

Symbolic Politics, Sri Lanka Elections and the Consociational Solution

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The continuing political and social instability in Sri Lanka once more dimmed the prospect for social progress and peace. The assassinations, an eye for eye type killings and high profile attacks on the Sinhalese dominated security forces have been continuing lucratively on a daily basis since the President Rajapakshe won the tightly contested Presidential elections on November 17, 2005 on a symbolic anti-federal platform (1). This article will attempt to look at some issues relevant to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

A theoretical understanding: Symbolic politics

The central argument of symbolic politics is that emotional symbols such as flag, national anthem, history of group, myth of motherland and fatherland can become tools in politics to influence the decisions of the masses for the purpose of winning elections and grab power (2). That is to say, the more the political actors employ symbols recognized as predominant in the psyche of a group for political gains, the greater their chances are to win the support of the masses. Masses are known to generally give priority to their symbolic identities over anything else and thus make decision accordingly. The attitudes of individuals and groups in the sphere of politics are mostly emotionally motivated. That is why political actors employ ethnic and/or religious symbols as they know they can trigger a positive response in their favor (3). This strategy has been labeled "symbolic politics". The essence of this argument is in S.J Kaufman words, "*people choose by responding to the most emotionally potent symbols evoked*" (4).

At the theoretical level, "symbolic politics" is purely a deliberate political strategy by political elites to arouse emotions with a view to grab power. Unfortunately, as we shall see, such a strategy leaves the masses uneducated and unprepared to address any political issue in a rational and constructive manner.

The consequences of symbolic politics are in fact severe. When political elites and political parties use hostile emotional symbolic politics to

win the votes of particular ethnic or religious groups, the society in which they evolve is bound to face social instability. Symbolic politics is a highly divisive tool. Its rhetoric denies modernity, equality or justice to particular segments of the society (5).

Of course, the political elite may think it can retract its symbolic promises once in power. However, recent political studies on Sri Lanka's political outbidding strategies show that, when they have employed religion and/or ethnicity to maximize their votes, politicians find it next to impossible to backtrack on their divisive promises (6). And the same problem befalls their successors.

A dramatic case in point was the fate of the first promoter of such strategy, S.W.R.D. Bandaranayke, the man who introduced Sinhala chauvinism in the realm of Sri Lankan politics. Once in power, this otherwise pragmatic politician found himself unable to control the emotions he had unleashed. In 1959, an extremist monk who thought S.W.R.D. Bandaranayke was about to make a step towards the country's Tamil minority, which would compromise the sacrosanct rights of the dominant Sinhala community, assassinated S.W.R.D. Bandaranayke. S.W.R.D. Bandaranayke had campaigned on symbolic politics and created single-handedly the sacrosanct rights of the dominant Sinhala community. With the monk, they became a reality that is now haunting Sri Lanka.

Why do people rebel?

Guerrilla-style insurgency or terrorists' activities always pose serious challenges to a centralized State. Recently, what the Iraq insurgency against the Anglo-American invasion clearly proves is that even sophisticated military powers can be successfully challenged when determined people have lost trust in the political process on the table. One has to keep in mind that if people can gather a sufficient motivation to rebel against a system, no one was actually born a terrorist. Terrorism is the result of political failure. It is not terrorism that engineers political failure, but political failure that breeds terror. Insurgents or terrorists are the byproduct of a failed political and social environment. In other words, when a political system acts unfairly, rebellion is bound to occur (7).

When the 'rules of the game' are unfairly rigged or set to serve a particular community in a divided society, marginalized groups are unlikely to accept the situation. Rebellion against the state and its institutions is their answer. A set of unfair rules will trigger the marginalized people to rebel, and

for some to support either a political or a violent mobilization. In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) is the product of such unfair rules and its leader came quickly to the theoretical understanding that the southern elites' ethnocentric policies used to outbid their opponents would provoke a backlash against the state.

In any country where there is an insurgency, the prime motivation comes from oppression and discrimination (8). Notwithstanding, such motivation could be derailed if and when the political elite modifies its attitude towards the disfranchised segment of the society. It means then to give priority to a more equitable power-sharing system with those illiberal forces (by illiberal, I mean ones that act outside the current state-centered system of government). This attitude would increase the level of trust of the people in the state and its institutions. Eventually they would stop rebelling and accept a more equitable system. Trust and confidence in institutions are the pillars of democratic systems. In Sri Lanka, the LTTE would have more trust in the country's political establishment if it were convinced that wider political autonomy and power-sharing was genuinely on the table. But it has not happened so far.

Indeed political science studies have proven without reservation that the influence of illiberal forces in deeply divided but democratic societies can be challenged effectively. This requires of course that liberal forces within the society show political maturity by accepting graciously to redefine the sharing power arrangement that existed with those illiberal forces (9). It must be kept in mind here that almost all oppressed ethno-political groups in ethnically divided societies transformed themselves into illiberal forces out of necessity. There are many cases to support that view, from India to China to Sudan to Northern Ireland to even Quebec to support such a view.

When those fragmented forces are left to grow stronger, they end up challenging the whole political set-up and they are likely to propose a completely separate state when they are geographically or ethnically concentrated. On the other hand, there are also many examples in the political science literature that prove that illiberal forces are contained every time the political elite comes to the conclusion that peace is priceless and that the power-sharing arrangement must be improved (10).

There is no doubt that the Sri Lankan political actors need to find constructive ways to engage the LTTE politically and if they do so with a genuine will to solve the problem, a peaceful arrangement will be found. Yet,

five decades of hostile symbolic politic strategies are in the way. They constitute the biggest challenge to overcome. Unfortunately, the latest election failed to depart from previous scripts.

Sri Lanka's Ethnic Elections

In Sri Lanka, elections are ethnically based. We should describe the elections as "ethnic elections" (11). In almost all ethnically divided democratic societies, and Sri Lanka is one of those, the reality to reckon with is that ethnicity plays a crucial role. Such ethnic elections lead the political elites to resort to ethnic based slogans and to avoid any unnecessary proposals that would perturb the mindset of their electorate. After all, the ultimate aim of the politician is to be in power, not to lose power. And it is a fact that since independence, the elite has been manipulating symbols in order to maximize votes. Thus the emotional issues of linguistic nationalism (12) mixed with extremist Buddhist religious rhetoric (13), or the remembrance of ancient Buddhist heroes (14) and generating fears of the other groups, have been handy instrument for the main Sinhala political parties in the island to secure and to lock the Sinhalese votes.

This trend was laid down at the first 1956 General Elections. It was still continuing at the latest November 2005 Presidential elections. Symbolic policies such as the Sri Lanka Freedom Party's (SLFP) Sinhala-only Act proclaimed in 1956 to today's President Rajapakshe's anti-federal grand standing were ploys designed to lock the Sinhala votes. The Sinhalese happened to be not only the largest ethnic group of the country, but also the beneficiary of the dubious Sri Lanka's electoral arrangements. As a result, since the independence, whoever wins the Sinhala vote wins the election. Those cards give a major incentive to Sinhala nationalist forces to outbid their opponents by using anti-minority rhetoric, mostly anti-Tamil rhetoric. That the electoral strategy produced a politico-military movement, the violent LTTE has yet to be acknowledged.

2005 Presidential Elections

Sri Lanka held its fifth Presidential elections on November 17, 2005. To contest the election, the SLFP-led United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA) headed by the retiring President Mrs. Kumaratunga, fielded her Sinhala nationalist Premier Mahinda Rajapakshe, a man from the Sinhala predominant Southern province of Sri Lanka, as its candidate, while the opposition led by the

United National Party (UNP) fielded its leader Ranil Wickramasinghe, a former Prime Minister.

Mr. Wickramasinghe chooses to identify himself as a good friend of the international business community, and a champion of neo-liberal economic policies (15). Mr. Rajapakshe, a charismatic speaker, took the opposite view, vigorously attempting to show a different picture to the masses, particularly to the non-northeastern rural Sinhalese. Although the incumbent President was from his party and he was the Prime Minister, he successfully positioned himself as a member of the oppressed Sinhalese masses (16).

This is the usual script necessary to win the Southern Sinhala sympathy and the support of the Sinhalese masses. The Prime Minister went as far as promising to abrogate President Kumaratunga's Supreme Court banned Tsunami pact with the LTTE (17), a pact signed by the leader of his party! And to justify the failure of the talks with the LTTE, he casted the West and particularly Norway as the villain in the country's current peace crisis (18).

Another important factor swaying the rhetoric was the fact that Premier Rajapakshe had signed an electoral pact with two radical parties: the Sinhala nationalists Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) (19) and the Jathika Hela Hurumaya (JHU) (20). Both are strongly opposed to LTTE and want the unitary character of the Sri Lankan state preserved.

Other minority parties considered the agreements reached by the Premier with the radical Sinhalese parties to protect the unitary state as a '*totally obnoxious position*' harmful to the minority's interest (21). As a result, the major minority ethnic group parties except the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) endorsed the UNP candidate Wickramasinghe (22).

As for the LTTE and the TNA, they both said they would boycott the elections arguing that the Tamils would not obtain any justice from the Sinhala centric polity (23) pointing out that "*the experience the Tamils have had over five decades, has taught them neither to trust the leading Sinhala political parties nor to have faith in their leadership*" (24).

Ultimately, Premier Mahinda Rajapakshe who secured a little over 50% of the popular vote won the tightly contested election. His opposition rival Ranil Wickramasinghe secured 48.43% votes (25).

An analysis of the result shows that Mr. Rajapakshe secured his win thanks to the support of the Sinhalese majority predominantly living in the Southern, Western and Northwestern Provinces, while Mr. Wickramasinghe had the support of the minorities who concentrate in the Northeast, Central and part of the Western provinces (26).

Soon after the elections, Mr. Rajapakshe, who won on his “anti-federal” rhetoric, appointed Ratnasiri Wickramanayake as Premier of the island. Mr. Wickramanayake is well known for his pro-war and Sinhala nationalistic rhetoric. Mr. Rajapakshe’s choice delighted the Sinhalese hard-liners and his allies. The Tamil nationalists and Tamil nationalist inspired media viewed it as a first step towards a renewed war against the LTTE.

Furthermore, the appointment of H.M.B.G. Kotakadeniya as a Defense Ministry’s public safety adviser raised further Tamils' discontent with the Rajapakshe’s administration. To make matter worse, on January 3, 2006, five young Tamils Advance Level students were killed in Trincomalee at a popular family beach. The forensic reports clearly stated that the death of the students was due to shooting (27). Tamils and others widely believed that it was a master plan of H.M.B.G. Kotakadeniya, a member of the Sinhala nationalist JHU.

Retaliation was deemed inevitable. It came on January 7, 2006 in the form of a suicide attack on the Israeli built Dvora patrol craft in Trincomalee. The attack killed at least 13 Navy sailors. The government blamed the LTTE for the attack (28). The LTTE denied any involvement in the attack on the Navy boat, but the media wrote that it was connected to the deaths of the students widely blamed on the Defense Ministry’s public safety adviser H.M.B.G. Kotakadeniya (29). The same media alleged that the Sinhala radical ex-police general went beyond his powers when he advised that more than 40 well trained Special Task Force (STF) personnel be deployed in the unstable Trincomalee area to look for any LTTE suspects (30).

Whatever the truth, the bottom-line remains that the pre-election rhetoric is still dominating the conduct of state affairs. The Sinhala elites show no interest to go beyond their symbolic promises because the local, provincial council and Parliament elections are on the corner. Their only aim now is to consolidate power and to strengthen hard-line policies to win forthcoming elections. Thus, nothing is promising since ethnic violence already casts a long shadow on the hope for peace.

President Rajapakshe stands firm on his anti-federal pledge made to the Sinhalese voters, persuaded now that a federal state structure would help Tamils to establish later a separate state in the island. The Sinhala extremist allies who supported Mr. Rajapakshe candidacy warned him that they would definitely withdraw their support if the government walked an extra mile beyond the symbolic elections promises to meet the Tamils demands for self-autonomy (31).

Sri Lanka is now facing up to the consequences of symbolic politics based on aggression and hostility. When one employs such a tactic to scare the voters, it is later on difficult to change tack. Any move would result in a massive loss of trust. Once more, the symbolisms used by Southern politicians led the minorities, particularly the Tamil one, to believe that a Sinhala centric polity is not going to bring them any justice (32). Hence, the recent outburst of brutal violence (33) which must be understood in this context.

It is not up to the political analyst to question whether particular events or phenomenon are good or evil, just or unjust, moral or immoral. That is for philosophers and eventually for the political elites themselves. A political analyst focus is about political reality and the likely outcome of political decisions. In Sri Lanka, to predict any particular outcome is fraught with danger. The situation is too volatile to warrant the pursuance of any long-term strategy.

Negotiating a consociational solution and the Sinhalese psychological fear factor.

What five decades of symbolic politics produced was a brutal ethnic civil war, which dismantled the relations between the different ethnic groups and brought a collapse of the economy. Clearly political conflicts need political solutions. No amount of military recipe will offer stability and bring a necessary reconciliation. In fact, as we mentioned earlier, harsh military solutions facilitate the emergence of marginalized groups whose ethnic loyalty feeds politico-military movements. In other words, the more the government relies on a military solution in the name of safeguarding the motherland, the stronger the tie between marginalized groups and ethnic movements becomes.

And in Sri Lanka, the government's decades of ghastly military operations against the Tamil Tigers has been proven to be ineffective and not successful. If the offensive military operation in the Tamil areas brought an

unprecedented level of terror and violence, it achieved little else. Indiscriminate artillery shelling and blind serial bombing that continued unabated for years caused colossal damage to life and property. These military campaigns uprooted people from a peaceful life and reduced them to wartime refugees.

As a result, in the north of the island, nearly 500,000 Tamils were made homeless and refugees (34). Inevitably, these actions contributed to further sour the relations between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority. They also encouraged moderate Tamils to vehemently support as a last resort, and for the sake of dignity, the LTTE outfit.

Notwithstanding, to solve five decades of ethnic conflict there is no other solution than political means. In both the ruling party (President Rajapakse) and the opposition UNP (Ranil Wickramasinghe), many believe that it is the only option, and they would like now to seal a peace pact with the LTTE, who is by and large the Tamils' major ethno-political movement. Unfortunately, others disagree. Ideas of a military solution remain predominant across the Sinhala political spectrum.

Extremist Sinhalese forces including the JVP are still using the fear factor to rally their supporters. Those extremist parties argue that any concessions to the Tamils would seriously infringe the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka. They claim that Sri Lanka is the sacred home of the Sinhalese and of Buddhism, referring to the Mahavamsa, a Sinhala-Buddhist tale going from the 6th century BC to the 4th century DC (35).

The use of the Mahavamsa, according to Tessa J Bartholomeusz, is an attempt to rally by fear and violence the Sinhalese majority into a holy war against the Tamils (36) who happen for the majority not to be Buddhist.

What makes things even more complicated is that the ordinary Sinhalese village folk, whose perception is largely shaped by the Mahavamsa legend, does believe that an autonomous Tamil region would eventually lead to the establishment of a separate state in the Tamil dominated Northeast (37). This idea is anathema to many Sinhalese who believe in the sanctity of a united island.

In Sri Lanka, a fear-psycho complex interferes with any resolution process. Ironically, the fear-psycho complex has fertile ground because the Sinhala-Buddhist population, although the large majority of the island, live with a "minority complex" towards the Tamils. This is so because the Tamil diaspora

is much larger than the Sinhalese one throughout the world and, in particular, when one considers the Tamil culture and the size of India. Furthermore this Sinhala-Buddhist population also developed a minority complex towards the Muslim minority, as Muslims belong to a much wider group than the Sinhalese.

But of course the main concern remains the connection of the Tamils with the Indian state of Tamil Nadu (38). Many Sinhala-Buddhists and monks are deeply suspicious of the Southern Tamils and they accuse them of pushing the Sri Lankan Tamils towards autonomy in the Northeast of Sri Lanka (39).

Moreover, as we mentioned, the majority of the Sinhala-Buddhists have been coerced into believing that a federal structure would be bad for the country and would pave the way for further estrangement between the communities (40).

In Sri Lanka, religious beliefs shape people's life, thus religion plays an important role in the drama for not only the Buddhist bhikkhus (41) or monks play a leading part in the socio-political life in Sri Lanka, but they are full blown political actors as well. One of their claims is that they are the rightful heirs of the island (Dhammadipa) and if anyone can live in Sri Lanka, this is provided that the cultural, religious, economic, political, and linguistic hegemony of the Sinhala-Buddhists is not challenged. A federal state would of course pose a major challenge to this view. Hence their opposition to any kind of federal structure.

The irony of their position is that the Sinhala-Buddhists want now to stick at all costs to a unitary state structure that was imposed on them by the British colonial rulers in 1833 when they unified the island's Tamil kingdom in the Northeast with the rest of Sinhala kingdoms. The truth is that there was, prior to the British, no precedent of a unified structure encompassing the whole of the island. In a way, the Sinhala-Buddhist views are to defend the post-colonial heritage regardless of the reality on the ground.

Whatever the reason it is clear that the Sinhala nationalistic appeals of the political parties find a vast support. Yet, all the Sinhala resistance to the autonomy strengthens the LTTE's Tamil symbolic appeals among the Tamil population.

The LTTE resurgence prior to the Presidential elections in the Northeast region was primarily due to this kind of logic. The more the Sinhalese dominated government denies equality to the members of the groups

who think they are oppressed by the state, the more those members tender their support to the politico-movement that fights for their liberation. To break this vicious circle would require guts and vision.

If Sri Lanka ruling elites and politicians were genuinely interested in a prosperous development of the country, the first step would be to soften their chauvinistic rhetoric. That would pave the way for serious talks with the Tamil Tigers who, in any case, run a de-facto state in chunks of Sri Lanka's north and east with their own flag, police, banks, courts and defense units including a naval wing, the Sea Tigers, and four light aircrafts (42). But there is no sign that it is to happen any time soon. To the contrary, in November 2005, the shadowy LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran warned that unless the government - which has already ruled out a separate homeland for minority Tamils - gives them wide autonomy, the Tamil Tigers would "intensify their struggle" in 2006 (43).

Meanwhile there is a growing realization that another round of ethnic civil war would prove devastating and the ruling elites are struggling to find constructive steps to diffuse the current unstable situation and to find a political solution. Unfortunately for the ruling elite, the southern anti-peace forces such as the JVP and JHU are still well organized and they are likely able to mobilize poor southern Sinhalese for their own political ends.

Whatever the views of the parties, it is clear to international observers that the only way out is a consociational or meaningful federal political solution (44). It would not only strengthen democracy (45) but also would bring political stability if it were implemented properly.

That means rewriting parts of the constitution of the Sri Lankan State. This could be acceptable if it is properly and convincingly sold to the Sinhalese majority as everyone is aware that the current unitary form of state system has failed (46). But so far the Sinhalese ruling class, focused on internal conflicts, has not shown the political willingness and the guts to sacrifice the inherited unitary state structure. Yet only such a move would pressure the LTTE into a negotiated political solution.

Negotiating with the enemy

Although there are other significant politico-military groups involved in the Sri Lankan conflict, whether the government likes it or not, the LTTE has emerged the major partner in the negotiation process (47) and the only one that

could probably deliver on its words. Thus, it would be unrealistic for the government to seek a political solution without the LTTE's positive participation. The problem is that the LTTE has laid down unpalatable solutions, referring to what it called "internal sovereignty" (48).

Nevertheless the LTTE opening gamble shows a willingness to find a negotiated political solution. The LTTE leader Prabhakaran, in his 2002 Heroes' Day address, said: "We are prepared to consider favorably a political framework that offers substantial regional autonomy and self-determination. But if our people's right to self-determination is denied and our demand for regional self-rule is rejected we have no alternative other than to secede and form an independent state" (49). Since then, the LTTE has urged the government "to come forward soon with a reasonable political framework that will satisfy the political aspirations of the Tamil people". Prabhakaran reaffirmed his organization's desire to seek a political solution in his Heroes' Day 2005 address (50).

The Muslim Factor

The Muslims constitute roughly seven percent of the population. Being ostracized by both the Tamils and the Sinhalese because of their way of life (and the fact that they are generally the poorest segment of the population), they now prefer to be recognized by their religion and cultural identity. That has pushed some to claim they should be identified as a separate ethnic group (51).

As a result, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), the largest Muslim party, seeks formal participation in the negotiation by insisting today that any future agreement on the political solution between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government should address the concerns of the Muslims. However, the SLMC is likely to demand the separation of the currently merged Northeast province, as the Muslims are confined to the East. It would also demand devolution of some powers to the community level. Both requests are not welcome, either by the LTTE or the Sri Lankan government as they would unbalance any meaningful relations between the Tamil and Sinhalese dominated areas.

Yet, the LTTE is here in the same predicament as the government because of policies towards the Muslims that were reminiscent of those practiced by the Sinhalese-led government towards them. Indeed the problem arose from the fact that the LTTE practiced an ethnic cleansing in disguise in many areas of the North of the country. As a result it succeeded in crystallizing

a Muslim opposition that did not exist before (52). The more violence it unleashed on the Muslims, the stronger the Muslim voice became. And today it is a political force to reckon with, while twenty years ago it was an insignificant element of the political game.

Conclusion: Paradise or home of suicide bombers?

Ethnic elections in Sri Lanka have played a key role in marginalizing the minorities. Political elites and leaders need to think of new strategies to win elections rather than riding anti-minorities, anti-Tamil or anti-peace platforms to win votes. The earlier the political elites give up ethnic outbidding on the minorities, the sooner Sri Lanka will face a decent future. The choice is in the hands of the Sri Lankan elite, particularly in the hands of the Sinhalese political leaders. Failure in the past to change their electoral strategies means today that Sri Lanka's current image in the international arena is that of a home to Tamil suicide bombers and uncompromising chauvinistic Sinhala nationalists. Not that of the paradise the British said it was in the XIXth century.

A.R.M. Imtiyaz' endnotes

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http://www.sangam.org/taraki/articles/2005/11_01_Elite_Mobilization_Symbolic_Politics_and_Presidential_Elections.php
- 12 Neil De Votta, Op.Cit
- 13 Tessa J. Bartholomeusz and Chandra R. de Silva, "Buddhist Fundamentalism and Identity in Sri Lanka," in *Buddhist Fundamentalism and Minority Identities in Sri Lanka*, (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998)
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- 15 Manifesto of Ranil Wickramasinghe
<http://www.srilankanelections.com/manifestos/RWEnglish.pdf>
- 16 Prime Minister launches his Presidential manifesto
http://www.mahindarajapaksa.com/PENews/oct1805_01.php
- 17 On December 26, 2004 violent tidal waves hit the shore of Sri Lanka's beautiful beaches, particularly cruelly affecting the war-torn NorthEast. The global community promised attractive financial compensation to rebuild affected regions and urged President Kumaratunga to negotiate with the LTTE to disburse the international aid to the LTTE controlled NorthEast region. To meet international pressure, the government of Sri Lanka sealed a pact with the LTTE in July 2005. The JVP and JHU went to court to ban the pact. Mrs. Kumaratunga's attempts ended in vain when the Supreme

-
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- 19 JVP- PM policy agreement
http://www.bbc.co.uk/sinhala/news/story/2005/09/050905_jvp_points.shtml
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- 24 Ibid.
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- 35 Mahavamsa, < <http://lakdiva.org/mahavamsa/chap025.html> >
- 36 Tessa J Bartholomeusz, 1999. "In Defense of Dharma: Just-War Ideology in Buddhist Sri Lanka," *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 6: pp. 1-16.
- 37 S.J. Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed?: Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992)
- 38 The Tamil Nadu sixth most populous State in the Indian Union and the second most industrialized State in India, home to 55 million Tamils who have links with the Sri Lankan Tamils.
- 39 In interview with a Buddhist monk who declined to identify his name. This monk was a faculty member of Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Colombo University, Sri Lanka. The interview was arranged on the phone on January 10, 2006.
- 40 Fear complex plays stronger role in shaping Sinhala-Buddhists political ideas, which deem Tamils as the major enemies of the Sinhala race. I was proved this ethno-psycho mentality when I interviewed the Sinhalese students, scholars, and ordinary workers and farmers in 2001 for my doctoral degree project. Many of the respondents said that the Tamils would get separate state soon if they were allowed ruling the federal

-
- administration in the Northeast. They fear that such a federal state eventually end the Sinhala-Buddhists domination in the island.
- 41 Many Sinhala-Buddhists consider Sri Lanka as a Buddhist country. Sinhala politicians know that if they get the support of bhikkhus, it will help them to enjoy the political power. That is why Sinhala politicians support certain temples. Either side cannot break the alliance between the politician who patronizes a temple and the bhikkhus in it easily.
- 42 Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers
<http://www.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/asiacpf/01/06/tamil.tigers.reut/index.html?section=cnn_latest>
- 43 LTTE peace secretariat
http://www.ltteps.org/mainpages/images//2005/12/Novmber_2005_pdf
- 44 The LTTE leaders suggested that they might settle for a Canadian-style federal setup that guarantees the Tamil area widespread autonomy. "There must be a political solution," the LTTE's second in commanding, Tamilchelvam, has said recently. "The name is immaterial. Federation, confederation, northeast council, autonomous region, we can accept any of these solutions as long as we are guaranteed our equal rights, our dignity and justice. We do not want a lifestyle decided by Buddhist monks in Colombo." (Source: www.Tamilnet.com)
- 45 Arend Lijphart, Op.Cit.
- 46 S.J Tambiah, *Buddhism Betrayed?: Religion, Politics, and Violence in Sri Lanka* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1992)
- 47 Ever since the inception of the militancy in the early 1980s, the LTTE has had two faces---as a ruthless and dreaded terrorist organization and as a well-motivated and well-trained conventional army, which has had many successes to its credit in its military operations against the Sri Lankan Armed Forces.
- 48 In September 2002, first round of peace talks in Thailand with the former UNP government, the LTTE dropped its demand for a separate state.
- 49 Quoted in DeVotta, Neil, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (California, Stanford University Press, 2004).
- 50 LTTE peace secretariat
http://www.ltteps.org/mainpages/images//2005/12/Novmber_2005_pdf
- 51 The LTTE leader V. Pirapakaran, forcefully expelled some 17,000 northern Jaffna Muslims in October 1990 and Muslims widely believe he is responsible for the massacre of over 300 Muslims, more than 120 of them in one ghastly incident at prayer time inside the Katankudy mosque in Batticaloa district in 1991.
- 52 A.R.M. Imtiyaz, *Expulsion of Jaffna Muslims: The Logic of Cultural Genocide*
<http://www.sangam.org/taraki/articles/2005/1215_Expulsion_of_Jaffna_Muslims_Logic_of_Cultural_Genocide.php>;
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