri Lankans are polarized and alienated from one another at different levels, hopefully this Consultation will provide the forum to test their fears, prejudices and to search for a common vision based on the principles of compassion, justice, peace equality and dignity for all Sri Lankans irrespective of religion, ethnicity, class, political ideology or gender.

We are also aware that this is not a Consultation where the main players to the ethnic conflict or the people with decision-making powers will participate. At the same time, we should not underestimate the influence of those who participate at the Consultation, have on those who make decisions and control power. We hope at this Consultation we will discover not only our limitations but also our capacity to influence radical changes in people’s attitudes and social, economic and political structures. We are confident that such changes will occur when those involved in conflict are able to transcend barriers and forge alliances to work together.

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6 ‘Assessing Peace: An Inter-ethnic and Inter-religious Grassroots Approach to Peace Building in Sri Lanka’ This is a joint project carried out by the Inter-religious Peace Foundation, Sri Lanka, and the Life-Peace Institute, Sweden.

7 For a list of the persons involved in this Consultation, please see the First Consultation Report, available upon request from the LPI Uppsala Office.

8 See attached Appendix # IX for the list of participants.
to strengthen, broaden and deepen the space in Sri Lanka for democracy, human rights, the right to self-determination and good governance…”

In order to situate this structural coherence and logical continuity between these Consultations, it would be useful to present a brief summary of the Project Objectives and of the results of the First Consultation. This will help to situate the contextual and conceptual framework for evaluating the Second Consultation.

1.1 Summary of Project Objectives, Methodology and Expected Outputs.

Apart from specific immediate and long-term objectives and activities that have been identified, the general objectives of the project have been summarized as follows:

“Hence the proposed project aims to provide a forum for inter-ethnic and inter-religious consultations between grassroots groups in order to forge new alliances, strengthen the existing foundations of peace and find new ways to transform the Sri Lankan conflict from the bottom up…”

The methodology has been identified as follows:

“…Through a series of three international seminars, representatives of the Sinhalese, Tamil and Moslem communities, members of the Sri Lankan Diaspora as well as participants from the African, American and European continents will meet, discuss and share views on both the strengths and the weaknesses in previous peace initiatives. This assessment of the past should then lead to a common perspective for building durable peace based on concrete community participation and inter-ethnic and inter-religious exchange.”

Expected outputs have been identified as follows:

Hence this peace initiative supports an assessment of the mutual moods of the various communities involved in Sri Lanka’s conflict, an assessment of the state’s political willingness to reach a durable peace agreement based on acceptable terms for Tamil, Moslem and Sinhalese communities, as well as an assessment of the LTTE’s willingness to consent to a negotiated settlement of the situation. Finally, an assessment of past peace-building efforts must be made in order to learn from old mistakes and avoid reproducing them in the future.

Propositions to de-escalate current hostilities will then be drawn from this inter-ethnic and inter-religious consultation. Suggestions for action should enable the peace movement to build solid means for achieving peace and allow initiatives to grow from the common grounds laid during the Consultation. The purpose of this approach is to reinforce grassroots efforts to achieve peace and avoid relegating all dialogue to government and militant representatives who can benefit from continued hostilities. This dialogue would lead

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9 Dr Rienzie Peera, Research Director of the Life-Peace Institute, Sweden, opened the Second Consultation with these remarks reiterating the importance of the consultations on the peace process in Sri Lanka, p.36.

10 The First Consultation, organized by the Inter-religious Peace Foundation in collaboration with the Life-Peace Institute, took place at the Lewella Retreat House, Kandy, Sri Lanka, October 29 – 31, 1999. This first meeting brought together grassroots civil society activists from various ethnic and religious communities.


12 Ibid, p.3.
to the establishment of inter-ethnic and inter-religious links and to a peace network, which should give peace minded individuals a forum for voicing their concerns. Ultimately such an effort should allow the peace movement in Sri Lanka to stabilize and gain momentum, hence making peace the concern of a majority rather than the preoccupation of a minority. 

1.2 Methodology:

The following report will be an analysis of how the participants engaged in a collective effort to develop mutual trust and understanding and group consensus to work together to achieve the above objectives. The main aim of the report is to demonstrate the dynamics through which the core issues of the conflict were identified and addressed and to account for the outcomes. This report will identify and situate the various views on each major area of discussion and contention and the method and form at arriving at convergence. It will draw on the original documents where necessary to substantiate or situate such views. As such it will not be a narrative report. This method of presentation may not do justice by all the written presentations or by all participants, all of whom contributed with energy and spirit to achieve the final collective outcomes. Copies of the original presentations by various participants have been annexed and the reader is urged to refer to these.

1.3 Distinctive Features of the Second Consultation.

The Second Consultation derives significance not only by its explicit aim of seeking to empower grassroots civil society to play its historic role in achieving an honourable peace within a democratic social order. It derives significance from its structure, process and content in terms of conflict resolution methodology. A contention mode was deliberately structured such that all subjective perceptions and prejudices would be revealed, examined, criticized and transformed individually and collectively while moving steadily in the direction of building mutual trust, understanding and cooperation.

The Second Consultation was not designed to produce another rehashed version of the usual laundry list of grievances, obstacles and opportunities. It was designed such that important representatives of the major ethnic and religious constituencies would engage in an intensive interaction to identify divergences and explore convergences so they may establish the common ground to cooperate in achieving a speedy end to the war in the context of a democratic peace.

Participation: Divergence and Diversity

The Second Consultation was unique in terms of the character of the participants. All participants had the singular distinction of being intensely committed to seeking a political settlement to the conflict and had been engaged in the search for a democratic peace for a long time. The Sri Lankan delegation consisted of three leading Buddhist monks, including the Sanga Nayaka of the Northeast, three

13 Refer to the project proposal, “Assessing Peace: An Inter-ethnic and Inter-religious Grassroots Approach to Peace Building in Sri Lanka”, pp. 6 and 7.

14 The Second Consultation, organized by the IRPF in collaboration with LPI, took place in Uppsala, Sweden, 17 – 19 November, 2000, and brought the Sri Lankan Diaspora / Expatriate and Sri Lankan Civil Society together with international conflict resolution experts. See also appendices I and VIII. (Invitation and Guidelines), pp.37 and 71.
Christian priests, one leader of a Moslem organization working in the Northeast and three leading peace activist-theoreticians from the South; one who belongs to the Northern Tamil community, one from the Tamil plantation community and one from the Sinhala community. The Sri Lanka Diaspora was represented by Tamil and Sinhala participants from the US, Britain, Germany, Canada and Sweden. All participants had the distinction of being ideologically conscious and intensely committed to their views, as well as to searching the common path to a democratic peace. Finally, the participants included international conflict resolution experts, who are associated with the Life & Peace Institute and the World Council of Churches.

**Dynamics: From Contention to Cooperation**

Given that the participants came from different environments and circumstances and that they represented different ethnic and religious identities, which were embroiled at some level in the present conflict, the Consultation was bound to be contentious. Given the nature of participation and the objectives to be achieved, the Consultation had to be structured and managed carefully so as to provide a forum for a free and frank expression of views without degenerating into hostile polemics. Credit is due to Dr Rienzie Perera and to Mr Clement John for skillfully navigating the process towards an open constructive engagement making way for a free, though intense, exchange of views, which succeeded in overcoming ideological and perceptual barriers and produced a very high level of mutual trust, understanding and a commitment to work together for peace.

**Structure: From Subjective Prejudice to Informed Appreciation.**

The Consultation was designed to bring out subjective perceptions of the conflict and its resolution into the open so everyone could assess and evaluate them and come to terms and work with the basic assumptions involved to reach common understanding. The Consultation agenda was creatively structured to produce an epistemological and ideological movement from the perceptual level of subjective experience to a more rational/conceptual discourse on the major issues, obstacles and opportunities and ending up with a strategic frame for cooperation.

**Interaction: From Bitterness to Creative Engagement.**

The Consultation was designed with a view towards creating an environment of creative and constructive engagement. Hotly contested views were brought out and discussed with a sense of decorum, discipline and a common mission. All participants were energized and took up the challenging and contentious issues with a high degree of involvement.

**Comment:**
A written report can never bring out the real dynamics of such a Consultation. Suffice it to say that, in terms of the group dynamics and the level of involvement, the Consultation achieved exceptional success in building the bridges of mutual trust, understanding and a common commitment to forge the links and networks to work together for peace. It also succeeded in clearing up a lot of misconceptions, particularly with regard to the causes of the conflict, the question of the right to self-determination, the role and character of the Buddhist Sangha, the role and character of the LTTE, the issue of terrorism, problems facing Sri Lankan civil society and the current peace process focusing on the Norwegian facilitation. Finally, the output was the setting up of an action committee under the auspices of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation and an international coordinating-networking centre to be managed by Dr Rienzie Perera on behalf of the Life & Peace
Institute. Both in process, content and output, the 2nd Consultation stands as a landmark in building the bridges of mutual trust and cooperation and energizing the collective will to struggle for peace and coexistence among advanced social forces from disparate groups embroiled in the conflict.

2.0 Landscaping the Historical, Conceptual and Perceptual Terrain

Dr Nesiah presents an historical overview of the structural causes of the present conflict. One of the major problems he identifies is the yawning gap between the perceptions of history and identity embedded in the recesses of popular consciousness of the Sinhala-Buddhist community as constructed by chauvinist politics and the reality of the historical formation of the modern Tamil national movement. The demand for secession arises due to the threat perceived by the Tamil people to their existence and identity as an independent nation. A threat imposed by the state. The demand can only be addressed by removing such threats to the integrity, dignity, equality, security and autonomy of the Tamil nation. Yet, Dr Nesiah cautions that any political settlement must also address the fear of separation felt by the Sinhala people.

He first addresses a prevailing myth regarding historical interpretation.

“ It is often claimed that the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has racial, religious and historical roots going back over two millennia. This claim is based largely on the ancient Buddhist chronicle, the Mahawamsa, first compiled one and a half millennia ago and since extended, and subsequently supplemented by later chronicles.”

He accounts for the long history of coexistence, which forms the weave binding all Sri Lankan communities as a people. This, for him, is the underlying theme of Sri Lankan history. The conflicts of the remote past under feudalism are viewed as a natural struggle for political supremacy - a struggle for the retention or seizure of state power by various contending ruling dynasties of the South Asian region, particularly in India and Sri Lanka. This contention accounts for the politicisation of religion, both Buddhism and Hinduism, where religion becomes a political-ideological weapon for conquest, expansion and consolidation by the various contending empires and kingdoms. Nations and identities are formed historically and are subject to development and change. At the time of these conflicts, Nesiah argues, there could not have been any defined sense of national or ethnic identities or conflicts based on such. The present conflict is accounted for not by references to the past and the projection of a perpetual state of war between the Sinhala and Tamil ethnic formations but is generated by the contradictions in the formation of the modern post-colonial nation-state.


16 Ibid, p.38.
“Colonial conquest and domination introduces a new logic of communal politics, which is institutionalised in the form of a system of parliamentary representation based on majoritarian hegemony, which militated against the rights and freedoms of the minorities.”17

The emerging anti-imperialist national unity expressed in the Jaffna Congress was to be sabotaged by the Sinhala-based elites who worked to set up a majoritarian-hegemonic state. He points to the vanguard contributions of the JYC in advancing a genuine anti-imperialist agenda based on national unity.

“Long before independence, the JYC led the campaign for the use of the national languages in education and in governance. The Mother Tongue in Education (Nesiah, 1945) was authored by a JVC activist. The JYC succeeded in getting virtually all the leading schools in Jaffna to teach Sinhala as a compulsory subject at the secondary level. As J.E. Jayasuriya has noted, ‘At a time when the Sinhalese were prepared to do without Sinhala, the battle for Sinhala and Tamil was fought by Tamil leaders’.”18

Dr Nesiah traces the emergence of modern Tamil nationalism in the formation of the post-colonial state and makes some crucial arguments that demonstrate that the demand for separation was an inevitable response to state discrimination and repression:

“Up to the time of Independence, the Tamil leadership was virtually unanimously and uncompromisingly in favour of a unitary Sri Lankan state. Even the Tamil Congress, which effectively marginalized the JYC and was promoting Tamil consciousness, did not favour federalism. Perhaps the Tamil leaders they were not far sighted and only feared that federalism would limit their professional opportunities. The concept of federalism was introduced to the community only after independence and was resoundingly rejected, even in Jaffna, in the 1952 general elections. It was only with the Sinhala only movement of 1956 that the Sri Lankan Tamil population opted for federalism. In due course the political factors that united the Sri Lankan Tamil population gradually gained ascendancy (in the political field) over the caste and other prejudices that had kept the population divided. Eventually this nationalism acquired a separatist component but this component remained peripheral up to the mid-70s; every candidate advocating secession was demoralisingly defeated at every election to every parliamentary seat.”19

He then traces the sequence of major policies and events that systematically alienates and marginalizes the Tamil people from the state and the nation-building project that lead to the demand for the right to national self-determination. Proscribing this demand constitutionally gave rise to the armed struggle and to the political-military dominance of the LTTE.

As Dr Nesiah summarises;

“The statement of S.J.V Chelvanayakam on winning the Kankesanthurai bye election in February 1975, marks a fateful turning point:

We have for the last 25 years made every effort to secure out political rights on the basis of equality with the Sinhalese in a

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18 Dr D Nesiah, ibid, p.40.
19 Ibid, pp 40-41.
united Ceylon… It is a regrettable fact that successive Sinhalese governments have used the power that flows from independence to deny us our fundamental rights and reduce us to the position of a subject people… I wish to announce to my people and to the country that I consider the verdict at this election as a mandate that the Tamil Eelam nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free.

That statement and the Vaddukoddai resolution of 1976 in favour of separation must be seen in the context of many painful and humiliating reverses including the adoption of the scheme of "Standardisation" of University admissions and the 1972 Constitution. In the context in which it was adopted in 1971, many Sinhalese leaders may have seen "Standardization" of university admissions as a politically compelling measure. They failed to understand (or were indifferent to) the traumatic impact it would have on the Sri Lankan Tamil community. In turn, the Sri Lankan Tamil leaders failed to understand (or were indifferent to) the political pressures on the Sinhalese leaders on account of the growing ethnic imbalance in university admissions. Negotiations between the political leaders of the different ethnic groups on this issue may have led to an acceptable solution – but such dialogue has not been part of Sri Lanka’s political tradition. Similarly, the drafting of the 1972 Constitution was widely seen by the minorities, especially the Sri Lankan Tamils, as an exercise undertaken by the Sinhalese leaders with little heed to the concerns of the minorities.”

Dr Nesiah then considers the possibilities of a federal union. He provides a rational and balanced analysis trying to take account of all related concerns.

“Fundamental to the federal concept is that none of the federating units is exclusive, i.e., all citizens of the country have free access to every federating unit. While there could be legitimate ground to oppose state aided settlement schemes designed to alter the ethnic balance of any region, a federation of ethnically exclusive regions cannot be viable. This reality needs to be accepted by Sri Lankan Tamils as well as those of all other communities in respect of all the regions of Sri Lanka. There has been much ethnic cleansing of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims; effective counter-action is necessary. The entire island belongs equally to all her citizens, irrespective of whether the administration is unitary or federal. The establishment of a Tamil majority autonomous region would raise, among the Sinhalese, fears of secession and also fears for the security of the Sinhalese settled in that region. As already pointed out, the federal concept and the manner in which it has worked out in other countries in the region suggest that federalism would minimize (though perhaps not eliminate) ethnic conflict. In the case of secession too, the experience elsewhere suggests that this demand is more potent where there is repression and over centralisation (as in the case of Pakistan in relation to Bangladesh) than in cases where there is a ready acceptance of devolution (as in the case of Switzerland and the U.K.). It could be argued that both Canada and India would have fragmented long ago if they did not have federal constitutions; and that the secession of Bangladesh, Eritrea and Bosnia may not have occurred if they enjoyed equality and internal self-determination.

20 Dr D Neshia, ibid, p.41.
However, historic parallels may not be enough to dispel Sinhalese fears of secession and political links with Tamil Nadu, and these need to be addressed and necessary safeguards worked out. On the other hand, minority fears of unfettered powers of the centre to dissolve regional governments and impose direct central rule also need to be addressed.\footnote{Dr D Nesiah, ibid, pp.44-45.}

Dr Nesiah concludes by stating that there is no military victory possible for either side and the only way towards resolving the conflict is through political negotiations. However polarized the positions may be, he expresses confidence in a negotiated political settlement, given that other countries rent asunder by internal war have overcome seemingly intractable barriers to achieve peace. He calls for building consensus for a negotiated political settlement within a federal framework.

\section*{3.0 The New Tamil Civil Society in Tamil Eelam and its Struggle for Peace}

Dr Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam argues for the need for a mental-intellectual shift to recognize the reality and significance of the new Tamil civil society.\footnote{Dr Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam, “The New Tamil Civil Society in Tamil Eelam and its Struggle for Peace”, Appendix III, pp.47-48.} He takes the discussion to a more concrete level by attempting to ‘nail the issue and the concrete ground situation’. From within the field of problems of epistemology, mental-ideological frames and dominant paradigmatic assumptions, he gives clear and succinct expression to the core issue, the main obstacles in resolving it and the basic political and conceptual frame in which such a resolution could be conceived. Dr Edirveerasingham frames his presentation from within a LTTE perspective. He declares his view that the LTTE is the sole representative of the Tamil people and Mr Pirabakaran the chosen leader of the Tamil nation.

His basic argument is that there had always been an independent Tamil civil society. Colonialism suppressed and distorted both civil societies of the Sinhala and the Tamil people. Now the Sinhala people have got their independence and deny the same to Tamil civil society. Tamil civil society is undergoing a resurgence and renaissance as a consequence of the armed struggle for national liberation. A new Tamil civil justice, culture and administration have been instituted in the liberated areas. Recognition of this reality forms the frame for any political negotiation and settlement.

He sets out to draw the contours of the issue:

“The Tamil and Sinhala communities have existed in our island, each with their own language and culture, for more than 2000 years. Four centuries of colonial rule stunted the evolution of the both communities' cultural and civic institutions and imposed institutions that promoted the North Atlantic worldview. When colonial Britain left the island a constitution was put in place as the covenant that kept the two communities together. The Sinhala community re-established and promoted the growth of its language and culture, but it expected the Tamil community to accept the Sinhala version of civic justice for both communities. The Tamil people consider themselves as a Nation with a territory called Tamil Eelam and not as a minority community in the Sinhala nation. The Tamil nation resisted the
imposition peacefully at first, and then by resorting to arms. Tamils are now re-establishing the rights of their own community and their own civic justice in the areas they control. They reject the Western or Sinhala versions of civic justice that are not in concordance with their own civic justice. The Sinhala community and its leaders are resisting this attempt with tragic consequences to both communities.” Will the Sinhala nation state consent to peacefully permit the space, and the responsibility and authority the Tamil community needs to renew its own culture and civic justice? Can the two communities agree on a common civic justice that will not be in dissonance with each other's community and civic justice? If such an agreement is not feasible, can they live separately in peace for mutual benefit? This is the challenge to the two communities and the concerned international community.”

Dr Ethirveerasingham then sets out to ‘nail’ the core issue from his perspective:

“The Tamils and their leadership are not going to give up their goal of separation without the implementation of a negotiated and irrevocable solution. If they lay down their arms, past events tells them that the struggle will be terminated with vengeance. All Tamil voices for justice will be silenced until a new Tamil force emerges.”

“The LTTE is the civil and military administration of the Tamils in Tamil Eelam. The SLG should not pretend that it alone represents the Tamil community’s interests, though it may do so for a few Tamil individuals and groups. The Tamil community considers the SLG as a colonial occupying force in parts of Tamil Eelam. This is the reality that the Sinhala people should understand before any solution can be negotiated. The Tamils do not want the Sinhala armed forces near them, the same way they did not want any Indian forces near them. The Tamil people no longer want to entrust their safety and security to the Sinhala nation and its armed forces.”

Referring to the most fundamental obstacle in the way of a settlement, Dr Edirveerasingham says:

“…The realization that the Tamil community wished to be considered as equal to the Sinhala community, that the Tamil community had traditional areas of their own, and that they had a right to determine their own future development was unpalatable to the majority of the Sinhala community and its lay and elected leaders.

All of Sri Lanka Government's (SLG) proposals to solve the problem were fundamentally the same. The SLG focused on changing the structure of the administrative machinery of the government and apply it to the whole of the island assuming that the Tamils will learn to accept the new order. It is a folly to repeatedly use the same strategy and the same assumptions to solve the growing problem, knowing that such strategies have failed in the past, and knowing that there are other viable alternatives.”

Dr Edirveerasingham then proceeds to define the basic political and methodological frame in which a resolution to the conflict could be approached.

“ If the SLG would pay attention to the view of the problem as expressed by the aggrieved party, it would create more innovative proposals that would get a better hearing by the Tamils. The Sinhala leaders have laid

23 Dr Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam, ibid, p.47.
26 Ibid, p.47.
boundaries to suit their views. To solve the problem they need to go beyond those boundaries.”

“However long the dialogue for peace takes and whatever forms the solution will evolve, the Tamil administration and the Sinhala Administration should cease hostilities, bring economic, health and educational normalcy, and continue to negotiate until an agreement is reached. It is important for all at the grassroots level to support the peace process until a solution is found. The alternative to a dialogue is a continuing war of separation. The next dialogue will only be to discuss the modalities of separation.”

“A new creative strategy is essential to solve the problem. ... Similarly, we need to go beyond the proposals that have failed to achieve a solution to our ethnic problem. Past experience tells us that we cannot solve the problem by ourselves. Norway may be our best intermediary. The longer we take to start the process the more difficult it will be to bring about the normalcy required to negotiate a political solution.”

Dr Edirveerasinham proceeds to depict the growth of the new Tamil nation and civil society and attempts to draw the intrinsic and authentic features of participatory democracy that is being applied: His argument is that this national resurgence has given rise to two separate systems of identity, values and culture and two estranged systems of civil society, two nations, which have developed in opposition to each other- the recognition of which forms the basis for a negotiated political settlement.

“During the past ten years, Tamils have embarked on a renaissance of their society under the Tamil administration in the areas they control in Tamil Eelam. Under their civic administration they have established a participatory democracy where each sector elects their own council. The councils then make policies and processes that operate the sector with the help of the Tamil Administration. Membership to the councils is open to all adult Tamils living in the area. Pericles stated the most fundamental idea of democracy. He said, in about 430 B.C. “Although only a few may originate a policy, we are all able to judge it.” (In The Open Society and its Enemies, Karl Popper) Velupillai Pirapakaran is giving this opportunity to the Tamil people to contribute directly to the areas of their concern for the development of the Tamil people in Tamil Eelam. The alternative for the Tamils is Sri Lanka's version of democracy.

A cultural and political renaissance has begun in Tamil Eelam. The Tamil society in Tamil Eelam has new values and relationships that has been evolving since the 1980’s.”

“The Tamil society in Tamil Eelam no longer resembles the earlier generations. Unfortunately, the Sinhala leaders and their community cordoned off the Tamil community and isolated them by implementing their military, language and administrative policies. They failed to keep up with the developing values, attitudes, courage and determination of the new Tamil society in Tamil Eelam. The difference between the Tamils of Tamil Eelam and the Sinhalese widened to such an extent that they are now like the French and the English. They may belong to the same Union, but not to each other's state. Twenty years of war, emergency regulations, and ten years of embargo have contributed to the separate evolution of the values and attitudes of the two communities.”

Pirapakaran’s 1993 Hero's day address echoes the feeling of the Tamils on the subject of their cultural renaissance,
“Only when Language, the arts and culture gain strength and grow to heights does the national community structure closely knit and strengthen, human life and community relationship achieve greatness, and national civilization receives greatness.”

Dr Edirveerasignham’s view concerning the LTTE being the sole representative of the Tamil people raises intense discussion and debate. Two basic questions are raised. How do we establish that the LTTE is the sole representative of the Tamil people, and does it represent the whole of the Tamil people and the Tamil-speaking people, particularly the Moslem people?

The Moslem Question:
The Moslem representative, Mr Rahuman gave concentrated expression to the injustices caused to the Moslem people by the LTTE, including, as he claimed, atrocities. He insisted that these injustices have to be addressed along with the rights, interests and aspirations of the Moslem people as a distinct community in any negotiated political settlement. He said that much of the bitterness he had felt over these injustices had been transformed by the consultation in that it provided him with the opportunity of confronting these issues openly. He felt that a new spirit of reconciliation should be cultivated by honestly addressing these injustices.

The entire Consultation congratulated Mr Rahuman for his forthrightness in expressing his views and the spirit of reconciliation he proposed.

Question Of The Sole Representative Of The Tamil People

The Consultation seemed to converge on the understanding that what was important was not formal, legal or political definitions, but the real issues of political power - in the sense of the ability to exercise and impose one’s will on society. Under the concrete conditions of the present conflict, the consultation recognized that the LTTE is the dominant-hegemonic- political-military force representing the Tamil nation in its struggle to achieve the right to self-determination and that any negotiated political settlement would first have to be entered and agreed upon by the Government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE.

The Question of the Tamil Homeland in the North-East

There was a general consensus that the Northeast region constitutes the traditional homelands of the Tamil people. It was agreed that any feasible political settlement would have to give constitutional, political and institutional recognition to Tamil nationhood based on a traditional homeland. It was recognized that such a Tamil homeland in modern times could not mean a politically dominated Tamil homeland but a homeland commonly shared by the Sinhala, Moslem and all people of Sri Lanka in much the same way that all communities coexist in the South. It was felt necessary to explore such ground to advance the discourse and define the convergences on this crucial and thorny issue of identifying institutional mechanisms for sharing power at the regional level such that any community would exercise political power, secure their democratic rights and freedoms and pursue their distinctive identity as a condition for respecting and promoting that of every community.

32 Translation provided by Dr Rienzie Perera, Life & Peace Institute, Sweden.
3.1 An Assessment of Peace and Justice Efforts in the Sri Lanka from a diaspora perspective

Dr Arulanantham makes a powerful and poignant presentation, which addresses the root causes and devastating consequences of the conflict. He offers a sustained and serious critique of the state and of ‘peace organizations’, which are trapped in the dominant state paradigm. He places hope in the current peace process facilitated by Norway, but calls on peace organizations to shed their partisanship if they are to play a constructive role. He brings to bear long years of experience in working with Tamil refugees in India which he combines with deep insight and sensitivity.

Dr Arulanantham sets out a working definition of civil society

I use the phrase civil society in a very broad sense, to include all those individuals and organizations claiming to be independent and working towards the goals of peace and justice without using the gun as a tool to make their point. This would include organizations with a peace label, a human rights label, humanitarian relief organizations, and also those who work to document and counter election violence and fraud. I would also include churches and other religious organizations in this group. This grouping spans a wide spectrum of organizations, and my generalized comments will obviously not apply to each individual one. For the sake of simplicity, from now on, I will collectively call these the “peace organizations”.

He then goes on to make an assessment of the role and contribution of these peace organizations. He finds that the role is distorted and the contribution negligible.

“There is neither peace nor justice in Sri Lanka at present. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the peace organizations have either failed or not succeeded yet. On the contrary, despite their efforts the war has escalated. The armaments being used are more efficient and effective in destroying people, property, and communities than ever before. At the same time, the gulf between the Sinhalese and the Tamils has certainly widened.”

He accounts for this failure in terms of dominant paradigms and the epistemological field established by them. The problem of paradigms had been taken up before by both Dr Nesiah and Dr Edirveerasingham. Dr Arulanantham’s critique goes into the political heart of the matter, including the issue of terrorism and the character of the LTTE. The epistemological and methodological issues raised by him and their ideological and political implications are of intellectual importance to all peacemakers and deserves quoting at length.

“Every appraisal, statement or action is made within a given paradigm: a term that encompasses a set of assumptions, a set of standards, goals, etc. Much of the misunderstanding and miscommunication in discussions about the conflict in Sri Lanka is rooted in the participants often being unaware of the different paradigms being used in these discussions. Clear communication and understanding requires a genuine effort to understand the paradigm used in any assertion.

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33 Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, “An Assessment of Peace and Justice Efforts in the Sri Lanka from a diaspora perspective” see Appendix IV.
34 Ibid, p.51.
If I am to summarize my opinion as to why the peace movements have failed, I believe it is because of the non-critical acceptance of, and indeed the promotion of, the paradigm under which the government sought to impose peace. The government in fact has sought peace under the same conditions that gave rise to the war. There seems to be no understanding or acknowledgement of this.

In an unspoken validation of the government’s paradigm, public discussion and international and local press reports have generally assumed that the conflict on the island of Sri Lanka involves a legitimate government defending itself against a terrorist organization. The international community and the majority of Sinhala Sri Lankans have, without question, accorded the government the right to use violence against the Tamil population. The government has used terror, arbitrary mass punishment and extra-judicial killings in trying to control the Tamil population. In this set of assumptions, the government’s terror is not called terrorism, but is largely classified as well-meaning errors that need correction.

On the other hand the resistance to the violence perpetrated by the government is defined as terrorism. This term, terrorism, conjures up a threatening spectre in the imagination that automatically denies any legitimacy or humanity to those labelled as using it. The label, terrorist, can be used to justify deadly measures against anyone imagined to be a threat. For over twenty years, it has been used to justify the almost permanent state of emergency and obnoxious laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act under which the Sri Lankan government has carried out its persecution of the Tamils. In the context of Sri Lanka, if peace were to be assured under the prevailing paradigm, it would mean peace after the defeat and subjugation of the Tamils, rather than peace with justice for all. A different perspective will be gained by acknowledging that the conflict in Sri Lanka is only one of perhaps hundreds of similar conflicts in the world. As seen too often around the world, the Sinhala-Tamil conflict rehearses the old story- a story as old as the story of the Exodus in the Bible- the story of domination and subjugation of a weaker people by a group with more power. The weaker group is demonised, marginalized, and, to facilitate this process, information is controlled and myths are created to justify the domination. It is perhaps a dark reality of the human condition. The powerful create the ideology the belief systems and even the victims that are necessary to exercise their power.

In Sri Lanka, among the ideologies and myths invented to justify majoritarian power are distorted versions of history which label the Tamils as recent migrants to the island, as well as mistaken conceptions about the motives of the Tamils, such as that they have primary loyalty to India. One such distortion that “Tamils are dark skinned people unlike the fairer Sinhala people” perhaps rooted in the Aryan myth, was recently stated as a fact in a book and an article in the Boston globe by a Harvard professor. This instance in which racist propaganda was reported as fact, is a disturbing reminder of how deeply and widely these myths have been implanted in the minds of the people. These distortions are bad not only for the Tamil community but for the Sinhalese community as well… Imagined fears cannot be erased by attacking the source of fear because it simply does not exist. Nonetheless, such fears destroy the fabric of a healthy society. In Sri Lanka the government has not only failed to correct these irrational fears, but has encouraged them, used them for self-serving purposes, and legitimised them.”

Dr Arulanantham gives a characterisation of the anti-Tamil policies of the state since formal independence and raises the question as to why these

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36 The Prevention of Terrorism Act was passed in 1979. This enactment, together with a declaration of a state of emergency in the north, marked a new, more intensive phase in security operations. Reports of human rights violations committed by the security forces increased, exacerbating resentment among Tamil civilians and fuelling growing support for the militants. It was followed by mass arrests of Tamil youth along with a spate of extra-judicial killings and disappearances. Taken from, Accord, An International Review of Peace Initiatives, issue 4, August 1998, pp. 16 & 79.

37 Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, ibid, pp.51-52. 
grievances are not publicly acknowledged by civil society peace organisations.

“If one were to summarize the Sri Lankan government’s program with respect to the Tamils as an expression of the democratic will of the Sinhala Buddhist majority in Sri Lanka in the last 52 years of political independence from the British, the following generalizations could be made:

1. The government was largely only responsive to the collective desires and imagined fears of the Sinhala Buddhists of the country. These desires and fears were a manifestation of the Sinhala Buddhist power in the Island and its program of domination and subjugation of the Tamils, who were cast in the role of an enemy.

2. The government separately defined and rejected its Tamil citizens and then demonised and brutalised them. Examples of this include the disenfranchisement of the hill country Tamils and the many state-facilitated acts of violence against the Tamils, their culture, cultural icons, property, and identity.

3. All protests by the Tamils verbally or with weapons were dealt with violently, oftentimes with collective punishment that fell heavily upon the innocent.”

Dr Arulanantham addresses the collective conscience of the Sinhala majority community to come to terms with the causes and consequences of the conflict.

“It is significant, that there has been no acknowledgement by the Sinhala Buddhists collectively that there is anything wrong in the manner in which the Tamils have been treated and are being treated by the government. This is not an indictment of the many thousands of individual Sinhala people, who as individuals have expressed their anguish and regret over this situation. But if Sri Lanka is a country where all communities have equal dignity and respect, where is the collective apology for the pogroms of 1983?, or for the disenfranchisement of the hill-country Tamils in 1948?, or for the many other acts of brutality visited on the Tamils by the government—the extra-judicial executions, unexplained disappearances, bombed churches and civilian shelters, denial of food and medicine for the sick in Jaffna? I do not intend this statement as an accusation, but rather as a description of the state of mind at work as we explore the possibilities for peace.”

Dr Arulanantham presents a vivid picture of the devastating consequences of the war on the Tamil people. This picture, in its vividness and effect, is not available in the South. It has been suppressed by official censorship and by media acquiescence in the dominant state ideology. As such, it brings an acute sense of reality to the Consultation.

“The consequences to the oppressed Tamil community of the government’s abuse of power have been simply devastating. I cannot emphasize this point enough. Their way of life, their understanding of the state and of themselves has all been forcibly changed. Not a single city, town or village has been spared by the deadly attacks unleashed by the Sri Lankan government. The northeast has been bombed for 15 years. People here have been deprived of the basic necessities of life such as food and medicine for over a decade by a deliberate action of the government. I don’t know of a single Tamil family that has not been touched and challenged by this war. Many have not survived. Others are struggling to cope, often with the assistance of their extended family, a concept that still remains strong in Tamil culture.”

38 Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, ibid, pp.52-53.


40 Ibid.
Dr Arulanantham discusses the organic link between the growth of the armed struggle led by the LTTE as a response to state oppression and repression and the radical democratic transformation of Tamil society, including the role and status of women. However controversial these ideas may be, they have the effect of challenging the dominant Southern consciousness- and the lack if its conscience.

The Sri Lankan government’s continued recourse to deadly force has transformed a guerrilla organization into a conventional military group with an effective army and a navy. Such an accomplishment could not have been without the transformation in the self-perception of those Tamils who have chosen resistance to the government as their strategy. They have abandoned the traditional attitudes and adaptive mechanisms by which Tamils were successful when ruled by an outsider for over many centuries. They now think of themselves as a free people, with the abilities and rights of a nation, and with land that belongs to them. Within the society, too, social and hierarchical relationships have changed. Caste groups have found new status, while the traditional elites have become less powerful.

The status of the Tamil women has been debated with opinions and interpretations that seem more reflective of the biases of the presenters rather than the facts that are available, reflecting the division in the Tamil society as it goes through the changes imposed by the prevailing situation. The facts are that women are playing roles not seen in traditional Tamil societies and function as soldiers and work in many responsible positions. Many have also suffered terribly and have been forced to support children as widows as more men than women have lost their lives in this conflict. They too will adapt and change to survive and this will be reflected in their status.41

Dr Arulanantham accounts contextually for the rise to dominance of the LTTE

“As we all know, violence begets more violence. It should be obvious to any observer who has lived through the post independent period, that the LTTE and their military program was created by the successive Sinhala governments of Sri Lanka and their arrogant and misguided policies towards the Tamils. LTTE’s single-minded focus and commitment was a survival response of a smaller, weaker group with less access to resources than the government. Sacrifice and discipline was their answer to poorer resources. The organization has never operated in an environment free of internal and external threats, a fact that must influence their methods of functioning. They are an authoritarian organization fighting against heavy odds and with military and security as their priority. This had certainly interfered with those civilians choosing to lead a non-confrontational life. Their program has had an effect on all Tamils, including those who did not want to confront the system. They have been accused of committing many human rights violations including the expulsions of the Muslim population from Jaffna, as they pursue their military resistance. But they have often been accused and convicted by the local and international media without evidence, reflecting the success of the Sri Lankan government in defining the LTTE and in controlling the debate about them. They are labelled as a terrorist organization by the US and Indian governments. But they do have widespread support among Tamils, including those who may not agree with all it’s methods and strategies as they are seen as the only resistance to the obvious mistreatment of Tamils by the Sinhala dominated governments.”42

The critique of the peace organisations is taken up once again by Dr Arulanantham in order to develop a constructive frame of questions as a mirror for peace organisations to evaluate themselves and restructure their approach and work.

41 Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, ibid, p.54.

42 Ibid, pp.54-55.
“Unfortunately, peace organizations have too often been used by the government as a pawn in its struggle against the LTTE. It must be admitted that peace organizations have not only failed to bring about peace or justice in Sri Lanka, but have indeed supported the very oppression of the Tamils that gave rise to the war. Many peace organizations have supported the fraudulent and bankrupt policy of war for peace. And they have failed to remain neutral in the conflict, as an independent party should be. Why has this happened? Some of the reasons could be the following:

1. The current power and organizational structure of the state serves the interests of many of the members of peace organizations. They support it because they survive and thrive in the current system. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are serving themselves.

2. The second is what I call the love affair with Chandrika. Chandrika talked peace, which was music to the ears of peace organization. The destructive policy termed “war for peace” is a sad commentary on members who were tired of the abuses of the UNP. But in retrospect, what Chandrika was really after was not peace and justice for the Tamils but power for herself. Peace and war were merely a means to acquire and express that power. When things went wrong, she was not held personally responsible. It was never Chandrika but her machinery that was at fault. Having invested their hopes in her, the peace organizations could not own up to their misjudgements. But in remaining silent, they supported her violence against the Tamils. Their direct or indirect support for the cynical policy of depriving medicine and food to northeast Sri Lanka, the voices of peace organizations remained muted. How can any civilized government deprive children of medicines to treat malaria? …”

“Another major problem is that the peace organizations oftentimes over-project their successes, perhaps an indication of personal or financial need. They have alleged that the dominant Sinhala mindset had changed without any basis or proof. They have claimed successes in organizing people and changing their hearts and minds when a few hundred people turned up to protest in a country with millions.

Peace organizations have also failed to astutely look at the dynamics of war itself. The sources that keep the war going, including arms sales, have received little attention. If they have done studies of these factors, they remain muted, subject to the government’s control on information. Finally, the peace organizations have not only been partial, but have failed to create the middle space needed to work effectively with all sides as a peacemaker.

There is no easy answer for how peace organizations should change to remedy the problems I have suggested. But go forward they must. As hopes of peace emerge from the Norwegian talks, it is vital that peace organizations understand their role and play it effectively. Some theorize that in situations such as the war in Sri Lanka, peace comes when it becomes a better alternative to war—particularly for those who benefited from the war. It can also come when there is a clear victory of one side over the other. Yet the latter seems unlikely, and we may have reached the point of what the peace theoreticians call the “hurting stalemate”, a point that is ripe for peace. As we articulate the plans for peace, the peace organizations have to keep in mind the necessary requirements to make this peace stick. The fundamental prerequisite is that the peace plans grant of genuine power to the Tamils to control their lives and their affairs. The structure in which it can be done can be argued, but cosmetic power

Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, ibid, p.55.
transfer is supported by meaningless adjectives, and without any real content it will not work. Giving up power is difficult and will require alternate sources of power. Peace organizations have to ask these questions of themselves.

1) Why should the Tamils now expect different treatment from the Sinhala Buddhist controlled government to what has been their treatment in the last 50 years?

2) How can the Tamils hand over their personal security to the government? How has the government demonstrated that they are worthy of this trust?

For the Sinhala community to genuinely transfer power there needs to be a systematic attempt to understand and humanize the Tamils, to undo the process of demonisation that has gone on for so many years. This would also require lifting press censorship and honestly sharing information about the situation in the northeast.\textsuperscript{44}

Dr Arulanantham concludes his presentation with a proposal for genuine reconciliation and a sense of hope:

“For the Tamil community to accept and become part of a larger community on the island of Sri Lanka there needs to be recognition of the hurts done to them, and restitution for events such as disenfranchisement, the many pogroms such as that of 1983, and the war. To expect these conditions to be achieved may be unrealistic without serious effort, pain and setbacks. Some may even call it an unrealistic dream. But we must continue to live in hope.”\textsuperscript{45}

“However the Norwegian peace effort is a ray of hope. This potential diplomatic breakthrough is perhaps less due to the success of the peace organizations, than to the failure of the war movement. However, peace organizations will necessarily have a role on the long and bumpy road ahead towards peace, and hence there is a need for an honest appraisal of these organizations.”\textsuperscript{46}

4.0 Assessment of Peace and Justice Efforts in Sri Lankan Civil Society

Mr Balakrishnan brings to bear a long and varied experience in the field of constitutional reform, human rights, peace and development. He begins by tracing the development of the conflict. According to him the conflict emerged over the question of sharing power in a post-colonial state and erupted into the open after independence. Acceptance of majority rule without adequate constitutional and institutional safeguards for the protection of minorities constitutes the structural fault line. The strong trade union left movement in the 50s-60s campaigned against racial discrimination. Their slogan was “One language two nations, two languages one nation”. But the progressive movement lost out to the dominant status quo represented by the two major parties.

Balakrishnan goes on to give a characterization of the major peace organizations and their activities in Sri Lanka. He unravels a series of initiatives and interventions that took on core aspects and issues

\textsuperscript{44} Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, ibid, p.56.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, p.51.
of the conflict on a broad popular scale. Although overall there has been the development of a peace culture and constituency, he admits to serious drawbacks. The main ones being the lack of funds, the lack of cooperation between different NGOs and the difficulties initiating a dialogue between North and South. The cult and culture of violence is all pervasive, which is exploited by war makers. Deep racial prejudices stand as a major bloc, which is spread also by the dominant mainstream media. The government’s undermining and co-optation of the non-elected groups, NGOs and civil society in general is also a major problem in the way of building a strong national peace constituency or movement for the growth of a vibrant and independent civil society. He also adds that the issue of the security of life and property of peace activists being threatened is a factor, which seriously undermines the effectiveness of peace organizations. Yet Balakrishnan attests to the existence of a strong democratic peace constituency in Sri Lanka as evidenced by several surveys conducted, including some of high academic and professional standard.

Balakrishnan then goes on to raise a point, which leads to some interesting interventions, which have significance for the Consultation. He claims that both Southern and Northern civil society cannot be said to be authentic civil societies given that they are dominated by politics and the gun and that the same culture of barbarism that exists in the South is to be found in the North. According to his argument, even under conditions of war, and especially under conditions of war, it is important that civil society finds its independent democratic voice.

Mr Rupasinghe intervenes to state that the theoretical discrimination between the politics of the oppressor and the oppressed should be sustained and that the terrorism of the North is a response to the terrorism of the South. This was an issue of cause and effect. When the state, which has the monopoly of the legitimate use of force, exercises that force to suppress and repress any individual, nation or people, it is legitimate for the oppressed to take up arms against the state. Whether it is legitimate for the oppressed to resort to the same policy of terrorism, as the state is a major question, but that Rupasinghe claims is a matter of ideological and political line.

Selia Amirthalingam contributed to the discussion by adding that all civilians face a potential threat by the brutalizing police force, and by Sinhalese extremists. He points out that militant pro- and anti-government forces are growing and building organizational strength.

Dr Arulanantham raises the question of the function of the heap of international human rights conventions that have been entered into by the Sri Lankan state and of the effectiveness of state institutions and agencies such as the Human Rights Commission.

The discussion ends with the participants acknowledging that the interaction had raised their level of understanding that the phenomenon of terrorism and barbarism was driven by a mutually reinforcing logic of destruction and counter destruction, being the logic and character of the war and that to label just one side, as terrorist would be a gross violation of justice. More fundamentally, the issue was raised from a medical point of view that the phenomenon of terrorism and barbarism was an expression of a cancerous social and political order and that civil society intellectuals should analyse the structural roots of this disorder objectively and independently.
5.0 An Inter Ethnic And Inter Religious Grassroots Approach to Peace Building in Sri Lanka – A Muslim Perspective

Rahuman begins by accounting for the Moslem people as a traditional historical community that has coexisted in Sri Lanka since the 8th century where they lived in Sinhalese villages but adopted the Tamil language. According to him, at the time of independence Moslems accounted for 31% in the Eastern province and 17% of the Northeastern province. After the 1981 census, the state worked systematically to reduce the Muslim presence and occupied ancestral Muslim land in these areas.

According to Rahuman, in modern times, Moslems were first discriminated against by the State and the Singhalese and then increasing tensions began with Tamils. This was due to LTTE atrocities. The state has also been involved in these massacres. LTTE later evacuated 75,000 Muslims from the North province. Atrocities against Muslims in coastal areas give anxiety that the intention may be to annihilate the Muslim community.

Rahuman asserts that the Moslem people, like everyone else, have endured and suffered untold misery and hardship due to this war. They also have legitimate grievances against the state and the LTTE. Rahuman disassociates himself from the established Moslem political establishment and says that the Moslem people must live in peace and cooperation with all other communities with respect, security, equality and autonomy. Therefore, he insists that in seeking peace not only those taking up arms should be consulted.

Rahuman’s presentation had an electrifying effect. Perhaps for the first time, the consultation had to come to grips with the issue of the Moslem people- their political status in negotiations and in the shaping of the new political order, and their attitude towards the LTTE.

The discussion ended with a renewed and deeper appreciation of the just grievances of the Moslem people, their suffering due to the war, the forms of their oppression and discrimination, and their role and status in negotiating a sustainable peace and in the construction of a new democratic political order.

6.0 The Role Of Buddhist Priests (Sangha) In The Sri Lankan Conflict

Ven Assaji begins by admitting that there is some truth to the international image that Buddhist priests are the main obstacles to peace. He insists that this reality be analysed properly in order to comprehend the depth and complexity of this partial truth. This problem has to be understood in the historical context of the development of Sinhala Buddhism. To understand the Sinhala Buddhist identity it is necessary to appreciate the role of the Mahavamsa. The Mahavamsa scripture has a special status in Sri Lanka. Even today it is the fountainhead of the banner of Sinhala nationalism. The Mahavamsa forms the mind-set of the Sinhala Buddhist national identity.

“Just as the Tripitaka is sacred to all Buddhists, the Mahavamsa is the sacred source for Sri Lankan Buddhists. This is how the mind set has been defined. The Mahavamsa occupies the same status among Sri Lankan Buddhists, as does the Vira Kavya in Sankrit literature. The Mahavamsa is
devoted to recording the aggressions of The Chola, Pandian and Kalinga kingdoms from India and the subsequent decline of the Sinhala Nation and Buddhism.

The war between Dutugemunu and the Elara, who had the longest reign in Sri Lanka, is even today the fountain for raising the banner of Sinhala patriotism. Even though king Elara has been described as Dhammiko Dhamma Raja, the damage caused to the Sangha by his ministers and officials has been emphasized. Here we find that the Mahavamsa is constrained to give recognition to the historical foundations of coexistence even as it sets out to deny it.”

Ven Assaji explains the historical context for feelings of animosity against Tamils among the Sinhalese.

“The Mahavamsa has described the manner in which the Tamil community had been granted special privileges at the cost of depriving the Sinhala Buddhists during the reign of Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe, Sri Wickremasinghe Rajasinghe and Sitavaka Rajasinghe. These kings had built Hindu kovils inside Buddhist temples in order to meet the needs of their Tamil queens. The act of bestowing the Sri Pada sacred area to Arittaki Vendu is of many such incidents mentioned. These historical events served to spread distrust and suspicion by Sinhalese towards Tamils in India. The destruction of Buddhist places of worship during various periods of history also served to build up the mind set of the Buddhists against Tamils.”

The Sinhala Buddhist polity was historically formed in the crucible of great fear and insecurity. This sense of insecurity was further strengthened by the colonial powers: Portugal, Holland and Britain. From 1956 the politicians have cultivated this sense of fear. A sense of patriotism was built up by exploiting this fear. Under British colonialism the Sinhalese felt marginalized. They fought for their rights and for Buddhism. Buddhist monks came to be regarded as guardians of the state and the Buddhist social order. Buddhist doctrine and the Sinhalese nation became identified. Ven Assaji describes the process of how patriotism gets identified with anti-colonial Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism and then is manipulated into anti-Tamil chauvinism by opportunist politicians.

“Following this, under the British colonial occupation, the development of events was not to the favour of the Sinhalese. The colonial power acted to create division and conflict between the two communities as opposed to building trust and cooperation. The activities of Ven Wariyapola Sri Sumangala, Ven Miggetuwatte Gunananda and Anagarika Dharmapala are located in this context. The lectures and activities of these persons served to build up patriotism among the Sinhala Buddhists. While some Tamils in the North adopted Christianity, they also gained access to Christian schools and obtained higher education in English. Due to this, they were able to achieve high positions in the state administration. Due to the excessive patriotism of the Sinhala Buddhists, they rejected opportunities of entering such schools and gaining an English education and achieving such positions. This resulted in jealousy against such Tamils.”

These developments produced a distinct identity construction:

“Throughout this period, the Sangha had been the protector not only of the Buddhist doctrine, but also of the Sinhala people. The Buddhist doctrine and the Sinhalese nation became welded together as a bark to a tree. Thus, history bestowed upon the Buddhist priest and the Sangha the role of protector of the religion and the nation. Accordingly, a particular mind set formed in this way.”

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid, p58.
The elevation of the Buddhist priest to the level of the guardian of the state by the Colonial powers and the special privileges gained by Buddhists had their fatal consequences:

“These aggressors spread division not only as nations but between religions as well, which contributed towards breaking the bonds of friendship and solidarity between these communities. The various privileges accorded to the Buddhists were roots of corruption and decline. The Buddhists only recognized this fact long after the corrosion had set in.”

Ven Assaji analyses how the ruling class manipulates feelings of injustice, fear and oppression into instruments of mind-control.

“History bears testimony to the manner in which the rulers have infiltrated and penetrated the mind of the Sinhala Buddhist through various institutions and agencies. In place of the doctrine of tolerance preached by Buddhism, the rulers propagate that this tolerance has been the cause of our downfall. From the 16th Century onwards during the Portuguese, Dutch and British colonial periods, the Sinhala Buddhists had suffered great injustice and oppression. It is not necessary here to record them. The rulers, instead of identifying the real enemy of the people, targeted the Tamils as the source of all woes.”

However, Ven Assaji assures that Buddhist monks cannot stay within this mind-set. Categories such as race, nation, state, and caste have to be transcended by monks. Rulers have infiltrated the Buddhist mind-set, defining Tamils as the causes of all evil and thereby destroying relations of friendship and solidarity.

Ven Assaji delivers an argument in defence of the Sri Lankan Buddhist constituency whose image has been tarnished due to the inability to make critical judgements:

“It is not that the monk and the Sinhalaya had not acted in a passionate, and even unruly manner. There is evidence that this was produced by those who wished to ascend these hierarchies by resort to chauvinism and racism. This becomes clear when one looks deep into the environment of events behind Black July in 1983 and Bindunuweva in 2000. But, it is also clear when looking at other events that the Sinhalese Buddhist is tolerant without compare. Not only for the Sinhala Buddhists, but also to all Buddhists of the world, there is none such sacred places as the Shri Maha Bodhi and the Dalada Maligawa. No one can ever justify what happened at these places. The tolerance displayed by the Sinhalese is indeed great. Even though certain racist forces tried to spread the flames of communal violence throughout the land, Buddhist monks also played a role in preventing such. The massacre of Buddhist monks at Arantalawa, the killing of the chief incumbent of the Dimbulagala Viharaya and the destruction of Buddhist shrines and temples in the North East cannot be ignored. Yet, these events did not provoke a backlash from the Sinhala Buddhist people. There are Sinhala Buddhist forces and members of the Sangha who do try to exploit these issues. But this is the politics of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism and should not be identified as the essence of the Sangha. The propaganda carried out internationally that the whole of the Sinhala nation and the Sangha is anti-Tamil has the result of denouncing those Sinhala people and members of the Sangha who act to bring about an honourable peace. The various reports and literature by some agencies bring out the fact that there are those who seek to profit by this biased propaganda.

In the face of this background and this challenge, we should never forget that there is a Sri Lankan Buddhist constituency, including Buddhist monks, who are dedicated to bring about harmony among the various nations and communities through an honourable peace, which gives
recognition to the just rights of the national minorities. It is unfortunate that no Tamil organisation has yet made an evaluation of this truth."

Ven Assaji goes on to construct what he claims to be the genuine Buddhist approach to conflict and war. This is important in that it is an espousal of the Buddhist doctrine on conflict and its cessation in terms of its application to the present conflict. It forms the doctrinal basis for reasserting the universalism of Buddhism, which according to Ven Assaji, textually repudiates any form of hierarchy, control or domination of any being by another, but, on the contrary, declares the family of humankind. It declares the equality, integrity and dignity of all beings irrespective of, and transcending, the divisions of race, language, religion, nation, country, tribe, community or group. This premise forms the basis for Ven Assaji to construct his line of demarcation between the true precepts of Buddhism and the false, however, to state it more concretely, between Buddhism as politics and state ideology, and Buddhism as a universal philosophy. This demarcation serves him to identify a minority of monks who remain true Buddhists by their adoption of a progressive stand against the war and who call for an honourable political settlement within a democratic pluralist framework.

Ven Assaji initiates the discourse by elaborating the methodological principles of investigation contained in the Buddhist doctrine concerning the cause of war.

“Buddhism is not a doctrine which analyses outward appearance. Instead, it analyses all problems and phenomena by probing the internal causes deeply by applying methods of social and psychological research and investigation. While fear and terror are generated by war, war is caused by greed. Greed gives rise to fear and sorrow. Those who are liberated from greed are free of fear and sorrow.”

“The biological human being is bereft of all divisions of race, creed, class, nation, ethnicity and caste as according to Buddhism... War is a struggle for power. Terror and destruction inevitably accompanies it. Buddhism analyses not merely the effects of such destruction but also their causes. The virtues and dividends of peace and coexistence form the base of the Buddhist doctrine.”

Ven Assaji provides the doctrinal foundation of Buddhism in relation to conflict resolution, which provides insight into the psychosocial dimensions of conflict generation.

“There are many profound principles of conflict resolution contained in the Buddhist doctrine. Even during his own time, the Lord Buddha succeeded in applying these principles of the Dhamma in resolving major social and political conflicts, as in the case of the war between Sakya and Cholia clans. The Buddha has analysed the psychological conditions and motivations that sets the mental frame for conflict. These mind sets are located in the categories of race, nation, tribe, caste etc.”

Ven Assaji gives expression to the universality of the Buddhist doctrine in order to raise the dichotomy between the teachings of Buddhism and the practice of deviant monks.

“The human family is a community of beings that exist as a collective deriving its origins and essence from one common source. Human beings are evaluated as lower or higher beings according to their actions. The roots of social conflict lie in the act of betraying obligations and

53 Ven. Assagi Nyaka Thero, ibid, p.58.
54 Ibid, p.59.
responsibilities. The tenets of the Dhamma state that it is far greater to achieve victory over the self, than it is to win a war by killing thousands. In this sense, Buddhism not only rejects conflict and war, but also all division based on race, nation, tribe, caste etc. The Tripitaka is replete with teachings on coexistence and solidarity among all communities.

Thus, we can question as to how those Buddhists and priests who profess the doctrine can propagate the view that war is a necessary means of resolving conflicts? All doctrines are pure in content and intent. Yet those who profess them are simple-minded and therefore deviate. This was so even during the time of the Lord Buddha. Yet we should never forget that there have been, and will always be, those who strive to imbibe and profess the true doctrine.”

Ven Assaji proceeds to give a brief account of the work of Buddhist monks in the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation to demonstrate progressive work by monks who strive to imbibe the true essence of Buddhism

“The monks represented in the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation are some of them. But unfortunately, their views and actions do not receive international attention or concern. The work done by such monks for some fifteen years to oppose war and promote peace and coexistence is indeed immeasurable. But that is the subject of another discussion.”

Ven Assaji concludes by giving expression to the progressive commitment of the Buddhist monks within the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation to cooperate with the current peace process under Norwegian facilitation.

“At present, the issue of war and peace has taken a new turn. At the invitation of the government of Sri Lanka, the Government of Norway has been requested to facilitate a dialogue between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. As a group of Buddhist monks who have long desired peace in the land and who have insistently advocated a negotiated political settlement, we give our wholehearted blessings to this initiative and shall work for its success with all our strength and commitment.

Hatred is not ceased by hatred. Compassion ceases hatred. The achievement of an honourable peace based on equality of all nations and communities is in accord with the true essence of the teachings of the Lord Buddha. Let us unite in peace.”

The presentation and discussion is evaluated as highly positive by the participants. It helps to give a balanced perspective of the complex and contradictory problems of the historically formed (Mahavamsa) ideological mind-set in which the Sri Lankan Buddhist monk is constrained and trained to think and act. It also provides a new perspective for the participants, particularly the Tamil representatives, that there are progressive monks who have to climb up-hill all the way and who are not given proper recognition.

The discussion focuses on the significance of the role played by such progressive monks in terms of influencing the broad masses and national decision-making. Ven Siyambalagaswewa Wimalasara and Ven Dr Pallekanda Rathanasara stimulate the discussion by introducing other constraints facing Buddhist monks. Ven Dr Rathanasara pointed to the economic difficulties of poor temples and monks who face difficulties in meeting needs and who are exploited by Sinhala extremists by offering financial assistance. They spoke of

58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
the intellectual malaise that has set in due to the pervasive and invidious culture of political repression and spiritual decadence.

7.0 Some Guidelines Towards Resolving the Sri Lankan Conflict

Dr Chandrakanthan presents a structured argument with a compelling logic developed in the form of an interplay of dichotomies. The thrust of his argument is to make the reality of an independent Tamil nationhood an established fact - established concretely, practically and irrefutably on the ground through war against an occupying colonial state. Dr Chandrakanthan insists on the acceptance of the right to separation as a fait accompli. The Tamil nation is already born and formed independent of, and in opposition to, the political/legal authority and jurisdiction of the Sri Lankan state. To paraphrase it perhaps provocatively, the Tamil nation has been won and its territory liberated through the force of arms and it shall never be surrendered. Dr Chandrakanthan argues that the hostility between the two nations has run deep. Now the problem is to settle how the two nations – Sinhala and Tamil – are going to coexist politically? To formulate it, perhaps more technically, “What are the political forms in which a free and voluntary union between the two nations could be achieved?” Therefore, political negotiations could only mean establishing the terms of a new union - a free, voluntary and equal union between two distinct and hostile nations.

Dr Chandrakanthan begins by constructing the reality of two-hostile nations that have parted ways. The war has led a logic of military escalation, which has intensified the demand for separation. Today there exist not only two nations but also two nationalisms, which oppose each other. Sinhalese nationalism became the aggressor, which nurtured a defensive nationalism, which has developed into a demand for full nationhood. The question is, “Can they live together when they are so polarized and their interests are politically irreconcilable? Nor have Tamils been given any opportunity to share in constitutional making. In spite of some two hundred years tradition of coexistence, the two nations have remained socially and culturally incompatible. This intolerance is witnessed by the wilful mutilation of bodies.

Dr Chandrakanthan presents an overview of the development of the Mahavamsa mind-set and its resultant ideological frame of one indivisible country, language, religion and nation to be expressed in a centralized, majoritarian- hegemonic, unitary state. The turning point of the process, Dr Chandrakanthan identifies as the Republican Constitution of 1972, which deprives the constitutional status and guarantees of the Tamil people and enshrines the Sinhala-Buddhist state.

Dr Chandrakanthan offers suggestions in key areas to restore mutual confidence between the two nations and their leadership.

1 Necessity to separate personal agendas related to political power from the peace agenda

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60 The Republican Constitution of 1972 paved the way for the Republic of Sri Lanka. Under new provisions, the state will protect and foster the Buddhist religion, giving it the foremost place in the life of the nation. Sinhala is also affirmed as the single official language of the courts and the state administration. The Federal party and other groups representing Sri Lankan and Up-country Tamils come together to form the Tamil United Front. Taken from, Accord, An International Review of Peace Initiatives, Issue 4, August 1998, p 78.
2. Sinhala Only Act brought racism into the bureaucracy so there must be an ideological purging of the entire state apparatus.
3. Authentic signs of peace making are necessary. The Government has to gain trust in smaller matters.
4. Restoration of an independent judiciary.
5. Restructuring of the total social fabric with real pluralism, not as Sinhalese majority plus minorities, relegating the minorities to second-class status.
6. Radical reformation of the educational system, eradicating the biased myths about each other.
7. Nurturing a responsible media – both traditional and electronic ones, including the Internet instead of the racist prejudices now being spread.
8. The war for peace strategy is broadly accepted, Why not separation for peace, which is much less expensive? Dr Chandrakanthan draws the bottom line in his construction. “The Tamil community would nevermore accept to live under the paradigm of one ruler.”

There were many questions raised by several participants following Dr Chandrakanthan’s presentation.

Cardula Reimann wanted to know what he meant by restoring the social fabric? Her concern was whether this meant a return to traditional society and patriarchy.

Dr Nesiah was concerned whether according to the presentation, the conflict could be resolved or not. If we have lost faith in all the Sri Lankan institutions – what to do?

Dr Karunyan raises the question: How to achieve the changes you want?

Dr Chandrakanthan addresses the need for a healing at the roots. He does not wish to suggest any particular constitutional model or framework. What is more important, he insists, is the content of the structure, not its form.

8.0 Basic Issues of the Ethnic-based Political Conflict in Sri Lanka and a Framework of Principles for its Democratic Resolution

Rupasinghe’s role here is to respond to the views of Dr Chandrakanthan. He first starts out by stating that in discussing the character of the present conflict, “it is important to distinguish between cause and effect, between structure and phenomena, between origins and consequences.” On this basis he argues that; “the basic issue to be resolved in the current conflict is the systematic discrimination and subjugation of the Tamil nation in the North-East by the state and the armed resistance to it by the Tamil national movement.”

Rupasinghe presents a historical analysis of the evolution, character and consequences of the modern Sri Lankan state.

62 Ibid.
“The post colonial state was established by the British Colonial power in collaboration with its dominant allies. In my view, the post-colonial state is not an authentic creation of the people, by the people and for the people. This state was crafted by the colonial power as the supreme political and legal authority to manage and maintain the political economy of colonialism. The hierarchical relations of feudal-colonial rule were transferred and transformed into a new system of management under a new form of state power. The feudal-colonial state was simply handed over to a new ruling class consisting of the most powerful and wealthiest landlords and entrepreneurs. The principle of majority rule based on the system of parliamentary elections led to the establishment of a hegemonic state where the dominant Sinhala elites concentrated and centralized political power at the expense of marginalizing and dispossessing the vast majority of the poor - the workers, farmers, fishermen, lower level professionals, traders and so on. At the same time, it marginalized and dispossessed all other ethnic communities, including the Tamil nation in the North and East, the Tamil plantation community, the Moslem, Burgher, Malay and other communities and caste groups.

The feudal-colonial state has not only perpetuated the prevailing status quo, but perpetuated dependence and indebtedness, ruin and devastation, poverty and degradation and brought the country to this brink of disaster. The feudal-colonial state has generated the most explosive and violent conflicts in the fifty-two years it has existed. Over one hundred and fifty thousand people, mostly youth from the poorest families in the North and the South, both Sinhala and Tamil, have shed their blood in resistance and rebellion against the state.”

Rupasinghe proceeds to discuss the development of the modern Tamil nation and the demand for the right to self-determination.

“The Republican Constitution adopted by the Sinhala majority in 1972 formalised this hegemony by the proclamation of the Sinhala Buddhist state and removing all previous guarantees of security provided to other communities. Further legislation which had the effect of fatally marginalizing the Tamil community, led to the unanimous adoption of the Vaddukoddai resolution in 1976 by all major Tamil political organizations, which declared in favour of a separate Tamil state. …The demand for a separate state has been endorsed by all Tamil parties without exception and enshrined in the Thimpu principles.”

On this basis, Rupasinghe reiterates his assertion that the core issue behind the conflict is:

“the systematic denial and violent suppression of the national democratic rights of the Tamil nation which has given cause to the demand for its right of national self-determination, i.e., the right to form a separate state.”

Rupasinghe situates the basic issues and constraints in negotiating a political settlement.

“The LTTE has emerged as the dominant armed power within the Tamil National Movement. It is the only organization that has stood firm in pursuing the mandate of the Tamil people for recognition of Tamil nationhood and its unconditional right of self-determination. It demands an acceptable alternative to a separate state and insists that it is the responsibility of the state to present such an alternative form of sharing

64 The Vaddukoddai Resolution was adopted on 14 May 1976. In this resolution the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) declared that all attempts to cooperate with governments had failed and that only through a separate Tamil state could Tamil historical grievances be met. Taken from, Accord, An International Review of Peace Initiatives, Issue 4, August 1998, p 14.
65 Ajith Rupasinghe, ibid, p.66.
66 Ibid.
power as a basis for negotiations. The LTTE has presented the basic constitutional framework for such an alternative. As Anton Balasingham and V. Rudrakumar have formulated it, in its most flexible form, it demands sharing power at the centre with parity of political status as the basis for articulating a form of regional autonomy.

However, the state has persistently refused to accord the Tamil nation parity of political status. It has insisted on maintaining the principle of majoritarian domination in parliament and in denying nationhood to the Tamil people. This is the fundamental reason why all attempted negotiations have failed. Furthermore, it has lacked the political will to implement the constitutional reforms agreed upon. The practice of rigging elections and arbitrarily dissolving provincial councils, the prevailing culture of political violence have eroded confidence in the political order and produced a generalized crisis of legitimacy.\(^67\)

Yet, according to Rupasinghe, the very escalation of the crisis provides opportunities for peace.

“Yet, the very escalation of the war has produced new prospects of peace. The military equation has reached a stage of deadly stalemate. Neither side can gain strategic military dominance without raising the stakes beyond what is politically feasible. Both sides are compelled to recognize the futility of a military solution. At the same time, both sides insist on gaining a sense of strategic parity in order to establish the ground to seek a negotiated political settlement on their terms.”\(^68\)

In assessing the current conjuncture, Rupasinghe analyses the role of the international community.

“The international community has stated its interest in seeking a negotiated settlement which respects the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and which provides a form of sharing power as a way of addressing the national democratic aspirations of the Tamil people… The fact that the international powers have, at present, not got deeply embroiled in pursuing their own strategic agenda’s through the war and appear to share consensus on a negotiated political settlement is a positive factor for peace.”\(^69\)

Rupasinghe locates the limits, constraints and opportunities facing the protagonists.

“In terms of the major protagonists, both the Government and the LTTE are compelled ultimately to seek a negotiated settlement, even while striving to establish strategic equilibrium, if not advantage, on the ground. The LTTE has given its consent to the Norwegian facilitation\(^70\) and is engaged in a fitful dialogue. The government is striving to build consensus for its devolution package. In doing so, it has initiated an explosive debate taking on the extreme reactionary elements within the racist agenda, while however preserving the majoritarian character and hegemonic aspects of the state. Whatever the compulsions behind such a move, the debate to advance the agenda of devolving power has provided some limited space for the peace movement.

However, as before, the present effort on the part of the government is fatally flawed in that it has followed the same method of trying to impose a settlement as opposed to opening negotiations with the LTTE. The attempts to marginalize the LTTE will, as before, lead to tragic consequences. Both sides of the divide and all stakeholders will eventually have to recognize and respect the limits, constraints and imperatives that form the objective frame to reach a negotiated settlement. They will have to find the political will to make sacrifices and reach compromise for the

\(^{67}\) Ajith Rupasinghe, ibid, pp.66-67.

\(^{68}\) Ibid, p.68.

\(^{69}\) Ibid.
sake of the country and the people. Or else they will be rejected by the people and by history.”

Rupasinghe then offers his proposals for achieving a democratic and sustainable political settlement and it is worthwhile to quote it at length.

“However polarized the issues remain, the challenge and the solution, I believe, is to build the political will to restructure the state on democratic foundations based on the theme of one country, one state for each and all equally, and to evolve the new institutions which will provide for the dignity, equality, security and autonomy of all the nations and communities within a united Sri Lanka. The sharing of political power at the centre should form the basis for establishing a secure and stable system of autonomy at the regional and local level for all communities without any form of internal discrimination. Such a constitutional order and settlement requires the recognition, on principle, of the right of self-determination of the Tamil nation accommodated in consonance with the democratic rights and aspirations of all the nations and communities and the people of Sri Lanka. It is also required that an upper chamber such as a Senate be established reflecting the plurality of linguistic, religious and ethnic communities and sectors with veto powers such that there shall be no domination nor discrimination of minorities by majorities. A special constitutional court should also be established with a similar democratic pluralist reflection to deliberate on all major issues arising from disputes between the various communities and constituencies. The participation of women is crucial in such institutions since patriarchy and male supremacy constitute a generative structure of degradation and violence in human society. It also requires the institution of accessible and affordable forms of public litigation to hold all public officials directly accountable to the people. Societies once rent asunder by violent internal conflict for centuries have found the will to resolve their differences and are learning to live in democratic coexistence. Such constitutional settlements have been approached in the Philippines, Northern Ireland, South Africa and elsewhere.”

Rupasinghe goes on to discuss the challenges, dangers and opportunities towards achieving such a peace. He brings out the nature and role of Sinhala extremists and the contradictions within the military-chauvinist camp and sets out the possibility for violent civil upheaval.

“But peace will not come easy. There will be many gruelling challenges and trials ahead. Extreme forces from all sides, which profit from war and seek their political survival through war, driven to irrational desperation, may attempt to disrupt and destabilize any possibility of peace. They may try to unleash the politics of communal violence. They may try to resort to the politics of terror and assassination, as before, in a frenzied rush to eliminate all opposition and grab state power. The state will respond with its own form of ruthless terror. The process of militarisation and brutalisation, of destruction and devastation may intensify beyond all imagination. As every day passes, more and more poorest sons and daughters of the land will be claimed as sacrificial lambs to be offered to the wolves of war. The foundations of civilized existence and democratic governance will be assailed as never before by the fury of the storm. More than ever, it is up the people to charter the course of history in this most momentous hour in order to achieve the most profound democratic transformation of the social order where we may learn to define our own freedom in the struggle for the liberation of each other and all humankind. This way we may bury this horrible past forever.”

71 Ajith Rupasinghe, ibid, pp. 68-69.
72 Ibid, p.69.
73 Ibid, p.69-70.
Rupasinghe concludes by presenting an ideological frame in which to comprehend peace and to build the conscious will and determination to fight and claim a new democratic social order.

“For our part, we must continue to swim against the tide and grasp every window of opportunity. We must build the consensus and the political space for a graduated military de-escalation and the resumption of dialogue leading to a negotiated settlement. For this, we must empower the people by building their conscious will and capacity to mobilize their full creative strength and resources with the objective of sustaining and deepening their aspiration for peace within a democratic social order. Once conscious and confident and guided by an emancipating vision of freedom, the people will claim their sovereign right to design and govern the social order of their own making. The war has defiled and violated us all. It has robbed us of our dignity and our humanity. We have all suffered and lost. Future generations will carry the wounds of war until they have been healed by the power of their free and conscious union. The flames of war must become the fire of creation of a new social order where war and violence will have no need nor place. Deep in the soul of the people lie the dream and vision of such a land of freedom. The crisis paves the way for the people to raise their command of the forces of nature and society, to master science and technology, to grasp political economy and more and more build their will and capacity to become the conscious architects of their world and their destiny.”

The plenary discussions synthesized around the convergence that what is at issue is genuine power sharing to realize self-determination within a unified state system as opposed to devolution or decentralization. It is recognized that any genuine settlement would have to address the issue of independent Tamil nationhood and its equality of political status. Once the issue of identity and status is given concrete form in terms of a definition of power sharing, then the institutional mechanisms and processes for realizing self-determination in the context of a democratic plural society could be worked out.

9.0 Summary of Major Outcomes

As stated at the outset, this report will not provide a quantitative list of major issues, obstacles, opportunities and strategies, nor a diagnosis of the peace process. It was not designed as such. Such basic ground has already been established through scores of conferences, consultations, seminars and workshops. The outcomes of the Second Consultation is here viewed with regard to the distance covered in identifying divergences and exploring convergences, both in an ideological and practical sense, in approaching the problem of peace, among participants who represent diverse constituencies involved in the conflict.

The Consultation involved intense discussion with respect to selected topics at a macro and micro level during group workshops. These reports are annexed to the main report and the reader is advised to refer to these for more detail. However, the major outcomes from both the plenary sessions and the group workshops are here brought together in the form of a summary of major outcomes.

9.1 The Core Issue:

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74 Ajith Rupasinghe, ibid, p.70.
The Consultation produced a convergence in identifying the core issue. The core issue is recognized as an issue of sharing power between two distinct and separate nations on the basis of institutionalising the right to self-determination of the Tamil nation in all areas of social life on the condition of parity of political status within a united country.

9.2 Priority Activities:

The top priority activities were recognized as:

1) Strengthening the Norwegian facilitated on-going peace process.
2) Strengthening the political will of the main stakeholders in arriving at a negotiated political settlement.
3) Strengthening the role of civil society to advance the peace agenda by mobilizing public opinion.
4) Contributing towards bridging the gaps in communication and understanding through dialogue and consultation among key players and constituencies in state and civil society and working together to build bridges of democratic coexistence.
5) Helping to identify and overcome divergences among key players through involving them in exploring creative convergence.
6) Conducting in-depth research into major areas of divergence and synthesizing experience in peace building in Sri Lanka.

The most concrete outcome was realized in the form of establishing an international coordinating centre linking the Sri Lanka Diaspora, the international peace community and the Sri Lanka peace constituency. A group of participants were named from the Sri Lanka delegation for coordinating local activities under the auspices of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation. Dr Rienzie Perera was appointed to coordinate the work of the centre as the Research Director of the Life and Peace Institute.

9.3 Major Practical/Organisational Outcomes
Appendix 1

A Consultation Between The Sri Lankan Diaspora/Expatriate and Representatives of Sri Lankan Civil Society, Uppsala 2 November, 2000

Dear friends,

As the Research Director of the Life & Peace Institute I write this letter to invite you to participate at a Consultation Between The Sri Lankan Diaspora/Expatriate and Representatives of Sri Lankan Civil Society.

This consultation is the second in the series of three consultations planned by the Life & Peace Institute (Sweden) in collaboration with the Inter Religious Peace Foundation (Sri Lanka). The first consultation was held at Ampitiya, Kandy (Sri Lanka) from September to October 1999. The report of this consultation is available in English, Tamil and Sinhala and will be sent to the participants of the second consultation. As we have planned three consultations we would like to see that the issues and ideas which emerged at the earlier consultation flow to the other to make the necessary linkages and to enrich the dialogue. Therefore, one should not see these consultations as isolated events but connected one to the other leading to the overall goal of conflict transformation and search for lasting peace enshrined in a political frame work.

The consultation planned to be held in Uppsala, Sweden, from November 17-19 2000, is the second in the series with the aim of providing a forum for the above mentioned groups to meet, listen, dialogue, disagree and agree to search together for a common ground to end the bloody conflict in Sri Lanka. This is not an easy task and there are no easy solutions to the problems we are faced with. But we are also confident that nothing is impossible. We do not expect miracles to take place at this meeting but hope that the time together will pave the way for an honest and soul searching dialogue which will pave the way for trust and confidence building. As Sri Lankans are polarized and alienated from one another at different levels, hopefully, this consultation will provide the forum to test their fears, prejudices and to search for a common vision based on the principles of compassion, justice, peace, equality and dignity for all Sri Lankans irrespective of religion, ethnicity, class, political ideology and gender.

We are also aware that this is not a consultation where the main players to the ethnic conflict or the people with decision-making powers will participate. At the same time we should not underestimate the influence of those who participate at the consultation have on those who make decisions and control power. We hope at this consultation we will discover not only our limitations but our capacity to influence radical changes in peoples attitudes and in social, economic and political structures. We are confident that such changes will occur when those involved in conflicts are able to transcend barriers and forge alliances to work together to strengthen, broaden and deepen the space in Sri Lanka for democracy, human rights, right to self determination and good governance.

I invite you to participate in this Consultation with the spirit of openness and humility to search a way forward to bring lasting peace to Sri Lanka.

Yours sincerely, Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera , Research Director, LPI.
Appendix II

A Sri Lankan Tamil perspective of the Ethnic Conflict
Presentation by Dr. D. Nesiah

The Ethnic Conflict - A 20th Century Development
It is often claimed that the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka has racial, religious and historical roots going back over two millennia. This claim is based largely on the ancient Buddhist chronicle, the Mahawamsa, first compiled one and a half millennia ago and since extended, and subsequently supplemented by later chronicles.

In those centuries (the Sangam period), there was a profusion of outstanding religious and secular literature in South India. Buddhist scholars and missionaries fanned out from there to other parts of India, to Sri Lanka and to many lands in South, South East and East Asia up to the Pacific. Some of these South Indian scholars were among the most distinguished of the Presidents of Nalanda University in North India, which was then among the worlds foremost institutions of higher education and Buddhist studies. These and other details have been documented in Pandit Hisselle Dhammaratana Mahathera's "Buddhism in South India" (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1968).

The Hindu revival in South India, which began in the middle of first millenium A.D., was marked by many instances of persecution of Buddhists and destruction of Buddhist institutions, monuments, scriptures and literary works. This revival effectively wiped out Buddhism which, together with Jainism, had been dominant in South India in the early centuries of the first millenium A.D. Similar Hindu revivals had already occurred in many other parts of India. During the Hindu revival in South India, many Buddhists evacuated to Sri Lanka and elsewhere. It was in this context that the Mahawamsa was written. Clearly, one of the objectives was to create a barrier to the spread of the Hindu revival into Sri Lanka.

The North of the island has been peopled from pre-historic times; this population has been augmented by diverse immigrants (Indrapala, 1983). However, there is very little evidence of any inter-ethnic hostility anywhere in Sri Lanka at any time prior to the 20th Century. On the contrary, in the centuries B.C., Hindu and Buddhist were not seen as opposing categories; nor was there a clear distinction between Sinhala and Tamil. Right through the two millennia A.D. there have been many changes in ethnic identity. Rival Sinhala and Tamil claims of being descendants of the first immigrants into the island therefore make little sense. Sir Paul E. Peiris has noted in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, Volume 28, that:

"...it stands to reason that a country which was only 30 miles from India, and which would have been seen by Indian fishermen every morning as they sailed out to catch their fish, would have been occupied as soon as the continent was peopled by men who understood how to sail ... Long before the arrival of Prince Vijaya, there were in Sri Lanka five recognized isvarams of Siva which claimed and received the adoration of all India. These were Tiruketeeswaram, Munneswaram, Tondeswaram, Tirukoneswaram, and Nakuleswaram...”.

But none can tell what proportions of the descendants of the pre-Vijayan immigrants from across the Palk Straights speak Sinhala/Tamil today, and what proportions of the descendants of those who worshipped at the five
isvarams referred to claim to be Buddhist/Hindu/Muslim/Christian today; nor does it matter. What is important is that we do not locate the early population of our Island in ethnic (as opposed to tribal/clan) categories and attribute to them ethnic consciousness which did not exist at that time. Today, ethnic consciousness is reinforced by modern documentation such as census registers, birth certificates, school registers and records of religious institutions (in which a citizen’s ‘race’, religion and mother tongue are identified), and by the media and the political process (which highlight ethnic issues). But, as Prof. S. Pathmanathan (1999) has noted:

“...the tendency to explain the so called ethnic conflict of recent years as the manifestation of a phenomenon rooted in historical experience of the nation has added new items to the list of myths in historiography. Selective readings from traditional history have contributed to entertain the belief that ethnic relations in the country have been one of continual racial conflict, a familiar theme in the pioneer historical writings of the European authors of the 19th century”.

As in other regions, there have been numerous wars on account of local dynastic rivalries and others on account of invasions from outside. In many of these, the ruler on one side was Sinhala and the other Tamil. Invariably, there were Sinhalese and Tamils in both camps. In any case, the tap root of these conflicts was not ethnic discord. There is little evidence of racial or linguistic intolerance though, on a few occasions, there were manifestations of religious intolerance in the colonial period.

Till the approach of independence, the social and political divisions in Sri Lanka were based on caste and class rather than language and religion. Ponnabalam Ramanathan became, in 1912, the first Sri Lankan to be elected to the Legislative Council; and Ponnambalam Arunachalam, in 1917, the founder President of the Ceylon Reform League and again, in 1919, that of its successor, the Ceylon National Congress. The split of the latter in 1922 on ethnic lines related to power sharing at the apex and not to any mutual hostility among the population or sense of alienation on the part of any ethnic group. The conditions for the emergence of ethnic nationalism did not exist at that time. Among the Sri Lankan Tamils, even ethnic consciousness did not surface in the pre-Donoughmore period, perhaps for lack of institutional mechanism (such as the Sangha among the Sinhalese) to mobilise such sentiments. Another factor was that caste-based and other fragmentation of the Sri Lankan Tamil (SLT) population hindered the development of Tamil ethnic consciousness. Till the mid-30s, the influence of the Jaffna Youth Congress (JYC) also served to delay the emergence of Tamil ethnic consciousness as a political force in Jaffna.

The Jaffna Youth Congress
Jaffna, widely identified as the centre of Sri Lankan Tamil consciousness, also produced the earliest and most militant all-island oriented nationalist movement. The JYC, which peaked in the early thirties, campaigned against the caste system, opposed federalism (for unstated reasons), demanded quick independence for a united Sri Lanka, and rejected the Donoughmore reforms as too little too late (Kadirgamar, 1980). Their allies across the Palk Straight were the Indian National Congress led by Gandhi and Nehru and not the Dravidian movement of Tamil Nadu; their closest partners within Sri Lanka were the radical nationalist leaders of the South including Kannangara, Kularatne and Mettananda and the Marxist leaders rather than the anglicised ‘moderate’ leaders of the Ceylon National Congress and the United National Party. The JYC was totally alienated
both from Dravidian sectarianism in India and from local Tamil sectarianism sponsored by those who, in the mid-thirties, formed the Tamil Congress.

The JYC also sustained its Gandhian inspiration by reinforcing its network of linkages with Gandhi and several of his close associates. Among those who accepted its invitation, visited Jaffna and participated in its activities were Gandhi, Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Satyamurthy, Kamaladevi Chattopadyaya and Kalyanasundara Mudaliyar (Kadirkamar, 1980). It is indicative of the ideology of the JYC that the invitees did not include any of the leaders of the then burgeoning Dravidian/separatist movement (led by the Justice Party and the Self Respect Movement of Periyar E.V. Ramaswami Naicker) of Tamil Nadu.

Long before independence, the JYC led the campaign for the use of the national languages in education and in governance. The Mother Tongue in Education (Nesiah, 1945) was authored by a JVC activist. The JYC succeeded in getting virtually all the leading schools in Jaffna to teach Sinhala as a compulsory subject at the secondary level. As J.E. Jayasuriya has noted, "At a time when the Sinhalese were prepared to do without Sinhala, the battle for Sinhala and Tamil was fought by Tamil leaders" (Nesiah, 1981:152).

Ironically, the teaching of Sinhala in schools in Jaffna was abruptly terminated in 1956 as a reaction to the introduction of Sinhala as the only official language.

The Tamil Congress, which displaced and took over the political leadership of the SLT from the JYC, did not pick up and carry forward the national languages policy of the latter. Like the leadership of the Ceylon National Congress/United National Party, the Tamil Congress was comfortable with the continuation of English as the medium of instruction in major schools and as the language of governance. When radical Sinhala leadership emerged to challenge the national leadership, it was on a Sinhala only platform. Perhaps if the Tamil leadership had retained its former national languages orientation, the challenge could have been thrown by a radical multi-ethnic coalition on a Sinhala-Tamil bilingual platform. The social, cultural and political transformation that began in the mid-fifties might then have been unifying and not divisive, and could have benefited both language groups and not just the Sinhalese speakers at the cost of marginalising and alienating the Tamil speakers.

The emergence of Tamil nationalism

Up to the time of Independence, the Tamil leadership was virtually unanimously and uncompromisingly in favour of a unitary Sri Lankan state. Even the Tamil Congress which effectively marginalised the JYC and was promoting Tamil consciousness did not favour federalism. Perhaps the Tamil leaders they were not far sighted and only feared that federalism would limit their professional opportunities. The concept of federalism was introduced to the community only after independence and was resoundingly rejected, even in Jaffna, in the 1952 general elections. It was only with the Sinhala only movement of 1956 that the Sri Lankan Tamil population opted for federalism. In due course the political factors that united the Sri Lankan Tamil population gradually gained ascendancy (in the political field) over the caste and other prejudices that had kept the population divided. Eventually this nationalism acquired a separatist component but this component remained peripheral up to the mid-70s;
every candidate advocating secession was demoralisingly defeated at every election to every parliamentary seat.

The statement of S.J.V Chelvanayakam on winning the Kankesanthurai bye election in February 1975, marks a fateful turning point:

“We have for the last 25 years made every effort to secure out political rights on the basis of equality with the Sinhalese in a united Ceylon... It is a regrettable fact that successive Sinhalese governments have used the power that flows from independence to deny us our fundamental rights and reduce us to the position of a subject people... I wish to announce to my people and to the country that I consider the verdict at this election as a mandate that the Tamil Eelam nation should exercise the sovereignty already vested in the Tamil people and become free”.

That statement and the Vaddukoddai resolution of 1976 in favour of separation must be seen in the context of many painful and humiliating reverses including the adoption of the scheme of “Standardisation” of University admissions and the 1972 Constitution. In the context in which it was adopted in 1971, many Sinhalese leaders may have seen “Standardization” of university admissions as a politically compelling measure. They failed to understand (or were indifferent to) the traumatic impact it would have on the Sri Lankan Tamil community. In turn, the Sri Lankan Tamil leaders failed to understand (or were indifferent to) the political pressures on the Sinhalese leaders on account of the growing ethnic imbalance in university admissions. Negotiations between the political leaders of the different ethnic groups on this issue may have led to an acceptable solution – but such dialogue has not been part of Sri Lanka’s political tradition. Similarly, the drafting of the 1972 Constitution was widely seen by the minorities, especially the Sri Lankan Tamils, as an exercise undertaken by the Sinhalese leaders with little heed to the concerns of the minorities.

The crisis of Tamil nationalism
The anti-Tamil violence of 1977, 1979 and 1981, and the island-wide pogrom of 1983, in which sections of the ruling party were clearly involved, was followed by the effective disenfranchisement of the Tamil people with the expulsion of their leaders from Parliament for failing to make a humiliating declaration renouncing secession in the immediate wake of the pogrom. This led to an extended break in the democratic process among the Sri Lankan Tamils. Inevitably, militant groups filled the vacuum created by the absence of Tamil Members of Parliament. This situation remains unchanged in that the Sri Lankan Tamils of the North and parts of the East continue to be effectively disenfranchised, i.e., most of them have had no say in electing any sitting Member of Parliament. Moreover, virtually all Tamils, whether displaced or not, are living in the shadow of a continuing war that effectively curtails their political and other rights.

A critical factor in the development of Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism is the displacement, at some time or the other, of over a million of the Tamil population, many of whom have been displaced several times. More than a half of this number remain displaced. As long as the war continues, so will displacement. Hundreds of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils are
scattered overseas in many countries and include a large number who are engaged in political activities related to the ethnic conflict.

Within the Sri Lankan Tamil community, some developments have taken place in respect of their self-perception. The "nationalism" of the Sri Lankan Tamils now embraces all Sri Lankan Tamils and is not fragmented as much as it was at the time of independence. In the political field, just as the Low Country and Kandyan Sinhalese ethnic identities have virtually merged, so too the fragments of the Sri Lankan Tamil ethnic group; in the social field, barriers remain but some progress is evident. The political focus of SLT nationalism has also gradually moved away from public service employment and university admissions (of very high priority to the Jaffna/Colombo Tamil urban middle class) to land and devolution (of great concern to the predominantly rural Tamils of the Vanni and the East).

Though the proponents of Tamil nationalism are not confined to Sri Lanka (many of its most militant advocates are scattered overseas), its territorial focus is clearly within the island. In the context of developments over the last five decades, the right to self-determination has emerged as an essential component of this territorially focused nationalism. A widespread misconception shared alike by many supporters and many opponents of secession is the identification of the right to self-determination with the right to unilateral secession. On the contrary, as Kirgis Jr. (1994) points out, the many faces of self-determination include:

(6) The right of limited autonomy, short of secession, for groups defined territorially or by common ethnic, religious and linguistic bonds - as in autonomous areas within confederations.

(7) Rights of minority groups within a larger political entity, as recognized in Article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and in the General Assembly’s 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.

In international law, the right to secede is only one of the options and even that option cannot be exercised unilaterally. In fact this question was posed by the Governor in Council of Canada to the Supreme Court (1998) as follows:

“...[Is] there a right to self-determination under international law that would give the National Assembly, legislature or government of Quebec the right to effect the secession of Quebec from Canada unilaterally?”

In response, the Supreme Court of Canada (1998) set out its opinion very clearly:

126. The recognised sources of international law established that the right to self-determination of a people is normally fulfilled through internal self-determination - a people’s pursuit of its political, economic, social and cultural development within the framework of an existing state. A right to external self-determination (which in this case potentially takes the form of the assertion of a right to
unilateral secession) arises in only the most extreme of cases and, even then, under carefully defined circumstances...

127. The international law principle of self-determination has evolved within a framework of respect for the territorial integrity of existing states...

130. There is no necessary incompatibility between the maintenance of the territorial integrity of existing states, including Canada, and the right of a 'people' to achieve a full measure of self-determination. A state whose government represents the whole of the people or peoples resident within its territory, on a basis of equality and without discrimination, and respects the principles of self-determination in its internal arrangements, is entitled to the protection under international law of its territorial integrity.

134. A number of commentators have further asserted that the right of self-determination may ground a right to unilateral secession... when a people is blocked from the meaningful exercise of its right to self-determination internally... The Vienna Declaration... adds credence to the assertion that such a complete blockage may potentially give rights to a right of secession.

We note that the Canadian Supreme Court and much of the literature on the subject (e.g., Steiner and Alston, 2000) draw a clear distinction between internal and external self-determination. Effective provision for internal self-determination (e.g., federalism combined with non-discrimination), far from paving the way for unilateral secession, delegitimises any recourse to it. On the other hand, the denial of due internal self-determination could legitimise a right of secession.

The future
The war brings profit to a few and misery to very many. The cost of war is enormous and multiplying (Marga Institute, 1998). We need to end the war, but it is difficult to see how it can be done without direct negotiations between those engaged in it. The Government and LTTE positions are mutually incompatible - but such has been the pre-negotiations situation in every major conflict, eg, in South Africa, Israel / Palestine, Northern Ireland, etc. In some of these countries, fundamental contradictions remain after many years of negotiations and recurrent breakdowns and resumptions of peace process. It is in such situations that negotiations are essential and could play a critical role in making progress on the long road to peace with justice (Gunatilleke, 2000; Philipson, 2000).

Hopefully, the war will be brought to an end and a mutually acceptable negotiated settlement will emerge. Perhaps this consultation will motivate some of us to work to that end. How will the objective of an autonomous Tamil majority region covering the North East relate to the interests of the Sinhalese, Muslims and Hill Country Tamils, and Sri Lankan Tamils resident outside the North East? If the Sri Lankan Tamils of the North East could demand a Tamil majority self-governing unit in that region, the Muslims of that region too could demand either institutional provision for a significant voice in that administration or a Muslim majority self-governing unit. Either the regional (North East) administrative structure...
should be negotiated to the satisfaction of the different ethnic groups of that region, or there must be provision for a parallel autonomous Muslim majority (South East?) region, the contours of which need to be negotiated and a consensus arrived at. In that event, Ampara electoral division, which is overwhelmingly Sinhalese, may need to be cut off from the rest of Ampara district and amalgamated with the Uva region.

In the case of Hill Country Tamils, they have legitimate claims to equal language rights in areas in which they live in large numbers. Perhaps, with the prospective gradual fusion of the SLT and HCT communities (a process that may have already begun in the case of Hill Country Tamils settled in the North East or in Colombo), they may eventually come to see the North East as the region to which they could go if they wish to live in a Tamil majority area, and the regional government of which could be expected to promote their language, religion, culture and other concerns. The Sri Lankan Tamils resident outside the North East already view that region and the regional government sought to be established in these terms.

It is necessary to dispel the notion that the emergence of an autonomous Tamil majority North East region is of interest only to the Tamils who reside there. The Indian parallel is instructive. Overall, millions of Indians of each of the major linguistic groups are scattered and settled in many states. As in the case of expatriate populations almost everywhere, their emotional and political adjustment to the environment and policies of the state in which they reside is helped, not hindered, by the resolution of the problems relating to their "homeland", even though they may never be part of that "homeland". In fact, the growing internal diaspora is a positive feature of Indian federalism, highlighting both the plurality and integrity of India.

Fundamental to the federal concept is that none of the federating units is exclusive, i.e., all citizens of the country have free access to every federating unit. While there could be legitimate ground to oppose state aided settlement schemes designed to alter the ethnic balance of any region, a federation of ethnically exclusive regions cannot be viable. This reality needs to be accepted by Sri Lankan Tamils as well as those of all other communities in respect of all the regions of Sri Lanka. There has been much ethnic cleansing of Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims; effective counter-action is necessary. The entire island belongs equally to all her citizens, irrespective of whether the administration is unitary or federal.

The establishment of a Tamil majority autonomous region would raise, among the Sinhalese, fears of secession and also fears for the security of the Sinhalese settled in that region. As already pointed out, the federal concept and the manner in which it has worked out in other countries in the region suggest that federalism would minimize (though perhaps not eliminate) ethnic conflict. In the case of secession too, the experience elsewhere suggests that this demand is more potent where there is repression and over centralisation (as in the case of Pakistan in relation to Bangladesh) than in cases where there is a ready acceptance of devolution (as in the case of Switzerland and the U.K.). It could be argued that both Canada and India would have fragmented long ago if they did not have federal constitutions; and that the secession of Bangladesh, Eritrea and Bosnia may not have occurred if they enjoyed equality and internal self-determination.
However, historic parallels may not be enough to dispel Sinhalese fears of secession and political links with Tamil Nadu, and these need to be addressed and necessary safeguards worked out. On the other hand, minority fears of unfettered powers of the centre to dissolve regional governments and impose direct central rule also need to be addressed.

The conflict in Sri Lanka has generated a large number of internally displaced SLT population and a large diaspora spread over many countries. Among the internally displaced, while many may wish to go back to their original homes, many others may not. In the diaspora too, many may wish to return to Sri Lanka in the event of settlement, but many others may not. Those who fear forcible repatriation in the event of a settlement may be motivated to oppose any. Many among these have been politically active in diverse ways - in drawing global attention to the crisis and the suffering of the SLT population, in materially helping those displaced, in lobbying with different government, non-government and international agencies, etc. Some have been promoting the civil war in one way or the other. The relationship between several Sri Lankan missions overseas and the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora is minimal and frequently unfriendly; it is clearly in the national interest to correct this situation. Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism, which incorporates such a widely dispersed population with divergent and even mutually contradictory interests, must come to terms with this reality. While the scattering of the population cannot be totally reversed, and their reconcentration in the North East or even within Sri Lanka to recapture the ante-bellum population distribution pattern is not feasible, it is essential to take account of and at least partially resolve the contradictions. Till this is done, different sections of the community will continue to promote mutually conflicting objectives, and this may hinder the resolution of the conflict.

Leonard Woolf argued in 1938 in favour of "a constitutional arrangement which ensured a large measure of devolution or the introduction of a federal system ... Despite the foresight of Leonard Woolf ...... , Sri Lanka's failure to lay down the constitutional foundations of a multi-ethnic society based on equality, ethnic pluralism and the sharing of power has exacerbated the ethnic conflict" (Tiruchelvam, 1997 : 33). Any state, to be viable, needs to have legitimacy in the eyes of all major segments of its population. This would be possible only if each such segment has a voice in forming the government and in governance at all levels. It may be difficult to ensure that the Sri Lankan Tamil community will have a major say in forming the government or in governance at the centre. But substantial devolution to the provincial level can provide Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism space for fulfillment which it has hitherto lacked. This is the key. As Tiruchelvam (1997:54) has put it, "what is necessary is not so much good administration as Thamil self-governance".

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Appendix III

The New Tamil Civil Society in Tamil Eelam and its Struggle for Peace
Presented by Dr. Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam

Overview
The Tamil and Sinhala communities have existed in our island, each with their own language and culture, for more than 2000 years. Four centuries of colonial rule stunted the evolution of the both communities' cultural and civic institutions and imposed institutions that promoted the North Atlantic worldview. When colonial Britain left the island a constitution was put in place as the covenant that kept the two communities together. The Sinhala community reestablished and promoted the growth of its language and culture, but it expected the Tamil community to accept the Sinhala version of civic justice for both communities. The Tamil people consider themselves as a Nation with a territory called Tamil Eelam and not as a minority community in the Sinhala nation. The Tamil nation resisted the imposition peacefully at first, and then by resorting to arms. Tamils are now reestablishing the rights of their own community and their own civic justice in the areas they control. They reject the Western or Sinhala versions of civic justice that are not in concordance with their own civic justice. The Sinhala community and its leaders are resisting this attempt with tragic consequences to both communities.

Will the Sinhala nation state consent to peacefully permit the space, and the responsibility and authority the Tamil community needs to renew its own culture and civic justice? Can the two communities agree on a common civic justice that will not be in dissonance with each other's community and civic justice? If such an agreement is not feasible, can they live separately in peace for mutual benefit? This is the challenge to the two communities and the concerned international community.

Recycling Discarded Proposals
In the attempt to find a common civic justice in the form of a constitution many attempts were made and each produced its own forms. All of them ended up in the "Recycle Bin." Each time, the Sinhala leaders recovered the previously trashed items, retouched, reconsidered and then returned them back to the recycle bin. Some of the Tamils cooperated with such empty exercises with enthusiasm, hope and awe in spite of past disappointments.

At the beginning of the conflict there was genuine misunderstanding of the reason for the conflict by the majority community. With time and experience the real reasons became clear to them. The realization that the Tamil community wished to be considered as equal to the Sinhala community, that the Tamil community had traditional areas of their own, and that they had a right to determine their own future development was unpalatable to the majority of the Sinhala community and its lay and elected leaders.

All of Sri Lanka Government's (SLG) proposals to solve the problem were fundamentally the same. The SLG focused on changing the structure of the administrative machinery of the government and apply it to the whole of the island assuming that the Tamils will learn to accept the new order. It is a folly to repeatedly use the same strategy and the same assumptions to solve the growing problem, knowing that such strategies have failed in the past, and knowing that there are other viable alternatives.

A Refusal by the Sinhala Leaders to Accept the Parametres of the Problem of the Tamils as Defined by the Tamils
From what can be assessed from articles and discussions in the media, past peace processes and packages, and speeches by the majority of Sinhala leaders clearly indicate their refusal to understand why the Tamil people have taken up arms to establish their rights as a community. For example, the veteran Sinhala politicians and opinion leaders often demand that the
Tamil leadership should lay down their arms, and declare that they are no longer demanding a separate state before negotiation takes place. Such demands expose the Sinhala conception of the status of the Tamil leadership as a small group of armed dissidents fighting for concessions for themselves and for a minority Tamil people. The Tamil leadership has fought for the rights of the Tamils for self-determination for more than twenty years and lost 16,000 of their cadres. Sinhala leaders are in a stage of denial in the face of overwhelming evidence that the Tamils are a nation fighting to safeguard their right to determine their future.

Sinhala leaders should remember their rebellion against the British. Those chieftains who wanted personal power thwarted Keppetipola's rebellion. They sold their freedom and the freedom of their people. Pirapakaran is not going to let similar events happen. The British forces put down the rebellion by destroying the houses and farms, creating a famine, slaughtering the rebels and innocent people, and committing crimes against humanity. The SLG is repeating similar actions against the rebellion of the Tamil people with modern weapons, emergency regulations and embargo. Why is it that those who were once oppressed become oppressors?

The Tamils and their leadership are not going to give up their goal of separation without the implementation of a negotiated and irrevocable solution. If they lay down their arms, past events tells them that the struggle will be terminated with vengeance. All Tamil voices for justice will be silenced until a new Tamil force emerges.

It is often said that the SLG is the only government in the world that feeds the refugees, and also failed to pay the salaries of the government servants, they are then rejecting, by default, their claim that the Tamil people are citizens of Sri Lanka. Such rejection will make the de facto separation assume de jure status. Such assistance by the SLG is a legal requirement to claim that the Tamils in Tamil Eelam and their territory are still part of Sri Lanka.

Repeating Failed Strategies
When a person is asked to join four dots that form a square with a line that would connect each of the four dots with the other three dots, without lifting the pen and without going over any line twice, generally, people will keep on trying various approaches. Often, even before such options are exhausted, they will keep repeating the failed strategies. With respect to the ethnic problem, the SLG repeated such follies irrespective of which Sinhala party was in power. The present coalition is no exception. If the SLG would pay attention to the view of the problem as expressed by the aggrieved party, it would create more innovative proposals that would get a better hearing by the Tamils. The Sinhala leaders have laid boundaries to suit their views. To solve the problem they need to go beyond those boundaries.

A new creative strategy is essential to solve the problem. The line needs to go beyond the dot in one of the corners of the square if a solution is to be achieved in the puzzle posed above. Similarly, we need to go beyond the proposals that have failed to achieve a solution to our ethnic problem. Past experience tells us that we cannot solve the problem by ourselves. Norway may be our best intermediary. The longer we take to start the process the more difficult it will be to bring about the normalcy required to negotiate a political solution.

Renaissance of the Tamil Society in Tamil Eelam
During the past ten years, Tamils have embarked on a renaissance of their society under the Tamil administration in the areas they control in Tamil Eelam. Under their civic administration they have established a participatory democracy where each sector elects their own council. The
councils then make policies and processes that operate the sector with the help of the Tamil Administration. Membership to the councils is open to all adult Tamils living in the area. Pericles stated the most fundamental idea of democracy. He said, in about 430 B.C. “Although only a few may originate a policy, we are all able to judge it.” (In *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Karl Popper) Velupillai Pirapakaran is giving this opportunity to the Tamil people to contribute directly to the areas of their concern for the development of the Tamil people in Tamil Eelam. The alternative for the Tamils is Sri Lanka's version of democracy.

A cultural and political renaissance has begun in Tamil Eelam. The Tamil society in Tamil Eelam has new values and relationships that has been evolving since the 1980's. Prof. Sivathamby has assessed it thus,

“By the beginning of the 1980s there was a dramatic collapse (the 1983 ethnic riots). From 1984 uncertainty and gloom spread to the North and East and the pattern of life changed. In this situation the role of literature began to assume importance. It was an important medium of expression but could not be practiced as openly as needed and desired. Poetry, understandably, was the first to record these new changes and experiences.

An anthology of poems edited by Nuhman, Cheran and Jesurajah was titled Maranathul Valvom (We Live Amidst Death), 1984, and it summed up the emotional climate of these areas. Living amidst death had become the order of the day. Nuhman's translation of Palestinian poets opened up a new vista to young Sri Lankan readers. It was Cheran, the son of Mahakavi, a new arrival of the 1980s, who recorded with authenticity and sincerity the changed feelings and emotions. His anthologies, Erandavathu Sooriya Uthayam (The Second Sunrise) and Yaman, though slender in size, left a deep impression. On the burning of the Public Library, he wrote:

“What took place?

My city was set on fire
My people became faceless.
On my land, my breeze on all the stampage of the Alien.
With your arms inter-locked behind your back for whom were you waiting?
Fire has writ large its message indelibly on the clouds.
(On the website “tamilnation.org”)

The Tamil society in Tamil Eelam no longer resembles the earlier generations. Unfortunately, the Sinhala leaders and their community cordoned off the Tamil community and isolated them by implementing their military, language and administrative policies. They failed to keep up with the developing values, attitudes, courage and determination of the new Tamil society in Tamil Eelam. The difference between the Tamils of Tamil Eelam and the Sinhalese widened to such an extent that they are now like the French and the English. They may belong to the same Union, but not to each other's state. Twenty years of war, emergency regulations, and ten years of embargo have contributed to the separate evolution of the values and attitudes of the two communities.

Pirapakaran's 1993 Hero's day address echos the feeling of the Tamils on the subject of their cultural renaissance,

“Only when Language, the arts and culture gain strength and grow to heights does the national community structure closely knit and strengthen, human life and community relationship achieve greatness, and national civilization receives greatness.”

(The translation is mine with apology for any errors.)

The LTTE is the civil and military administration of the Tamils in Tamil Eelam. The SLG should not pretend that it alone represents the Tamil community's interests, though it may do so for a few Tamil individuals and groups. The Tamil community considers the SLG as a colonial occupying force in parts of Tamil Eelam. This is
the reality that the Sinhala people should understand before any solution can be negotiated. The Tamils do not want the Sinhala armed forces near them, the same way they did not want any Indian forces near them. The Tamil people no longer want to entrust their safety and security to the Sinhala nation and its armed forces.

However long the dialogue for peace takes and whatever forms the solution will evolve, the Tamil administration and the Sinhala Administration should cease hostilities, bring economic, health and educational normalcy, and continue to negotiate until an agreement is reached. It is important for all at the grassroots level to support the peace process till a solution is found. The alternative to a dialogue is a continuing war of separation. The next dialogue will only be to discuss the modalities of separation.
Appendix IV

An assessment of Peace and Justice efforts within the Sri Lankan civil society
Presentation by Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham

I am grateful to the organizers of this meeting for giving me this opportunity to speak to you today. Peace and justice efforts are the response of decent and well-meaning individuals to the horrors of war. They are our response and our responsibility. In my view, the war in Sri Lanka is a result of injustice.

We all know that opinions like the one I am about to express are necessarily subjective in nature, and they depend on the holder’s life experience, life situation, biases, loyalties, commitments, and personality. But they also depend on the nature and quality of the information on which a person bases his or her opinion. Obviously, the Sri Lankan government recognizes this, and has responded by controlling the release of news about the current conflict with tight censorship, which has resulted in the distortion and manufacturing of information. However, over the years I have been fortunate enough to receive some news that is free of the censorship and the biases that influence much of the English-language media. The sources I am speaking of are not news agencies or reporters, but the numerous Tamil refugees I have worked with—mainly in south India, but also in the U.S.—over the past 10 years. For example, I have learnt that news about Tamils have a tendency to focus on the events in Colombo and Jaffna. One of the many untold stories in the English media is the massive extent of violence heaped on helpless, unarmed Tamils in areas such as Mannar, Trincomalee, and Vavuniya, on by the Sri Lankan government, beginning at least as far back as the early 1980s. My comments reflect information and learning from all these sources.

I would like to speak today not about the testimonials of these refugees specifically, but more broadly about peace and justice efforts by civil society. I use the phrase civil society in a very broad sense, to include all those individuals and organizations claiming to be independent and working towards the goals of peace and justice without using the gun as a tool to make their point. This would include organizations with a peace label, a human rights label, humanitarian relief organizations, and also those who work to document and counter election violence and fraud. I would also include churches and other religious organizations in this group. This grouping spans a wide spectrum of organizations, and my generalized comments will obviously not apply to each individual one. For the sake of simplicity, from now on, I will collectively call these the “peace organizations”.

There is neither peace nor justice in Sri Lanka at present. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the peace organizations have either failed or not succeeded yet. On the contrary, despite their efforts the war has escalated. The armaments being used are more efficient and effective in destroying people, property, and communities than ever before. At the same time, the gulf between the Sinhalese and the Tamils has certainly widened.

However the Norwegian peace effort is a ray of hope. This potential diplomatic breakthrough is perhaps less due to the success of the peace organizations, than to the failure of the war movement. However, peace organizations will necessarily have a role on the long and bumpy road ahead towards peace, and hence there is a need for an honest appraisal of these organizations.

Every appraisal, statement or action is made within a given paradigm: a term that encompasses a set of assumptions, a set of standards, goals, etc. Much of the misunderstanding and miscommunication in discussions about the conflict in Sri Lanka is rooted in the participants often being unaware of the different paradigms being used in these discussions. Clear communication and understanding requires a genuine effort to understand the paradigm used in any assertion.
If I am to summarize my opinion as to why the peace movements have failed, I believe it is because of the non-critical acceptance of, and indeed the promotion of, the paradigm under which the government sought to impose peace. The government in fact has sought peace under the same conditions that gave rise to the war. There seems to be no understanding or acknowledgement of this.

In an unspoken validation of the government’s paradigm, public discussion and international and local press reports have generally assumed that the conflict on the island of Sri Lanka involves a legitimate government defending itself against a terrorist organization. The international community and the majority of Sinhala Sri Lankans have, without question, accorded the government the right to use violence against the Tamil population. The government has used terror, arbitrary and mass punishment and extra judicial killings in trying to control the Tamil population. In this set of assumptions, the government’s terror is not called terrorism, but is largely classified as well-meaning errors that need correction.

On the other hand the resistance to the violence perpetrated by the government is defined as terrorism. This term, terrorism, conjures up a threatening specter in the imagination that automatically denies any legitimacy or humanity to those labeled as using it. The label, terrorist, can be used to justify deadly measures against anyone imagined to be a threat. For over twenty years, it has been used to justify the almost permanent state of emergency and obnoxious laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act under which the Sri Lankan government has carried out its persecution of the Tamils. In the context of Sri Lanka, if peace is to be assured under the prevailing paradigm, it would mean peace after the defeat and subjugation of the Tamils, rather than peace with justice for all.

A different perspective will be gained by acknowledging that the conflict in Sri Lanka is only one of perhaps hundreds of similar conflicts in the world. As seen too often around the world, the Sinhala-Tamil conflict rehearses the old story- a story as old as the story of the Exodus in the Bible- the story of domination and subjugation of a weaker people by a group with more power. The weaker group is demonized, marginalized, and, to facilitate this process, information is controlled and myths are created to justify the domination. It is perhaps a dark reality of the human condition. The powerful create the ideology the belief systems and even the victims that are necessary to exercise their power.

In Sri Lanka, among the ideologies and myths invented to justify majoritarian power are distorted versions of history which label the Tamils as recent migrants to the island, as well as mistaken conceptions about the motives of the Tamils, such as that they have primary loyalty to India. One such distortion that “Tamils are dark skinned people unlike the fairer Sinhala people” perhaps rooted in the Aryan myth, was recently stated as a fact in a book and an article in the Boston globe by a Harvard professor. This instance in which racist propaganda was reported as fact, is a disturbing reminder of how deeply and widely these myths have been implanted in the minds of the people.

These distortions are bad not only for the Tamil community but for the Sinhalese community as well. In 1967, when I was a young physician serving in Anuradapura, I realized that there was deep-seated fear of Tamils among many Sinhala people, who imagined that the Tamils were loyal to a massive India, which in their paranoid fantasy was entirely Tamil. Imagined fears cannot be erased by attacking the source of fear because it simply does not exist. Nonetheless, such fears destroy the fabric of a healthy society. In Sri Lanka the government has not only failed to correct these irrational fears, but has encouraged them, used them for self-serving purposes, and legitimized them.

If one were to summarize the Sri Lankan government’s program with respect to the Tamils as an expression of the democratic will of the Sinhala Buddhist majority in Sri Lanka in the last 52 years of political independence from the British, the following generalizations could be made:

1. The government was largely only responsive to the collective desires and imagined fears of the Sinhala Buddhists of the country. These desires and fears were a manifestation of the Sinhala Buddhist power in the Island and it’s program of domination and subjugation of the Tamils, who were cast in the role of an enemy.
2. The government separately defined and rejected its Tamil citizens and then demonized and brutalized them. Examples of this include the disenfranchisement of the hill country Tamils and the many state-facilitated acts of violence against the Tamils, their culture, cultural icons, property, and identity.

3. All protests by the Tamils verbally or with weapons were dealt with violently, oftentimes with collective punishment that fell heavily upon the innocent.

It is significant, that there has been no acknowledgement by the Sinhala Buddhists collectively that there is anything wrong in the manner in which the Tamils have been treated and are being treated by the government. This is not an indictment of the many thousands of individual Sinhala people, who as individuals have expressed their anguish and regret over this situation. But if Sri Lanka is a country where all communities have equal dignity and respect, where is the collective apology for the pogroms of 1983? or for the disenfranchisement of the hill-country Tamils in 1948? or for the many other acts of brutality visited on the Tamils by the government—the extrajudicial executions, unexplained disappearances, bombed churches and civilian shelters, denial of food and medicine for the sick in Jaffna? I do not intend this statement as an accusation, but rather as a description of the state of mind at work as we explore the possibilities for peace.

Recently the Associated Press reported that President Chandrika Kumaranatunge had appealed to the Sinhala people not to use mob violence against the Tamil people in the aftermath of the disturbances that occurred in the hill country following the killing of Tamils detained under the PTA by the government in Bindunuwewa. She stated that the Sinhalese should not physically attack the Tamils because if they did so the LTTE would get stronger. This was a sad and telling statement to me. The reason she gave for not beating up Tamils was not because they are human beings, nor because they are citizens of the country, but because doing so would strengthen the LTTE. Is this an admission that the only protection for Tamils is the LTTE? Without the LTTE, can the Tamils be beaten at will? I state this as a description of the mind set of the community with power in the Island as we explore peace possibilities. And how do the Tamils interpret the fact that in South Africa, far away from the scrutiny of people who know better, the President stated that “it is unfair that the Tamils who are recent migrants now want their own country”? Is this rewriting of history a reflection of the mind of the president?

Often when I think about Sri Lanka, I am reminded of the story of Exodus and what it teaches us about human collective power. It teaches us that such power is rarely given up voluntarily, easily, or without a battle. Ten socially disruptive events called the ten plagues were required for the Pharaoh to be brought to his senses and to recognize that the Jewish slaves should be a free people. Even then, he changed his mind and went after the Israelites, only to be drowned by the Red Sea. These lessons have to be kept in mind as peace groups talk of sharing power as the solution to the conflict with the assumption that such sharing is going to come voluntarily.

A second lesson one can draw from this story of oppression is that a change requires other center or centers of power, in the case of Exodus God himself, for liberation from a centralized source of oppressive power. The consequences to the oppressed Tamil community of the government’s abuse of power have been simply devastating. I cannot emphasize this point enough. Their way of life, their understanding of the state and of themselves has all been forcibly changed. Not a single city, town or village has been spared by the deadly attacks unleashed by the Sri Lankan government. The northeast has been bombed for 15 years. People here have been deprived of the basic necessities of life such as food and medicine for over a decade by a deliberate action of the government. I don’t know of a single Tamil family that has not been touched and challenged by this war. Many have not survived. Others are struggling to cope, often with the assistance of their extended family, a concept that still remains strong in Tamil culture. There are numerous poignant stories of courageous struggle and survival and also stories of despair and defeat.
Collectively the adaptive responses of the individual Tamils have been varied. Often even members of the same family use different strategies to cope, depending on the context in which they find themselves. These responses are spread across the whole spectrum of what is possible, from resistance, to avoidance (including fleeing the country, as I did), to acceptance of a diminished position within the country and decision to work within those conditions, to assimilation and attempts to become Sinhalese. There are many more variations and combinations of these responses. Some have even been pushed psychologically to the extreme end of the spectrum, which is not only to accept the oppressive system, but also to become promoters and ardent and aggressive defenders of the system that has hurt them and their community. This is a manifestation of extreme self-hate. I am certain that all of you know and recognize these various adaptive strategies among the Tamil people you know.

It is to be expected that competing strategies for adaptation will be mutually antagonistic and will be expressed as conflict between Tamils. Each different strategy is a judgment on the other, and the strategy of submitting to and getting along with the government is in direct opposition to that which decides to resist the government. Those who collaborate with the government have made the judgment that the resistance won’t work or is too costly, or that they don’t personally want to pay the price. They resent the fact that often they are identified with the resisters, as they are still identified as Tamils, and they may go out of the way to prove their loyalty to the system. Those who resist think that successful resistance is possible despite their obvious disadvantages in numbers and resources. To promote itself and its oppressive policies, the government also happily exploits those Tamils who choose the strategy of getting along with the government. For example, the material produced by a few Tamils calling themselves “The University Teachers for Human Rights” are promoted and distributed by the Sri Lankan government and its embassies. Their writing is very selective, and the language used is clearly biased and serves the Sinhala government in its propaganda work. The government uses it for their propaganda work. Another example is the interesting choice of a leader of an organization starting with the name Eelam as a member of the cabinet. I am sure that you will also recognize this pattern of exploitation in the activities of some of the peace organizations.

Nelson Mandela has stated that it is the oppressor who determines the tool with which the oppressed resists. Attempts at verbal protest were made in the 1950s and 1960s and 1970s. Yet the government’s quick use of the military to manage and control the Tamils made verbal resistance of this kind ineffective. Then guerilla organizations developed—many different ones at first, from which the LTTE emerged to become dominant. The Sri Lankan government’s continued recourse to deadly force has transformed a guerilla organization into a conventional military group with an effective army and a navy.

Such an accomplishment could not have been without the transformation in the self-perception of those Tamils who have chosen resistance to the government as their strategy. They have abandoned the traditional attitudes and adaptive mechanisms by which Tamils were successful when ruled by an outsider for over many centuries. They now think of themselves as a free people, with the abilities and rights of a nation, and with land that belongs to them. Within the society, too, social and hierarchical relationships have changed. Caste groups have found new status, while the traditional elites have become less powerful. The status of the Tamil women has been debated with opinions and interpretations that seem more reflective of the biases of the presenters rather than the facts that are available, reflecting the division in the Tamil society as it goes through the changes imposed by the prevailing situation. The facts are that women are playing roles not seen in traditional Tamil societies and function as soldiers and work in many responsible positions. Many have also suffered terribly and have been forced to support children as widows as more men than women have lost their lives in this conflict. They too will adapt and change to survive and this will be reflected in their status.

As we all know, violence begets more violence. It should be obvious to any observer who has lived through the post independent period, that the
LTTE and their military program was created by the successive Sinhala governments of Sri Lanka and their arrogant and misguided policies towards the Tamils. LTTE’s single-minded focus and commitment was a survival response of a smaller, weaker group with less access to resources than the government. Sacrifice and discipline was their answer to poorer resources. The organization has never operated in an environment free of internal and external threats, a fact that must influence their methods of functioning. They are an authoritarian organization fighting against heavy odds and with military and security as their priority. This had certainly interfered with those civilians choosing to lead a non-confrontational life. Their program has had an effect on all Tamils, including those who did not want to confront the system. They have been accused of committing many human rights violations including the expulsions of the Muslim population from Jaffna, as they pursue their military resistance. But they have often been accused and convicted by the local and international media without evidence, reflecting the success of the Sri Lankan government in defining the LTTE and in controlling the debate about them. They are labeled as a terrorist organization by the US and Indian governments. But they do have widespread support among Tamils, including those who may not agree with all it’s methods and strategies as they are seen as the only resistance to the obvious mistreatment of Tamils by the Sinhala dominated governments.

The Sri Lankan government’s response to the resistance has been to use and reward any Tamils whose adaptive response was to be subservient and get along, to brutalize Tamils for resisting or even being thought to be resisters, and finally to demonize the Tamil people and the LTTE internationally. The Sri Lankan government has been very effective in this propaganda effort, thanks to media censorship and the efforts of some collaborating Tamils, who have been used on the frontlines of this vicious propaganda war. They have cleverly and successfully presented the result of oppression as the cause of oppression. Unfortunately, peace organizations have too often been used by the government as a pawn in its struggle against the LTTE. It must be admitted that peace organizations have not only failed to bring about peace or justice in Sri Lanka, but have indeed supported the very oppression of the Tamils that gave rise to the war. Many peace organizations have supported the fraudulent and bankrupt policy of war for peace. And they have failed to remain neutral in the conflict, as an independent party should be. Why has this happened? Some of the reasons could be the following:

1. The current power and organizational structure of the state serves the interests of many of the members of peace organizations. They support it because they survive and thrive in the current system. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are serving themselves.
2. The second is what I call the love affair with Chandrika. Chandrika talked peace, which was music to the ears of peace organization members who were tired of the abuses of the UNP. But in retrospect, what Chandrika was really after was not peace and justice for the Tamils but power for herself. Peace and war were merely a means to acquire and express that power. When things went wrong, she was not held responsible personally. It was never Chandrika but her machinery that was at fault. Having invested their hopes in her, the peace organizations could not own up to their misjudgments. But in remaining silent, they supported her violence against the Tamils. Their direct or indirect support for the cynical and destructive policy termed “war for peace” is a sad commentary on their judgments.
3. The other judgment one can make about the peace organizations was that they neither understood nor sought to understand the extent of Tamil suffering. Rather than loudly deploring the inhumane policy of depriving medicine and food to northeast Sri Lanka, the voices of peace organizations remained muted. How can any civilized government deprive children of medicines to treat malaria? Even the mere fact that there is strict censorship of news and information has often gone unmentioned, censored, or self-censored. It cannot be denied that the peace organizations faced a difficult problem in that they were operating under the order set up by the Sri Lankan government and were subject to scrutiny. For instances church leaders can pray for the
safety of the soldiers whose mission is to destroy Tamil property and lives under the slogan of fighting for their country, but cannot pray for those Tamils who are claimed to be citizens but labeled terrorist. Despite these difficulties and contradictions, I believe they could, and should, have made a stronger protest. At least they could have avoided the pretence that such constraints did not exist. One so called peace organization that has promoted Tamil subjugation under the banner of a Peace organization is the National Peace Council, presuming that one can take the frequent public pronouncement of its media director as indicative of its stance. Another major problem is that the peace organizations oftentimes over-project their successes, perhaps an indication of personal or financial need. They have alleged that the dominant Sinhala mindset had changed without any basis or proof. They have claimed successes in organizing people and changing their hearts and minds when a few hundred people turned up to protest in a country with millions. Peace organizations have also failed to astutely look at the dynamics of war itself. The sources that keep the war going, including arms sales, have received little attention. If they have done studies of these factors, they remain muted, subject to the government’s control on information. Finally, the peace organizations have not only been partial, but have failed to create the middle space needed to work effectively with all sides as a peacemaker.

There is no easy answer for how peace organizations should change to remedy the problems I have suggested. But go forward they must. As hopes of peace emerge from the Norwegian talks, it is vital that peace organizations understand their role and play it effectively. Some theorize that in situations such as the war in Sri Lanka, peace comes when it becomes a better alternative to war—particularly for those who benefited from the war. It can also come when there is a clear victory of one side over the other. Yet the latter seems unlikely, and we may have reached the point of what the peace theorist call the “hurting stalemate”, a point that is ripe for peace. As we articulate the plans for peace, the peace organizations have to keep in mind the necessary requirements to make this peace stick. The fundamental prerequisite is that the peace plans grant of genuine power to the Tamils to control their lives and their affairs. The structure in which it can be done can be argued, but cosmetic power transfer is supported by meaningless adjectives, and without any real content it will not work. Giving up power is difficult and will require alternate sources of power. Peace organizations have to ask these questions of them selves.

1) Why should the Tamils now expect different treatment from the Sinhala Buddhist controlled government to what has been their treatment in the last 50 years?

2) How can the Tamils hand over their personal security to the government? How has the government demonstrated that they are worthy of this trust?

For the Sinhala community to genuinely transfer power there needs to be a systematic attempt to understand and humanize the Tamils, to undo the process of demonization that has gone on for so many years. This would also require lifting press censorship and honestly sharing information about the situation in the northeast.

For the Tamil community to accept and become part of a larger community on the island of Sri Lanka there needs to be recognition of the hurts done to them, and restitution for events such as disenfranchisement, the many pogroms such as that of 1983, and the war.

To expect these conditions to be achieved may be unrealistic without serious effort, pain and setbacks. Some may even call it an unrealistic dream. But we must continue to live in hope. Thank you.
Appendix V

The Role of the Sangha in the Sri Lankan Conflict
Presented by: Ven Pundit Madampagama Assaji Nayaka Thero

Introduction
Before we enter into discussion of our topic, it is necessary to situate its historical background. This is because many crucial issues of today have their antecedents in the past.

The Mahavamsa as Historical Frame of the Sinhala Buddhist Ethnic Identity
Just as the Tripitaka is sacred to all Buddhists, the Mahavamsa is the sacred source for Sri Lankan Buddhists. This is how the mind set has been defined. The Mahavamsa occupies the same status among Sri Lankan Buddhists as does the Vira Kavya in Sankrit literature. The Mahavamsa is devoted to recording the aggressions of The Chola, Pandian and Kalinga kingdoms from India and the subsequent decline of Sinhala nation and Buddhism.

The war between Dutugemunu and the Elara, who had the longest reign in Sri Lanka, is even today the fountain for raising the banner of Sinhala patriotism. Even though king Elara has been described as Dhammiko Dhamma Raja, the damage caused to the Sangha by his ministers and officials has been emphasized. Here we find that the Mahavamsa is constrained to give recognition to the historical foundations of coexistence even as it sets out to deny it.

The Mahavamsa has described the manner in which the Tamil community had been granted special privileges at the cost of depriving the Sinhala Buddhists during the reign of Kirthi Sri Rajasinghe, Sri Wickremasinghe Rajasinghe and Sitavaka Rajasinghe. These kings had built Hindu kovils inside Buddhist temples in order to meet the needs of their Tamil queens. The act of bestowing the Sri Pada sacred area to Arittaki Vendu is of many such incidents mentioned. These historical events served to spread distrust and suspicion by Sinhalese towards Tamils in India. The destruction of Buddhist places of worship during various periods of history also served to build up the mind set of the Buddhists against Tamils.

I have here described in a summary form the historical background of events which have molded the ideological consciousness of Sinhala Buddhists. Even though the Mahavamsa also records more positive situations and events of coexistence, these remain submerged.

Following this, under the British colonial occupation, the development of events were not to the favor of the Sinhalese. The colonial power acted to create division and conflict between the two communities as opposed to building trust and cooperation. The activities of Ven Wariyapola Sri Sumangala, Ven Miggetuwatte Gunananda and Anagarika Dharmapala are located in this context. The lectures and activities of these persons served to build up patriotism among the Sinhala Buddhists.

While some Tamils in the North adopted Christianity, they also gained access to Christian schools and obtained higher education in English. Due to this, they were able to achieve high positions in the state administration. Due to the excessive patriotism of the Sinhala Buddhists, they rejected opportunities of entering such schools and gaining an English education and achieving such positions. This resulted in jealousy against such Tamils.

Tolerance
History bears testimony to the manner in which the rulers have infiltrated and penetrated the mind of the Sinhala Buddhist through various
institutions and agencies. In place of the doctrine of tolerance preached by Buddhism, the rulers propagate that this tolerance has been the cause of our downfall. From the 16th Century onwards during the Portuguese, Dutch and British colonial periods, the Sinhala Buddhists had suffered great injustice and oppression. It is not necessary here to record them. The rulers, instead of identifying the real enemy of the people, targeted the Tamils as the source of all woes.

These aggressors spread division not only as nations but between religions as well, which contributed towards breaking the bonds of friendship and solidarity between these communities. The various privileges accorded to the Buddhists were roots of corruption and decline. The Buddhists only recognized this fact long after the corrosion had set in.

Throughout this period, the Sangha had been the protector not only of the Buddhist doctrine, but also of the Sinhala people. The Buddhist doctrine and the Sinhalese nation became welded together as a bark to a tree. Thus, history bestowed upon the Buddhist priest and the Sangha the role of protector of the religion and the nation. Accordingly, a particular mind set formed in this way.

Generated by threatening hierarchies, the monk and the Sinhalaya became suspicious and fearful. The treachery of politicians also reinforced this mind set.

Actions and Interventions
It is not that the monk and the Sinhalaya had not acted in a passionate, and even unruly manner. There is evidence that this was produced by those who wished to ascend these hierarchies by resort to chauvinism and racism. This becomes clear when one looks deep into the environment of events behind Black July in 1983 and Bindunuweva in 2000. But, it is also clear when looking at other events that the Sinhalese Buddhist is tolerant without compare. Not only for the Sinhala Buddhists, but to all Buddhists of the world, there is none such sacred places as the Shri Maha Bodhi and the Dalada Maligawa. No one can ever justify what happened at these places. The tolerance displayed by the Sinhalese is indeed great. Even though certain racist forces tried to spread the flames of communal violence throughout the land, Buddhist monks also played a role in preventing such. The massacre of Buddhist monks at Arantalawa, the killing of the chief incumbent of the Dimbulagala Viharaya and the destruction of Buddhist shrines and temples in the North East cannot be ignored. Yet, these events did not provoke a backlash from the Sinhala Buddhist people. There are Sinhala Buddhist forces and members of the Sangha who do try to exploit these issues. But this is the politics of Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism and should not be identified as the essence of the Sangha. The propaganda carried out internationally that the whole of the Sinhala nation and the Sangha is anti-tamil has the result of denouncing those Sinhala people and members of the Sangha who act to bring about an honorable peace. The various reports and literature by some agencies bring out the fact that there are those who seek to profit by this biased propaganda.

In the face of this background and this challenge, we should never forget that there is a Sri Lankan Buddhist constituency, including Buddhist monks, who are dedicated to bring about harmony among the various nations and communities through an honorable peace which gives recognition to the just rights of the national minorities. It is unfortunate that no Tamil organisation has yet made an evaluation of this truth.

Since 1956, the Sinhalese and the Buddhist monks have resisted the granting of these rights due to the framework and the mind set of distrust produced by the history of aggression as described above. Here too political forces have exploited these fears and insecurities of the Sinhala Buddhist nation. I have tried so far to briefly situate the historical frame and the mind set in which to locate the role of the Sangha in the present conflict.

The Teachings of the Dhamma
The biological human being is bereft of all divisions of race, creed, class, nation, ethnicity and caste as according to Buddhism. Buddhism was born
in the land of Damabadiva because it was fractured by these divisions. Buddhism spread with great difficulty by opposing all divisions. War is a struggle for power. Terror and destruction inevitably accompanies it. Buddhism analyses not merely the effects of such destruction but also their causes. The virtues and dividends of peace and coexistence form the base of the Buddhist doctrine.

“All beings fear punishment. All beings love life. Therefore, be unto others as you would to yourself and not harm others.”

“Anyone who desires happiness shall deny themselves such happiness by harming others who seek happiness”.

From the Dhamma Padaya.

Buddhism is not a doctrine which analyses outward appearance. Instead, it analyses all problems and phenomena by probing the internal causes deeply by applying methods of social and psychological research and investigation. While fear and terror are generated by war, war is caused by greed. Greed gives rise to fear and sorrow. Those who are liberated from greed are free of fear and sorrow.

There are many profound principles of conflict resolution contained in the Buddhist doctrine. Even during his own time, the Lord Buddha succeed in applying these principles of the Dhamma in resolving major social and political conflicts, as in the case of the war between Sakya and Cholia clans. The Buddha has analysed the psychological conditions and motivations that sets the mental frame for conflict. These mind sets are located in the categories of race, nation, tribe, caste etc.

The human family is a community of beings that exist as a collective deriving its origins and essence from one common source. Human beings are evaluated as lower or higher beings according to their actions. The roots of social conflict lie in the act of betraying obligations and responsibilities. The tenets of the Dhamma states that it is far greater to achieve victory over the self than it is to win a war by killing thousands. In this sense, Buddhism not only rejects conflict and war, but also all division based on race, nation, tribe, caste etc. The Tripitaka is replete with teachings on coexistence and solidarity among all communities. Thus, we can question as to how those Buddhists and priests who profess the doctrine can propagate the view that war is a necessary means of resolving conflicts? All doctrines are pure in content and intent. Yet those who profess them are simple-minded and therefore deviate. This was so even during the time of the Lord Buddha. Yet we should never forget that there have been, and will always be, those who strive to imbibe and profess the true doctrine.

The role of the Sangha within the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation
The monks represented in the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation are some of them. But unfortunately, their views and actions do not receive international attention or concern. The work done by such monks for some fifteen years to oppose war and promote peace and coexistence is indeed immeasurable. But that is the subject of another discussion.

At present, the issue of war and peace has taken a new turn. At the invitation of the government of Sri Lanka, the Government of Norway has been requested to facilitate a dialogue between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. As a group of Buddhist monks who have long desired peace in the land and who have insistently advocated a negotiated political settlement, we give our wholehearted blessings to this initiative and shall work for its success with all our strength and commitment.

Hatred is not ceased by hatred. Compassion ceases hatred. The achievement of an honorable peace based on equality of all nations and communities is in accord with the true essence of the teachings of the Lord Buddha. Let us unite in peace.
Appendix VI

A Conflict of Two Nationalisms and the Prospects for Peace in Sri Lanka
Presented by Rev Dr. A. J. V. Chandrakanthan

The current politico-military situation that is obtaining in Sri Lanka poses a fundamental question. At its very root it is a question of nationalism that is inextricably interwoven into the social and political fabric of the two nationalities in that island and it emerges from the very heart of the Sinhala and Tamil national consciousness that have reached a point of no return.

In order to respond to this question, one should honestly recognize its existence in all its blood-spattered forms. Despite the sophisticated efforts made by the Sinhala officialdom and a handful of Tamil elites in Colombo to cover the nationalist blood stains under the glowing banner of “internationalism,” or the rhetoric of “globalization”, the nationalist forces in Sri Lanka have come to stay for more than one generation. I shall endeavor now to formulate the question as comprehensively as I can. “Can two nationalisms that are mutually exclusive, historically hostile, politically irreconcilable, religiously antagonistic, socially incompatible, economically adversarial, ethnically belligerent and culturally intolerant, co-exist within a unified, single sovereign national entity?”

It is in seeking to answer this question with clarity and a clear conscience that one would be able to do justice to many of the issues that underlie the current political scenario. When one looks at the manner in which the two unilaterally imposed Sinhala Constitutions of Sri Lanka, viz., 1972 and 1978 (it must be remembered that the Tamils were not party to any of the constitution-making) are applied and interpreted, one hardly needs any research to affirm that there is an obvious discrimination against non-Sinhala races and non-Buddhist religions. The Sinhala only Act of 1956, the discriminatory “Standardization” policy of 1972, the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1979 and the 6th Amendment to the Constitution of 1983 up to the 17th amendment of the year 2001 were all unilaterally introduced to trample upon non-Sinhala communities with the mighty foot of majoritarianism.

Majoritarian Numerocracy
While giving an impression to the western world that Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic polity, successive Sinhala governments, since independence have defined Sri Lankan democracy as a form of Ethno-religious majoritarianism of the Sinhala-Buddhist nation. Westminster model of democracy has never been understood or practised in Sri Lanka though for some strange reasons the western world seem to recognize this travesty of democracy as a good means of governance.

I am therefore advisedly using the word “nationalities to refer to the two major ethnic communities, viz. Sinhala and Tamil because the word majority and minority in the Sri Lankan political lexicon have been used in the most undemocratic sense of a game of numbers. Majority and minority were used interchangeably as ruler and ruled. The Tamils no longer refer to themselves or see themselves as a minority in a Sinhala State. In the political language the use and abuse of words and concepts contribute a great deal in both national and social integration or disintegration. For example the French who forms major minority in Canada are always referred to as the Francophone and the English as Anglophone and never as majority and minority communities. This has contributed in no small measure in the identity formation of Canada.

With its numerical majoritarian affirmation, the Sri Lankan national constitution is thus framed to accommodate solely the interests of the majority ethnic group with a lip service to other nationalities. In its quintessence, the national constitution is Sinhala ethnic or even a racist...
Constitution that is designed to protect the social, religious and ethnic interests of the majority ethnic-nationhood.

For a nation to grow and express itself as a pluralistic and multi-ethnic nation and to have good governance it is necessary that all ethnic and religious groups receive equal treatment and be protected from discriminatory actions and legislation. The solemn covenant, which became the anchor of the Constitution at independence in 1948, was section 29, which is the non-discriminatory clause. The SLFP and its Marxist allies arbitrarily rejected this safeguard when they framed the 1972 Constitution without the consent of the non-Sinhala races and non-Buddhist religious groups.

A Bill of Rights, which is justiciable, replaced section 29. This can easily be contested as hardly adequate. This presupposes a strongly independent Supreme Court. Unfortunately Sri Lanka has a politically biased judicial system with judges who have been known also to give politically motivated if not manipulated judgements even on cases that have serious implications in the Human Rights sector. Thus, there cannot be any safeguard against a hegemonistic ethnic majority determined on thriving by subjugating and decimating the minorities. Because when there is a tinkering of the system of the judiciary it gradually leads the state to an irredeemable state of political suicide.

**Buddhist Obstinacy**

It is unfortunate that the “Sangha” i.e., the Buddhist Clerical community, or to be more plain, the Buddhist monks enjoy almost unlimited freedom to dictate policy especially when it concerns the non-Sinhala races and non-Buddhist religions. It is has now been pointed out by well meaning political observers of the Sri Lankan scenario, that in the end these monks will be responsible for the collapse of the State system as they have very limited perception or comprehension of how modern democracies are managed. Encouraging the Buddhist monks to run the constitutional affairs of the State amounts to the allowing of pre-medieval or medieval forms of thinking to pervade the political ethos. This has already proved to be a devastating gamble and it will continue to prove to be suicidal to the Sinhala State apparatus. Though there a few monks who are more enlightened to see the political disaster befalling the nation, their voices are heard in the wilderness and do not seem to evoke a mature response from the majority of the Buddhist political and religious institutions.

From the mythological construction of Mahavamsa to the present day the religious manipulation of political systems the cancer of ethnic politics has become metastasized in the Sri Lankan body politic. It is no secret that the Buddhist monks pressured Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike to usher in the most discriminatory “national” legislation of “Sinhala Only”. They did the same with Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and today the monks have prevailed upon their daughter Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and are stoking the flames of the war between the Sinhalese and Tamils. I do have profound respect for those few monks, the peace-loving followers of the Master of Peace, Lord Buddha, but I do not know the impact they have on the masses as well as on their rebellious confreres.

One should not allow medieval and out-dated thinking to pervade the political system. Herein lie the embers of disaster. Religious minorities are not allowed to propagate their faith as in any society that is committed to free expression. They do not receive equal treatment in the allocation of funds and resources from the State’s treasury. Buddhist clergy receive preferential treatment beginning from construction of new Buddhist temples and residences to the donation of Benz luxury cars to the Chief prelates of the Sangha. A classical example of exploitation of religion by the state and vice-versa. The majority of the schools are owned and operated by the State, which implies preferential treatment for the Sinhala - Buddhist children.

Thus it is at the detriment of Tamil and Muslim schools that advantages accrue to Sinhala-Buddhist schools. Even admission to the Universities is assigned on racial quotas. Minority religious groups are not permitted to construct places of worship without the Buddhist State’s permission whereas Buddhist institutions flourish everywhere - including the rapid reconstruction of the Naga Vihara in Jaffna where according to government’s own acknowledgment over 80% of the schools, places of worship and residences are damaged by aerial bombardment carried out by the State’s armed forces.
The present constitution has only provided major advantages to the Buddhist faith. Other religious groups are severely disadvantaged as alluded to above. Far from fostering religious harmony, the present constitution is designed to further the interest and privileges of the majority Buddhists. There are no adequate safeguards against overt or hidden discrimination. Since the whole atmosphere is soured by the Buddhist ethos, there is no certainty that either the judiciary or bureaucracy will dispense justice impartially. If anything, the present constitution is a recipe for national disaster and inter-religious and inter-ethnic friction.

**The Concretisation of the Parting of Ways**

This interminable war has in theist twenty years widened the gap between the two communities. There is mutual distrust and racial paranoia. Even the Tamils and Sinhala Christians and their respective hierarchies speak a dichotomous language. The Sinhala and the Tamil communities have two totally different perceptions of the concept of “one nation.” This dichotomy is made visible expressive in their support to the Sri Lankan cricket team to the National airlines.

War is the great exterminator and destroyer of human values and especially so when it has been a protracted civil war for some 16 years. War dissolves all morality and society is left anchorless. This is precisely what has happened in Sri Lanka. The war has unleashed the brute force, the animal in man. An adolescent Sinhala soldier surfacing from rural villages in khaki uniform feels that he/she has infinite powers. They can choose to shoot, rape, maim, murder, mutilate, plunder and kill innocent civilians whether they are Tamil or Moslem. This war has brutalized the Sri Lankan social fabric.

Among the Sinhala and Tamil communities, there are a large number of young widows, amputees and orphaned-children. Persons who previously had no history of mental illnesses manifest dementia, psychosis, neurosis and other forms of personality disorders. The health needs of the Tamil, Sinhala and Moslem societies at all levels, physical, mental and psychological is formidable. But what is more alarming is that no one in the Sinhala middle class has shown even a pang of conscience. They seem to stand with folded arms and watching; the murder and mayhem with an amorality that stuns the human imagination. While the so-called erudite men like my colleague in the Federation of University Teachers Association (FUTA), namely former Professor Nalin de Silva is specializing on anti-Tamil, anti-Moslem and anti-Catholic hate literature.

**Such uncompromising intransigence reminds us of the last days of apartheid and the German Nazi episode in the first half of this century. The only reassuring note is that none of these evil forces succeeded finally.** More than a war between two nations, this is a war between two civilizations and it is becoming increasingly transparent that its really a 2500 year conflict with the Sinhalese Buddhist hegemony aiming at and hell bent on genocide of the Tamils. One has to wait and see as to who will succeed at this Russian game of roulette. My hope is that finally justice will triumph and the oppressed will go free. In the meanwhile the Jaffna peninsula has been denuded of its elite population and the Vanni region has become a vast graveyard. The government has intentionally cut off all food and medical supplies and the people of Vanni are surely and certainly being strangulated while the world is watching without a twinge of conscience unlike as in Kosovo. Despite the vigilance of Amnesty International and other Humanitarian outfits, mass graves of the flower of the Tamil community have been discovered and the State has, for the Tamils become an unmarked cemetery of fearful proportions.

It must be stated that while geography made this island into one country, historical processes have led us to the irreversible decision of two distinct national entities. **It must therefore be acknowledged that ethnic harmony can be achieved only when these two national entities are recognized and respected.**
Glimmers of Hope
To achieve ethnic harmony, there should be an island wide plan for re-education. Human Rights must become a compulsory subject in all schools, especially in the Sinhala State, which preaches Ahimsa and Dharma. Non-discrimination in all and every strata of life should be ensured. Our academics, historians as well as social scientists must be woken from their ignorance and chauvinism and actively discouraged from embracing the flesh pots of racism at least for the sake of our children and children’s children.
Re-writing history and translating fiction to recorded evidence has become a favorite pastime especially of Sinhala historians - all this form of foolery needs to be ended. It is rather ridiculous that some of these intellectual trash that passes off as history is funded and published by western agencies. The intellectuals need to act with a greater moral dedication for the sake of the future of the nations and its peoples than to be led by the currents of populism and patronage.

Recognition of the Human Rights of Tamils
As one who has lived and worked in Jaffna during the crucial years of 1988-1996, I have seen the banal and blatant violation of Human Rights by the IPKF, the Sri Lankan Army and the armed Tamil groups that have worked and continue to work with the Sri Lankan army.

Since 1987, the Tamil stooges and quislings who parade under several political parties, armed and paid by the State have indulged in untold forms of Human rights violations. They have made murder and disappearance of Tamil civilians a daily duty. The horrible crimes of Razeek group in Batticaloa defies human imagination. The LTTE also has its share of violations but as President of the University of Jaffna Teachers’ Union during that period, I am personally aware that during 1990-95, when they were administering the Northern Province the LTTE showed a remarkable openness to change and maturity when specific cases Human Rights violations were pointed out to them.

When J. R. Jayawardene and later Premadasa were Presidents, the violation of Human Rights was open and obvious but under the scandalous regime of Chandrika the violation of Human Rights has become covert, sophisticated and sinister. Perhaps with American advice, she appointed a Human rights Commission, under this mantle the Human Rights violations have increased at least ten folds. The recent attack on journalists by the PSD is a clear indication of her government’s commitment to HR. As for the Tamils, Chemmani and other Mass graves are enduring symbols of this cruelty. The Sinhala press, especially the Lake House has relativized, trivialized and banalized these brutalization by making these a mockery. This clearly demonstrates the Sinhala intelligentsia’s rapid descent into social permissiveness and amorality. History has shown us that when a people uncritically allow their leaders to descent to such abominable depths, they too are finally engulfed by the forces of Destruction.

The atrocities committed by the State some of which I had personally witnessed in Jaffna, namely the bombing of Navalny Church precincts, the primary school at Nagercoil and the bombing at Rasapathai (near the office of the Save the Children Fund) to the eviction of an entire population of a city in October 1995, -- all these were done with callous disregard for human lives. Some of these horrible memories will make Kosova fade into insignificance. But it has at least taught the world one important lesson that there are races such as the Serbs and Afrikaans who will never ever give in to the forces of righteousness. In such circumstances, the use of force becomes necessary to correct the ethnic imbalance. Sri Lanka is in dire need of such a corrective. Or else the world community will have to pay for the greed and corruption of its sick political elite and the steady decline of the State to bankruptcy.

If the world does not wake up to the dangers, we will have many more Cassavas, not just one. For this reason and reason alone, I am strongly in favor of a foreign mediation/ intervention. India intervened in this conflict for
the same reasons. Why should not a concert of foreign powers do the same thing if only for humanitarian reasons?

The fact is that Tamil Eelam has come to stay and alas the time is slowly ticking out signaling the last minutes for compromises. The manner in which the government of Sri Lanka treated Norwegian Peace efforts is a clear indication of the intransigence and the unwillingness from the part of the government to effect an acceptable solution via negotiations and dialogue. Things might happen as it exactly happened in the partition of India. A unitary State is absolutely out of the question after all the blood shed and the long drawn out war of over two decades. No body wants a Federal State if it can be avoided, - the delays, the litigation, the expensiveness. I think we need to go beyond the existing frontiers. A Confederation may have been viable some years ago, but does one hear of Jews returning to Germany and fraternizing once more with their German fellow countrymen with whom they had lived for over a millennia? The time for a peaceful resolution has therefore flown past us and we need to think along fresh lines. Two separate States linked on certain common matters such as foreign affairs, currency, railways and roads etc. may prove workable otherwise the game is lost. The European Union provides us with a model but it will be a post-partition model if we continue to allow the current stalemate in Sri Lanka.
Appendix VII

Basic Issues of the Ethnic-based Political Conflict in Sri Lanka and a Framework of Principles for its Democratic Resolution
Presentation by Ajith Rupasinghe

The effort taken in this paper is to provide a characterization of the core issues behind the current ethnic-based armed conflict in Sri Lanka and to present a framework of basic principles for its resolution.

1. Methodological Frame
In discussing the character of the present conflict it is important to distinguish between cause and effect, between structure and phenomena, between origins and consequences. This is a crucial methodological premise which bears on how we define the problem and determine the solution. The state is the supreme engineer and enforcer of the social order, the supreme authority in command of the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence, the sovereign power that decides and enforces the law of the land. It generates and accounts for the forms of class, national, ethnic and other forms of political struggle in society. Within this methodological and conceptual framework, I argue that the basic issue to be resolved in the current conflict is the systematic and intensifying discrimination and subjugation of the Tamil nation in the North-East by the state and the armed resistance to it by the Tamil national movement led by the LTTE.

2.0 Origins and Character of the Post-Colonial State
The post colonial state was established by the British Colonial power in collaboration with its dominant allies. This state was crafted by the colonial power as the supreme political and legal authority to manage and maintain the political economy of colonialism. The hierarchical relations of feudal-colonial rule were transferred and transformed into a new system of management under a new form of state power. The feudal-colonial state was simply handed over to a new ruling class consisting of the most powerful and wealthiest landlords and entrepreneurs. The principle of majority rule based on the system of parliamentary elections led to the establishment of a hegemonic state where the dominant Sinhala elites concentrated and centralized political power at the expense of marginalising and dispossessing the vast majority of the poor - the workers, farmers, fishermen, lower level professionals, traders and so on. At the same time, it marginalized and dispossessed all other ethnic communities, including the Tamil nation in the North and East, the Tamil plantation community, the Moslem, Burgher, Malay and other communities and caste groups. The social and political order was articulated on a structured hierarchy of wealth, power, privilege and status reflecting and reproducing the political economy and social relations of colonialism – only in ‘indigenous’ terms. The Sinhala language and the Buddhist religion were given priority and supremacy at the expense of the political, linguistic, religious and cultural rights of all other communities. The post-colonial state has served to perpetuate the political hegemony of a dominant Sinhala ruling class helplessly dependent on foreign capital and inherently opposed to the national democratic aspirations of the people. This ruling class is represented by both major parties, the United National Party (UNP) and the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) which have taken turns in generating the present crisis. The post colonial state has not only perpetuated the prevailing status quo, but perpetuated dependence and indebtedness, ruin and devastation, poverty and degradation and brought the country to this brink of disaster. The feudal-colonial state has generated the most explosive and violent conflicts in the fifty two years it has existed. Over hundred and fifty thousand people, mostly youth from the poorest families in the North and the South, both Sinhala and Tamil, have shed their blood in resistance and rebellion against the state.
3.0 Sinhala-Buddhist Chauvinism

Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism has been used as the dominant ideology of the feudal-colonial state in creating division among the people and entrenching the hegemony of the compradors. It has been used as an instrument of mass manipulation to accumulate vote banks and retain political power. Both parties have resorted to whipping up this ideology with the aim of sabotaging any form of a democratic resolution to the issue of national subjugation of the Tamil people. Nor has this hegemony benefited the Sinhala people or Buddhism. Indeed, the neo-colonial state has intensified the exploitation and oppression of the Sinhala people and violated and undermined the Sinhala Buddhist national identity. This has been done by the imposition of the politics, economics and culture of International Finance Capital and the World Bank. Sinhala Buddhist chauvinism has only served the most narrow and reactionary interests in maintaining the feudal-colonial state and the supremacy of the Sinhala-dominated comprador ruling class. The present war has nothing to do with the defense of the oppressed Sinhala-Buddhist nation but all to do with preserving the hegemony of the Sinhala feudal-colonial ruling class.

4.0 The Development of the Modern Tamil Nation and the Demand for the Right of Self-Determination

The modern Tamil nation was forged in the heat of the struggle against intensifying marginalisation and national oppression. At first, for decades, its leaders confined themselves to peaceful, constitutional struggle with the aim of seeking accommodation within the centralized bourgeois state. All efforts at arriving at a negotiated settlement were sabotaged by the prevailing parliamentary opposition and betrayed by the government of the time. Beyond that, the state resorted to violent suppression of all forms of such constitutional protest. These policies have led to several communal pogroms against innocent Tamil civilians which have caused hundreds of thousands to flee their homes.

The Republican Constitution adopted by the Sinhala majority in 1972 formalised this hegemony by the proclamation of the Sinhala Buddhist state and removing all previous guarantees of security provided to other communities. Further legislation which had the effect of fatally marginalising the Tamil community, led to the unanimous adoption of the Vaddukoddai resolution in 1976 by all major Tamil political organizations which declared in favor of a separate Tamil state. The majority of the Tamil people who had rejected the demand for a separate Tamil state in the 1970 general elections voted overwhelmingly in favor of such a separate state in 1977 - a sea change in just seven years - due to the acute sense of marginalisation felt as a result of the Republican Constitution. The demand for a separate state has been endorsed by all Tamil parties without exception and enshrined in the Thimpu principles. The state responded by making such a demand illegal and thereby robbed the Tamil people of their right to peacefully and constitutionally advance their struggle for dignity and equality. When the state resorted to open and violent rigging of even the District Development Councils which were offered as a sop to placate the Tamil people in 1981 and which led to the burning of the Jaffna Library, the path was paved for the armed struggle by Tamil militant youth. The core issue behind the conflict therefore is the systematic denial and violent suppression of the national democratic rights of the Tamil nation which has given cause to the demand for its right of national self-determination, i.e., the right to form a separate state.

5.0 Basic Issues and Constraints in Negotiating a Political Settlement

The LTTE has emerged as the dominant armed power within the Tamil National Movement. It is the only organization that has stood firm in pursuing the mandate of the Tamil people for recognition of Tamil nationhood and its right of self-determination. It demands an acceptable alternative to a separate state and insists that it is the responsibility of the state to present such an alternative form of sharing power as a basis for negotiations. The LTTE has presented the basic constitutional framework for such an alternative. As Anton Balasingham and V. Rudrakumaran have formulated it, in its most flexible form, it demands sharing power at the center with parity of political status as the basis for articulating a form of shared regional sovereignty incorporating the North-East.
However, the state has persistently refused to accord the Tamil nation parity of political status. It has insisted on maintaining the principle of majoritarian domination in parliament and in denying nationhood to the Tamil people. This is the fundamental reason why all attempted negotiations have failed. Furthermore, it has lacked the political will to implement the constitutional reforms agreed upon. The practice of rigging elections and arbitrarily dissolving provincial councils, the prevailing culture of political violence have eroded confidence in the political order and produced a generalized crisis of legitimacy.

The LTTE has also adopted an exclusivist attitude in terms of reaching a settlement. It has failed to produce a framework for a democratic political settlement that provides the same security and dignity to the Moslem and Sinhala communities that live in the North-East as it demands for the Tamil community. It is true that the settlement of Sinhala communities in these areas has been aimed at changing the demography and political geography by the state. However, such realities have to be addressed within a political settlement.

6.0 The Issue of Terrorism

It is a fact that the state has unleashed terrorism against the Tamil people in the form of communal pogroms, the deliberate massacre of Tamil civilian communities, the practice of inhuman forms of torture, the targeting of places of religious worship and so on. These acts of state terrorism have to be condemned.

The LTTE has resorted to acts of counter-terror as its response. While the practice of counter terror is a natural reaction to state terror it cannot be directed indiscriminately at civilians. Any organization that claims to represent an oppressed people cannot resort to terrorism against other oppressed people. This will only serve to isolate and alienate it from their struggle. It will prevent the possibility of forming the unity of the oppressed in a common struggle for liberation against the oppressor. Such a policy will end up in denying the logic of liberation. The ideology and politics of pursuing the interests of my nation at the cost of other oppressed people is a form of narrow bourgeois nationalism. It is necessary to ponder deeply about what could ultimately be the form of liberation that could be achieved by such an ideology? These comments are made with the intention of urging honest self-reflection.

7.0 The Present Conjuncture

The present conjuncture has been triggered by the dramatic and decisive military escalation occasioned by a major military offensive by the LTTE to capture Jaffna. The state has responded by a national and international mobilization in order to resist this offensive. Secondly, the recent general election has also served to intensify military operations. This is because projecting the scenario of a decisive military victory has become the PA’s only claim to power.

The combined result has been 1) a qualitative intensification of the military conflict with the addition of new military technology, 2) placing the country on a national war footing and the introduction of new emergency regulations, 3) renewed involvement of all the major regional and international powers in the politics of the conflict 4) renewal of diplomatic relations with the state of Israel which has come forward to supply and train the armed forces of the state, and 4) direct diplomatic facilitation by Norway.

The new situation has also given new life to extreme Sinhala fascist forces who have united in their opposition to any form of a negotiated political settlement and who insistently demand a military solution based on the physical liquidation of the LTTE and the total suppression of the Tamil national movement. Some of these forces have declared war against all those who would stand for such a settlement. They pursue an insurrectionary agenda aimed at displacing the established status quo for its failure to wage such a war of conquest. These are manifestations of intra-ruling class conflicts which contain the potential for violent resolution. The recent massacre at Bindunuweva is part of the racist agenda to destabilize the government, fan the flames of communal violence, spread a reign of terror and create a political crisis. This should
be viewed in the context of setting the stage for an insurrectionary bid to seize state hegemony by an alliance of such forces and factions within and outside the state.

The present situation is further compounded by the politics of opportunism and greed for state power endemic to both the UNP and the SLFP-led People's Alliance. The UNP has reverted to its habitual policy of manipulating any political solution in favor of electoral gains. The PA had designed the constitutional reform package more with the intention of extending the term of the Executive Presidency and introducing electoral reforms in its favor. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) has come out openly in opposition to any form of devolution of power on the basis of defending the unitary character of the feudal-colonial state. It has declared the LTTE to be a separatist force and an enemy that has to be destroyed by war. The common denominator among all these Sinhala-based parties is their commitment to maintaining the hegemony of the Sinhala-dominated neo-colonial-feudal state. The conflicts among them are intra-class conflicts over who shall reap the spoils of feudal-colonial plunder.

Yet, the very escalation of the war has produced new prospects of peace. The military equation has reached a stage of deadly stalemate. Neither side can gain strategic military dominance without raising the stakes beyond what is politically feasible. Both sides are compelled to recognize the futility of a military solution. At the same time, both sides insist on gaining a sense of strategic parity in order to establish the ground to seek a negotiated political settlement on their terms. The challenge to hegemony presented by the rise of extreme racist/fascist forces have compelled the leadership of both major parties to arrive at consensus in the pursuit of a peace agenda since the military agenda undermines them and gives space for their opponents.

The international community has stated its interest in seeking a negotiated settlement which respects the unity and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka and which provides a form of sharing power as a way of addressing the national democratic aspirations of the Tamil people. The major international powers promote both war and peace in pursuing their interests. The approach of the international powers has been to respect the national and regional security interests of India and to act within a common global security framework. India will seek a settlement which guarantees the unity and territorial integrity of the Sri Lankan state and which accords some dignity, equality, security and autonomy to the Tamil people. The logic of self-interest compels it to heed the Tamil Nadu electoral alliances and pre-empt the rise of secessionist trends there. The US and India has banned the LTTE as a terrorist organization. Both of them feed the Sinhala chauvinist agenda. In this context, it seems that the UK, The EU, Norway, Sweden, Canada have adopted a more neutral stand, with Norway playing a positive role by trying to facilitate a dialogue. The fact that the international powers appear to share consensus on a negotiated political settlement is a positive factor for peace.

In terms of the major protagonists, both the Government and the LTTE are compelled *ultimately* to seek a negotiated settlement, even while striving to establish strategic equilibrium, if not advantage, on the ground. The LTTE has given its consent to the Norwegian facilitation and is engaged in a fitful dialogue. The government is striving to build consensus for its devolution package. In doing so, it has initiated an explosive debate taking on the extreme reactionary elements within the racist agenda, while however preserving the majoritarian character and hegemonic aspects of the state. Whatever the compulsions behind such a move, the debate to advance the agenda of devolving power has provided some limited space for the peace movement.
However, as before, the present effort on the part of the government is fatally flawed in that it has followed the same method of trying to impose a settlement as opposed to opening negotiations with the LTTE. The attempt to marginalize the LTTE will, as before, lead to tragic consequences. Both sides of the divide and all stakeholders will eventually have to recognize and respect the limits, constraints and imperatives that form the objective frame to reach a negotiated settlement. They will have to find the political will to make sacrifices and reach compromise for the sake of the country and the people. Or else they will be rejected by the people and by history.

8.0 Towards an Honorable Peace and a Democratic Political Settlement

However polarized the issues remain, the solution, I believe, is to build the political will to restructure the state. It is preferable, I believe, that this be done based on the theme of one country, one state for each and all equally, and to evolve the new institutions which will provide for the dignity, equality, security and autonomy of all the nations and communities within a united Sri Lanka. The sharing of political power at the center on the basis of equality should form the principle for establishing a secure and stable system of shared sovereignty at the regional and local level which respects the territorial integrity of all nations and communities without any form of internal discrimination. Such a constitutional order and settlement requires the recognition, on principle, of the right of self-determination of the Tamil nation accommodated in consonance with the democratic rights and aspirations of all the nations and communities and the people of Sri Lanka.

This requires that the state be secular. It is also required that an upper chamber such as a Senate be established reflecting the plurality of linguistic, religious and ethnic communities and sectors with veto powers such that there shall be no domination nor discrimination of minorities by majorities. A special constitutional court should also be established with a similar democratic pluralist reflection to deliberate on all major issues arising from disputes between the various communities and constituencies. The participation of women is crucial in such institutions since patriarchy and male supremacy constitute a generative structure of degradation and violence in human society. It also requires the institution of accessible and affordable forms of public litigation to hold all public officials directly accountable to the people. Societies once rent asunder by violent internal conflict for centuries have found the will to resolve their differences and are learning to live in democratic coexistence. Such constitutional settlements have been approached in the Philippines, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Bangladesh and elsewhere. I take the liberty of proposing such an alternative since I believe firmly that the interests of the oppressed people of Sri Lanka as a whole compels us to seek a solution within a united democratic constitutional framework.

The aspiration for separation has arisen due to the impossibility of living together. It can only be overcome by working together to define new institutions and bonds of solidarity. The logic of division can only be overcome by replacing it with the logic of mutual understanding, respect and trust. They cannot be overcome by war. War has only served to deepen the wounds of historical grievance and fuel the desire to separate. When we learn to celebrate our unity in diversity and discover our identity in a common purpose, then we would have left behind the era of fratricidal war. This I believe is the path to peace. Concretely, peace can be achieved only when all parties find the will to sit and consult each other in a genuine spirit of reconciliation and design an acceptable constitutional framework within a united Sri Lanka. It is up to both sides of the divide to articulate a working consensus and arrive at the principles and framework for such a settlement.

9.0 The Path to Peace

But peace will not come easy. There will be many grueling challenges and trials ahead. Extreme forces from all sides that profit from war and seek their political survival through war, driven to irrational desperation, may attempt to disrupt and destabilize any possibility of peace. They may try to unleash the politics of communal violence. They may try to resort to the
politics of terror and assassination, as before, in a frenzied rush to eliminate all opposition and grab state power. The state will respond with its own form of ruthless terror. The process of militarisation and brutalisation, of destruction and devastation may intensify beyond all imagination. As every day passes, more and more poorest sons and daughters of the land will be claimed as sacrificial lambs to be offered to the wolves of war. The foundations of civilized existence and governance will be assailed as never before by the fury of the storm. More than ever, it is up to the people to chart the course of history in this most momentous hour in order to achieve the most profound democratic transformation of the social order where we may learn to define our own freedom in the struggle for the liberation of each other and all humankind. This way we may bury this horrible past forever.

For our part, we must continue to swim against the tide and grasp every window of opportunity. We must build the consensus and the political space for a graduated military de-escalation and the resumption of dialogue leading to a negotiated settlement in the context of a cessation of hostilities. For this, we must mobilize the people with the objective of sustaining and deepening their aspiration for peace within a democratic social order. Once conscious and confident and guided by an emancipating vision of freedom, the people will claim their sovereign right to design and govern the social order of their own making. The flames of war must become the fire of creation of a new social order where war and violence will have no need nor place. Deep in the soul of the people lie the dream and vision of such a land of freedom. The crisis paves the way for the people to raise their command of the forces of nature and society, to master science and technology, to grasp political economy and more and more build their will and capacity to become the conscious architects of their world and their destiny. This is the peace that we must struggle for.
Appendix VIII

Guidelines for the consultation

a) All the participants will come to the consultation with a commitment to discuss problems related to Sri Lanka as a shared problem.

b) The participants agree that the conversations should be facilitated, and they agree to cooperate with facilitation process and respect the facilitator.

c) The conversation will take place in an atmosphere of good will, good faith, honesty, and openness. Everyone agrees to conduct these conversations with courtesy and respect for each other. Each participant will listen carefully to what others have to say. This does not preclude tough and heated discussions of the issues.

d) Everyone agrees to honour the confidentiality of the proceedings. There will be no publicity of any sort, except with the agreement of all participants, nor will any participant be quoted to anyone outside the meeting.

e) The conversations will be described as a scholarly exchange. Participants enter freely into these conversations. Everyone understands that the conversations are being undertaken on a private basis.

f) However, it should be the intention of participants that the conversations become more than an intellectual chat but lead to fresh commitments and empowerment paving the way for conflict transformation.

g) Punctuality at meetings is essential and should be honoured by the participants.

The conversations will take place in English, but where necessary translation will be given. Participants agree that if there is something they do not understand, they will ask for immediate clarification or translation.
Appendix IX

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS AT SRI LANKA CONSULTATION, UPPSALA
17-19 NOVEMBER 2000

Representatives of Sri Lankan diaspora/expatriate

Rev. Dr. Joseph Chandrakanthan
Roman Catholic priest of the diocese of Jaffna, Sri Lanka
Served as Associate Professor at Jaffna University. Currently works as Consultant in Clinical Ethics and Professor of Asian Christianity at St. Michael’s campus of the University of Toronto
Author of several books and articles

Dr. N. Ethiraveerasingham
Taught agriculture at the Kilinohchi campus, University of Jaffna 1994-95.
Taught at the Universities of Sierra Leone, Papua New Guinea and Nigeria and has written one book and articles on agriculture
Attended University of California. Los Angeles, and received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Education from Cornell University, New York

Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham
Physician by profession
Lives in California
Works with the Tamil refugees on humanitarian health issues

Dr. Rajan Sriskandarajah
Physician by profession
Assistant Professor and Lecturer at New York Medical College
Editor and Webmaster of Ilanakai Tamil Sangam, USA

Mr. Periyathamby Rajanayagam
Lawyer by profession
Editor of Tamil Times
Actively involved in Human Rights work and writes extensively on Human Rights concerns

Mr. S. Sivanayagam
Senior Tamil Journalist
Founder and editor of Jaffna based Saturday Review Paper
Former Director and editor of Tamil Information Centre branch in Madras
Former editor of Tamil Nation

Mr. Vairamuttu Varadakumar
Executive Secretary of Tamil Information Centre, London
Involved in Human Rights and Community Development work
Committed to issues of justice and peace

Mr. Selliah Amirthalingam
Ph.D. candidate at the University of Uppsala
Researcher on Hinduism and Tamil culture
Mr. Kumarasamy Pararajasingham
Former accountant at the Ceylon Fisheries Corporation in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and was active in Trade union politics from 1960s. One of the founder members of the Jaffna branch of the Movement for Inter racial Justice and Peace (MIRJP) Active member of the Tamil rights Committee of Stuttgart, Germany and was the Editor of the Tamil magazine Sinthanai from 1985 to 1995

Mr. Thavaganeshan Vasudevan
Actively involved in peace issues with the Green party in Germany since 1980s Presently works as a Radiographer in Berlin

Mr. Ranjith Lochbihler
Political activist in Sri Lanka during the 1970s Co-ordinator of the Third World Café in Munic and a founder member of the Sri Lanka Friendship organisation in Munic Author of several books

Mr. Ranjith de Mel
Studied civil engineering in former East Germany Lives in Berlin One of the founder members of the Sri Lankan Association in Berlin

Representatives from Sri Lankan civil society

Ven. Dr. Pallekande Rathanasaa Thero
Monk of the Amarapura sect Graduate of Lumumba University, former Soviet Union Former Secretary of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation

Ven. Pandit Madampagama Assagi Nayaka Thero
Monk of Amurapura sect, Chief Sanghanayaka of Colombo Nava Koralaya Former Secretary of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation

Ven. Siyabalagasewa Wimalasara Nayaka Thero
Monk of Siam sect Chief Sanghanayaka of Northern east Chairperson of the Wanni Peace Foundation

Rev. Fr. Xavior John Stanislaus Philips
Priest in charge of the Maddhu church, Manna Diocese

Rev. Selvadurai Jayanesan
Priest of the Church of South India, Jaffna Diocese Works in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka

Swamige Kadamba Kanana
One of the co-chairpersons of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation Devotee of the Global Movement for Krishna Consciousness

Dr. D. Nesiah
Member, Board of Governors, Marga Institute Principal Coordinator of a two year project, ”A History of Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka”, “Science and Religion”, and ”Nationalism”
Mr. Mohamed Musthaffa Abdul Rahuman  
Chairperson, British College of Applied Studies, Dehiwela  
President of Muslims Rights Organizatin (NEMRO)  
Working for Muslim Rights and Tamil Muslim harmony in the Northeast

Mr. S. Balakrishnan  
Executive Director, Centre for Development Alternatives, Kandy  
Coordinator, Movement for Constitutional Reform

Mr. S. V. Ajith Rupasinghe  
Director, Prasanni (Praja Sanwada Saha Sannivedana Kendraya  
Center for Community Dialogue and Communication), Kotte  
Executive Council Member of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation  
Sociology Consultant

Rev. R.A. Freddy de Alwis  
Minister of the Baptist Sangamaya, Sri Lanka  
Former Executive Secretary of the Development Commission of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka  
Present Secretary General of the Inter-Religious Peace Foundation

Invited guests, resource persons and facilitators

Charlotte Erikson, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Desk Officer for Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives

Ms. Brigitte Morgenthaler Subramaniam, Switzerland  
Responsible for Migration Affairs, Reformed Churches of Berne-Jura, Switzerland  
Works closely with the Tamil refugees in Switzerland

Mr. Clement John, WCC, Switzerland  
Executive Secretary, International Affairs with Programme responsibility for Human Rights and Regional Representative for Asia and Pacific

Mr. Bernt Jonsson, Sweden  
Former Executive Director of Life & Peace Institute  
Editor in Chief of a biweekly periodical, Sändaren

Rev. Dr. Rienzie Perera, Life & Peace Institute, Sweden  
Anglican Priest, Diocese of Colombo, Sri Lanka  
Former General Secretary of National Christian Council of Sri Lanka  
Presently Research Director, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden

Ms. Cordula Reimann  
Postgraduate Researcher  
Doctoral Candidate working on thesis about ”Gender and Conflict Resolution” with Sri Lanka as a case study

Ms. Claudette Werleigh, Life & Peace Institute, Sweden  
Former Prime Minister of Haiti  
Presently Director of Conflict Transformation Programmes, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden
Mr. David Wiking, Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), Sweden
Adviser – Conflict Management, Division for Humanitarian Assistance, Swedish

Ms. Ulla Vinterhav, Life & Peace Institute, Sweden
Executive Officer, Life & Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden
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