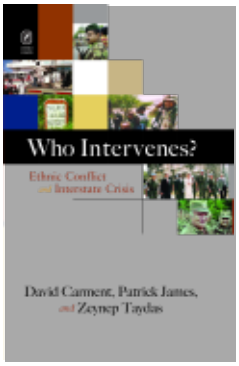
3. Disintegration of Paradise: The Indo-Sri Lankan Crisis



CHAPTER THREE

Disintegration of Paradise:
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> Quotas racially applied in the work place or on campus do not work. They rip societies apart; so does linguistic separatism or historical revisionism in pursuit of ethnic self-esteem. Scholars or politicians who promote such policies based on the romantic notion that ethnic groups should use state power to preserve their distinct identities should be sent to Sri Lanka to witness the fallacy of their theories (McGowan 1992).[1]

1. Introduction: The Disintegration of Paradise

The Indo-Sri Lanka crisis is characterized by a complex formation of issues, perceptions of adversaries, and decision-making tasks that emanate from internal as well as external sources. These sources indicate that deeply divided societies can influence decisions by outside actors to become involved in an internal conflict (Zartman 1992). As will become apparent, India's involvement in Sri Lanka's domestic protracted ethnic conflict had a double-edged nature. On the one hand, India's direct involvement consisted of acts of compellence, mediation, and physical intervention in an attempt to transform the highly centralized, unitary Sri Lankan state into a decentralized federation. On the other hand, indirect Indian involvement consisted of an increase in the flow of materials and weapons from India to Sri Lanka in support of the Tamil insurgency, along with the training of Tamil separatists on Indian soil.

Internal dimensions of the case reflect the impact of both the Tamil insurgency in the north and east of the island and the Sinhalese nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) insurgency in the south. Both conflicts can be characterized as hostile internal acts to the extent that they represented challenges to the unity of the Sri Lankan state. This internal dimension continued to play a significant role in influencing the relationship between the governments of India and Sri Lanka.[2]

This chapter, in an attempt to reveal patterns of Indian interest and involvement in Sri Lanka, examines the issues and events within the regional conflict. The primary focus is on the decision by India to send peacekeeping troops to Sri Lanka. In the second section of the chapter, the historical and political background of Sri Lanka's protracted ethnic conflict is scrutinized. The precrisis, crisis, and postcrisis periods are presented in the third and fourth sections. In the fifth section, implications of the conflict for the framework's propositions are assessed. The sixth and final section reviews the findings of this chapter.

2. Assessing the Ethnic Factor: A Regional Perspective

2.1 The View from Sri Lanka—Dominance or Diversity?

Sri Lanka's population of over 18 million consists of six major ethnic groups. Census data indicates that about 75 percent of Sri Lanka's population is Sinhalese, that is, Buddhists who speak Sinhala. They originally came to the island from India and mostly live in the southern, western, and central parts of Sri Lanka. The second-largest group is formed by Sri Lankan Tamils, or Tamils of Sri Lankan citizenship, who comprise approximately 12.2 percent of the population or more than 2.23 million.[3] (The population data are drawn from 1995 UN population estimates.) Sri Lankan Tamils are predominantly Hindu and speak Tamil. Sri Lankan Tamils traditionally have occupied the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka and they are basically split in two groups: Jaffna Tamils, mainly descendants of tribes that arrived on the island more than fifteen thousand years ago, and Indian Tamils, brought to the island by British tea planters during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They comprise 5 percent of the population. The remaining 7 percent of the population is made up of Tamil-speaking Muslims, Moors, Burghers, descendants of European colonists, and Veddahs. Some Muslims speak Sinhala and others Tamil due to the location of their homes. Muslims, located mostly in the eastern province, are mixed in with Sinhalese and Tamils. Other Muslims live around Colombo and the west coast (Shastri 1997).

Another important piece of demographic information that should be mentioned regarding Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict concerns India. In the southern part of India is the province of Tamil Nadu, in which more than 80 million Tamils live. This is significant because ethnic affinities have played a crucial role in Sri Lanka's ethnic problem (Taras and Ganguly 2002). According to Taras and Ganguly (2002), the relationship between Sinhalese and Tamils is

not only an example of peaceful coexistence but also traditional rivalry. Due to centralized colonial administration, for a long time the problematic issues between the two sides—political, religious, cultural, linguistic, or economic—were held in check by the British. However, when Sri Lanka became independent and the Sinhalese majority obtained political power, these issues came to the surface.

Political arrangements for ethnic groups and their degree of influence over the state and its decision makers are determined in part by historical experience (Horowitz 1985). Indian dominance in the political and social life of Sri Lanka played an important role in shaping the Sinhalese political order and Tamil reaction to it. India's relationship with Sri Lanka exhibits four significant characteristics.

One characteristic is the self-perception that the Sinhalese are a threatened people—they, not the Tamils of Sri Lanka, should be regarded as the minority. Surrounded by an overwhelming Hindu Tamil majority in the region—52 million including South India—the Sinhalese have, over time, developed a "reverse psychology" of superiority. Specifically, the Sinhalese claim lineage to the Aryans of northern India. In turn, this historical legacy is related to the idea that Sri Lanka is an island that had been conquered by the Buddha in order for the Buddhist religion to flourish (de Silva et al. 1988). Primacy of Buddhism on the island and commitment of political leadership to overcome threats to the Buddhist order are two historical perceptions deeply embedded in the collective subconscious of the Sinhalese people of Sri Lanka. Myths of Sinhalese cultural primacy have been bolstered by interpreters of ancient mythology that Buddhists have proprietary rights over the island.

Second, the Sinhalese have had a twenty-five-hundred-year history of political and religious affairs in which the sacred Sinhalese Buddhist texts describe the southern states of India as the main oppressors of the Sinhalese people (The Dipavamsa 1959). The identity of India as an external and threatening force is the most salient aspect of historical relations between India and Sri Lanka. This perception is reinforced by India's continuing status as the greatest power in South Asia.

Third, like India, the political system in Sri Lanka is elitist and personalized. The politics of Sri Lanka belong to a select few—members of either a "plantocracy" or English-educated political elite. In the early years of mass politics, transfer payment schemes and the state patronage system of the Sri Lankan government translated into the kind of participatory democracy that commonly is associated with welfare states. Decision making remained highly centralized and controlled by an elite group of Colombo-based politicians (Carment 1987, 1991). In other words, due to the fragile

nature of democracy, ethnic tensions could be manipulated by Western-educated elites in Sri Lanka.

Fourth, and finally, the Sri Lankan political system continues to exhibit aspects of institutional incompleteness. An illustration is the transformation of the Sri Lankan constitution over the past twenty years. These changes reinforced the powers of the president and the unitary political system while, more recently, attempts have been made to devolve power to provincial councils. The failure of devolution to take hold after the death of President Ranasinghe Premadasa in May 1993 and the subsequent election of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) meant that regional politics remained subservient to that of Colombo. In sum, the unitary nature of the state has two implications: First, politics is direct—leaders are selected on the basis of their willingness to protect the group and appeal to voters on that basis. Second, a unitary state implies a lack of flexibility in finding solutions related to autonomy.

Congruence among Sri Lankan elites with respect to the historical understanding of Indo-Sri Lanka relations cannot be interpreted as an absence of conflict among Sri Lanka's decision makers. Differences among Sri Lanka's elites consistently have focused on how to deal with the Tamil separatist movement, Indian involvement in the conflict, and relations with the chauvinist *sangha* (the influential Buddhist clergy).

These historical and social elements combine to create a centralized system based on identity politics that proved to be ill-prepared for the political mobilization of Sri Lanka's minority Tamils. Despite inheriting a legal and constitutional system that emphasized individual rights and liberties, democracy quickly became equated with quotas, applied both in the government and higher education (McGowan 1992; de Silva 1993). Interethnic elite interests converged initially during the 1920s, but that goal then had a simple and unifying character: to end colonization. Subsequent elite interests became fragmented along ethnic lines, especially after 1956, when ethnic nationalists swept into power on promises to restore Sinhalese preeminence.

2.2 The Origins of Sri Lanka's Protracted Ethnic Conflict

Figure 3.1 shows a time line for the protracted ethnic conflict, which can be traced to political mobilization of the Tamil minority in the early 1940s. At independence in 1948 the main issue regarding ethnic politics became the amount of power minorities would have in affecting decisions taken at the center. During the formative years of Sri Lanka's independence, Tamil political organization became subdivided into two basic groups: (1) leadership that represented the interests of the Sri Lankan Tamils, known as the Tamil

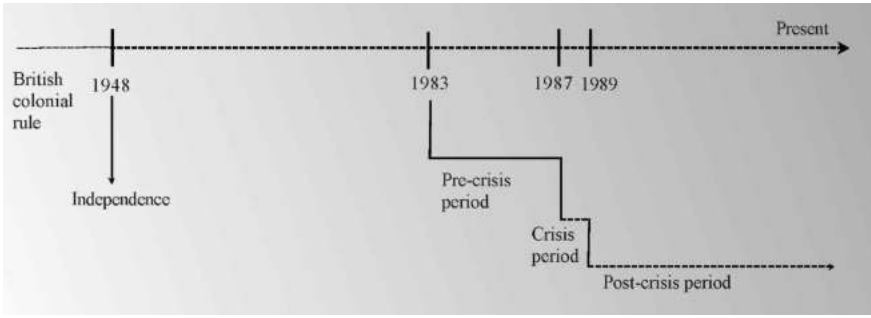

Figure 3.1 The Indo–Sri Lankan Conflict

Congress (which until 1948 had worked closely with the United National Party [UNP]) and (2) the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC), which represented the interests of Tamil plantation workers who, by 1946, formed over half of the Tamil population of the island. Together, the Tamils formed a large enough electorate to gain representation for their subgroups in the legislature.

Under the leadership of S. J. V. Chelvanayagam, in 1949 a breakaway group of Tamil Congress members formed the Ceylon Tamil State or Federal Party, with the aim of "creating an organization for the attainment of the freedom of the Tamil speaking people of Ceylon" (Kodikara 1982: 195). The Federal Party asserted its interest in four basic issues:

> 1. Establishment of one or more Tamil linguistic states operating as a federating unit or units enjoying wide autonomous and residuary powers within a federal state in Sri Lanka;
>
> 2. Restoration of the Tamil language to its rightful place enjoying absolute parity of status with Sinhala as an official language of Sri Lanka;
>
> 3. Conferment of full civil rights to all Tamil speaking people; and
>
> 4. Cessation of colonization of traditionally Tamil-speaking areas with Sinhalese people (Kodikara 1982, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993).

According to the Federal Party, the call for autonomy (which in 1949 had not become a demand for a separate state) represented a workable scheme because, apart from Indian Tamils concentrated in Kandy and a small percentage of others scattered throughout the island, the bulk of the Tamil

population inhabits the northern and eastern provinces.[4] The Federal Party held that the process of British colonization had, among other things, linked the Tamil community, both economically and politically, with the rest of the island (Kodikara 1993). The departure of the British from Sri Lanka signaled to the Federal Party that the Tamils could revert to the political system that existed prior to the arrival of the colonists, in which close links with the Tamils of India had been the norm.

Several acts of the national legislature had the perhaps unintended effect of causing enhanced Tamil solidarity. Most important was the Sinhala-only legislation in 1956—the official language act—which declared Sinhala as the only official language of Ceylon (or Sri Lanka).[5] In the 1970s the radical populist United Front (UF) won a two-thirds majority in parliament, and a 1972 proposal went further by including both language and religion: Sinhala would be considered the sole official language, with Buddhism accorded the "foremost" place in Sri Lanka. This proposal resulted in dissent from all of the federal-level Tamil representatives in the legislature. In that same year, the Federal Party, Tamil Congress, CWC, and two other smaller parties (the Elathamir Ottumai Munani and the All Ceylon Tamil Conference) joined together to create the Tamil United Front in response to perceived hostile legislation. An increase in Sinhalese colonists in Tamil-dominant agricultural areas exacerbated these tensions. In 1975, the leading Tamil organizations came together and formed the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) with the aim of obtaining a separate state.

Until the mid-1970s, the issue of Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka came out in the form of demonstrations and civil uprisings as a response to domination and assimilation efforts by the Sinhalese majority. However, after that time, "the nature of Sri Lankan Tamil nationalism acquired its present-day secessionist dimension" (Kearney 1985 in Taras and Ganguly 2002: 188). In other words, the demand for autonomy evolved into the issue of separation (Taras and Ganguly 2002). Not surprisingly, youth movements proliferated in the second half of the 1970s.

Quotas in university admissions also came along in the 1970s. Sharp discrimination against Tamil university applicants in 1977 substantially reduced the proportion of Tamils in many universities. (While the proportion of Tamils admitted to science-based disciplines reached 35 percent in 1970, it dropped to 19 percent by 1975 [de Silva 1979 in Shastri 1997: 148].) Student riots occurred in the same year. On-campus discrimination played a key role in the rapidly rising militancy of Tamil youth who, affected adversely by the new university admission policy, turned toward tactics that often included indiscriminate violence. University students eventually organized themselves

as guerrilla units, most notably, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), The Peoples Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization (TELO).[6]

Factors outside of the government's direct control contributed to the advancement of student militancy.[7] An often-overlooked factor from that era is the world sympathy evoked by riots, deaths, human rights violations, and a growing Tamil refugee problem from 1977 onward. The immediate effect of the violence took the form of terror created among Sri Lankan civilians (especially the Tamils) and a subsequent increase in support from South India for the separatist cause. Like their counterparts in Sri Lanka, South Indian Tamils also had undergone an ethnic resurgence in the 1950s. As will become apparent, their role in the Sri Lankan conflict is primary, and the Sri Lankan government recognized this with a constitutional amendment in 1983 that prohibited support for separation of any kind (Mohan 1985: 297).

3. The Precrisis Period: 25 July 1983 to 4 June 1987

3.1 Indian Intervention—Precrisis through Onset

Decreasing popular support and legitimacy led to increasing use of coercion by the UNP to sustain control of the country. While the government arrested an increasing number of Tamil insurgents, Tamil hostility increased enormously. The early 1980s, therefore, can be characterized as an era of increasing violence and hostility on both sides (Shastri 1997).

Faced with heightened tension and increased violence, the Indian government changed its policy in the same fashion toward Sri Lanka. Although India previously could be called "neutral" (due to its proclaimed policy of noninvolvement), after the early 1980s it became more interventionist in nature. India consistently called for deescalation of the conflict and peaceful resolution. Taras and Ganguly (2002: 191) summarize the Indian perspective, which had the problematic feature of including two conflicting interests: "preservation of Sri Lanka's territorial integrity, sovereignty and unity" and "accommodation of Sri Lankan Tamils' earlier demands for devolution of power and regional autonomy." In mid-1970, the UNP used violence in an effort to maintain control over the community. According to de Silva (in Shastri 1997: 155), despite attempts by the UNP government to represent the ethnic conflict as an internal affair, it became international anyway. The reason for that outcome is obvious;

due to heightened violence, Tamils in Sri Lanka came to believe that they could not handle the issue without outside assistance.

In July 1983, the Indian government chose to become an intermediary between the Sri Lankan Government (UNP) and the TULF. The Indian decision to intervene followed in the wake of postelection riots between Sinhalese and Tamils on 24 and 25 July 1983. At this time the demand for regional autonomy over separation came into play as a tactic by Sri Lanka's Tamil leadership.[8]

Subsequent transition of Tamil demands from regional autonomy to a separate state, along with the beginnings of Sri Lanka's foreign policy crisis on 25 July 1983, can be identified with the material and ideological support that the DMK (Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) government of Tamil Nadu provided to the separatists and the direct intervention of the Indian government in Sri Lanka's domestic affairs. India's leader, Indira Gandhi, recognized Tamil separatist demands as affecting India's own interests, specifically with regard to the great number of Tamils fleeing to India but also due to the influence that the ethnic conflict had on similar insurgencies in India.[9] The stated interest of India's leaders was to prevent Sri Lanka's internal strife from escalating to a degree that might lead to involvement of extraregional powers (Kodikara 1990, 1993; Taras and Ganguly 2002). At issue was India's concern that the Soviet Union and the United States would become involved. By attempting to isolate the Tamil ethnic issue, India reaffirmed its commitment to Indian Ocean Security as "security manager of South Asia."

3.2 Escalation and Counterinsurgency

During the 1983 riots, Sri Lanka's President Junius Jayewardene sought military assistance from the United States, Britain, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to meet the growing insurgency (V. P. Rao 1988). On 5 August 1983, in a statement designed to placate Sri Lankan concerns, Indira Gandhi addressed the Indian Parliament and asserted that India "does not pose any threat to Sri Lanka nor do we want to interfere in its internal affairs. We want the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka to be preserved" (Parliamentary Debates, Lok Sabha, 5 August 1983, quoted in V. P. Rao 1988: 421). Following Gandhi's speech, the Indian government asserted its regional preeminence by pronouncing the "Indira Doctrine." It said that

> India will neither intervene in the domestic affairs of any states in the region, unless requested to do so, nor tolerate such intervention by any outside power. If external assistance is needed to meet an internal crisis,

> states should look first within the region for help. (quoted in C.R.V.R. Rao 1985: 63)

In response to this announcement by the Indian government, Sri Lanka's Jayewardene warned that if Sri Lanka perceived a threat from India, it would turn to the United States, Britain, and others for military aid. Sri Lankan sources revealed that the president did in fact worry about an Indian invasion (Manor and Segal 1985; *Hindu*, 19 August 1983). Yet only several weeks later, Jayewardene agreed to prepare the groundwork for a settlement between the Sri Lankan government and the TULF to be negotiated through the good offices of the Indian government.

Jayewardene's change in strategy occurred because of the discouraging response that came from the Western powers to Sri Lanka's request for military assistance. The United Kingdom and the United States declined Sri Lanka's call for military assistance, and Jayewardene was turned down again by the United States after a visit there in 1984. However, former British Special Air Services (SAS) commandos, who worked for a security organization, called the Keenie Meenie Services, helped train the island's antiterrorist force. Although diplomatic relations with Israel had been severed in 1970, Mossad also assisted Sri Lanka's counterinsurgency training, and Pakistan responded with arms and military training for the Sri Lankan army (V. P. Rao 1988).

Sri Lanka's central concern at this time was Tamil militant activity in India—a fact that the Indian government officially denied until November 1986. Indira Gandhi's reluctance to discourage the Tamil militants had been a major irritant in Indo-Sri Lankan relations (*Globe and Mail,* 22 February 1988). Sri Lankan officials perceived Gandhi to be under pressure from the Indian Tamils. (In fact, India allowed the rebels to build up arsenals of arms in Tamil Nadu, run training camps, and ship military hardware across the Palk straits; retired Indian officers trained the militants in guerrilla warfare [V. P. Rao 1988].) Gandhi had an election coming up in 1985, and Congress preferred an electoral pact with the ruling AIADMK (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagan), which hoped to obtain political mileage from the Tamil issue to the point of demanding that the Indian government take direct military action against Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka made it clear that it would not tolerate direct foreign intervention, but India still saw the matter as its concern. Thus, as early as 1983, Sri Lanka's perceived options in dealing with its ethnic conflict became reduced substantially.

Efforts by the Sri Lankan government to control the separatist movement led to a heightening of tension between Sri Lanka and India. For example, in 1984 the Sri Lankan government introduced a surveillance zone to stop the

unauthorized movement of people between India and Sri Lanka. In that same year, Sri Lanka detained ten Indian fishing vessels for violating Sri Lankan fishing rights. In response the Indian government mobilized its powerful navy to convince Sri Lanka that detention of Indian citizens would not be worth the risk. The UNP's subsequent prohibition of fishing off the Mannar (northwest) region prompted the outflow of eleven thousand Tamil fishermen to Tamil Nadu (de Silva 1985, 1993).

Rajiv Gandhi succeeded his mother after her assassination in 1985. Gandhi moved swiftly to placate growing discontent among Sri Lanka's decision makers. Among the dissenters, Sri Lanka's then-prime minister, Ranasinghe Premadasa, insisted that if India removed its support, the militant struggle would collapse (*Asiaweek*, 23 November 1986). In response, the Indian government took decisive action to ensure the Sri Lankan government of its honest intentions. On 29 March 1985 the Indian coast guard intercepted a boat carrying guns and explosives to Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka (Kodikara 1987). The Indian government also applied pressure on the government of Tamil Nadu to remove Tamil militants from their training bases. With India taking the diplomatic initiative, two rounds of talks took place at Thimpu, Bhutan, in July and August 1985. The talks included the heads of major militant organizations (the LTTE, TELO, EROS, EPRLF), TULF, PLOTE, and the governments of India and Sri Lanka.

Like those before, the negotiations ended in failure. The talks became stalled, at least in part, because the Sri Lankan government—while advocating peaceful negotiations—had increased its attacks on the Tamil guerrillas. These military measures pushed moderate Tamils into militant organizations. Refusal by the Sri Lankan government to agree to the Tamil demand to merge the Northern and Eastern Provinces proved equally damaging. At that time a great difference existed between the position of Sri Lanka's leaders and a negotiated agreement with the Tamils (*Asiaweek,* 15 July 1986).

Jayewardene once again approached the United States to come to Sri Lanka's aid in solving the ethnic crisis. But the United States responded by informing him that it had cut the annual aid package to Sri Lanka in half, due partly to an effective Tamil lobby in Washington (*Hindu,* 6 June 1986). In voicing his unhappiness with the American response, Jayewardene said, "I am very happy that I have been abandoned. I do not trust a single power" (*South,* September 1987: 36).

On 8 November 1986, in a coordinated move with the Tamil Nadu government and police, the Indian government arrested known militants and their leaders and confiscated their arms and ammunition in a statewide crackdown (*Asiaweek*, 23 November 1986). This response, however, did little to

persuade the Sri Lankan government of India's neutrality on the Tamil issue. In fact, the Indian government released those arrested the same day (*Asiaweek,* 23 November 1986).

Also in November of 1986, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) met in Bangalore. The major objective of this meeting was to seek a modus vivendi between Tamil insistence on the merger of the Northern and Eastern Provinces and Sinhalese opposition to it. The so-called December 19 Proposals called for administrative linkages between the two provinces and devolution of power to them. Both sides agreed to the proposals. The perception of the Sri Lankan government, however, remained that it would continue to pursue a military solution against the militants while using the proposals as a negotiating position for further talks.

By the beginning of 1987 the dominant Tamil rebel group, the LTTE, began carrying out a plan to take over civil administration in the north, which it already had under its military control. At the same time, the Sri Lankan government imposed a blockade on supplies of fuel and other essential commodities to the Jaffna peninsula while simultaneously picking up military action in the north and east (*Hindu,* 3, 10, 11 February 1987).

Within weeks of the Sri Lankan effort to eliminate the Tamil rebels, the government of India warned the Sri Lankan government against taking further military action against the insurgents. In a message delivered to Jayewardene on 10 February 1987, Gandhi warned that India had suspended its good offices and demanded that Colombo (*a*) lift the economic blockade of Jaffna and (*b*) affirm its commitment to the December 19 proposals. "If these steps were not taken and the military option was continued," Gandhi concluded, the fighting "will be prolonged" and the "situation will escalate" (*Hindu,* 12 February 1987: A1). Jayewardene reacted immediately to this threat. He issued two warnings to the LTTE, suggesting that (*a*) hostilities should cease in the north and the east and (*b*) the lifting of the embargo would be conditional upon observance of a ten-day cease-fire. When the LTTE violated the cease-fire, the Sri Lankan army launched a full-scale military campaign involving over three thousand troops in a land, air, and sea assault on the Jaffna peninsula. At the end of April 1987 the battle for Jaffna had begun. By May, despite the failure to round up the leaders of the LTTE, the Sri Lankan army enjoyed unprecedented success against the Tigers (Pfaffenberger 1988).

3.3 From Precrisis to Crisis

Since the beginning of 1987, intense fighting between Tamil guerrillas and Sri Lankan forces had produced high civilian causalities, mostly from the Tamil

side. Some estimates placed the civilian death toll at the end of May 1987 as high as five hundred, prompting Gandhi once again to issue a warning to Jayewardene: "The time to desist from military occupation of Jaffna is now. Later may be too late" (*Hindu*, 29 May 1987: A1). The government of India condemned the government of Sri Lanka's actions, warning that it would not remain an indifferent spectator to the plight of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. Tamil militants inflamed the situation by slaughtering twenty-nine Buddhist monks on their way to an ordination ceremony. Indian newspaper editorials called for an armed invasion of Sri Lanka (Pfaffenberger 1988). During this course of events, the Indian government announced its intention to send relief supplies to the people of Jaffna peninsula. On 4 June 1987, five Indian Air Force supply planes, escorted by Mirage 2000 fighter jets, entered Sri Lanka's airspace and dropped relief supplies in and around Jaffna. The government of Sri Lanka condemned the Indian airdrop, known as Operation Eagle, as an unwarranted assault on Sri Lankan sovereignty and territorial integrity. Relations between Sri Lanka and India had reached the crisis stage.

The decision to seek a negotiated settlement came only after India threatened invasion. It is significant that despite full awareness of India's warnings, Jayewardene pursued a choice that he knew most likely would end in military hostilities. The president acted, at least in part, in response to time constraints—the internal protracted conflict in his view required immediate attention. To do nothing other than submit to Tamil separatist demands would have been, in Jayerwardene's view as well as those of others (particularly Premadasa), suicidal.

Whether the president's choice to seek a military solution against the Tamils was influenced more by pressure from decision makers within his cabinet or by time constraints is a moot point. Significant, however, is that he pursued a military stance vigorously despite repeated warnings from the Indian government and the overwhelming military superiority that backed those threats. Inflexible decision making, the belief in extraregional intervention, and an unwillingness to heed Indian threats suggest a decision-making process greatly influenced and constrained by domestic conflict, an overwhelming desire to resolve the conflict by force, and a belief system that limited, from the outset, the possibility of considering a full range of options.

4. The Crisis Period: 4 June 1987 to 27 July 1989

4.1 Sri Lanka Capitulates to Indian Demands

Within hours of hearing about the airdrop, Jayewardene launched a full-scale

diplomatic protest that officially condemned the Indian action. Surprisingly, Colombo neither called for a UN Security Council meeting nor boycotted the SAARC meeting held in July of that year. Instead, Jayewardene, who believed that he had limited options after failing to get Western help against India, signed an accord with Gandhi in Colombo on 29 July 1987. The accord embodied the principles of the December 19 Proposals.[10] The Tamil militants, specifically the LTTE, did not sign the accord but agreed to a cease-fire (Taras and Ganguly 2002).

As when previously faced with Indian threats, Sri Lanka perceived few options. In a 24 September 1987 meeting in Sri Lanka with representatives of the Canadian government, prior to his departure to the Commonwealth Countries Head of Government Meeting (CCHOGM) in Vancouver, President Jayewardene confirmed this view. He pointed out that the terrorists never would have got as far as they did without Indian support. He also said that India's "quasi-invasion" in early June remained totally unjustified—a deep shock that became instrumental to his willingness to sign the accord in the form that he did. It occurred to Jayewardene that India would be coming in and "it was better they come in with him than against him."[11]

The Indo-Sri Lankan Accord represented a major disappointment for both Sri Lankan Tamils and Sinhalese. Despite the fact that the ultimate emphasis was on the territorial integrity of Sri Lanka, the accord stopped short of guaranteeing devolution of authority and the rights sought by the Tamils. Some high-ranking Sinhalese officials also had very deep reservations about the accord, and that remained true throughout the process of negotiation (Taras and Ganguly 2002).

The government of Sri Lanka agreed to the departure of its security forces from the north and east, to solve the Tamil problem through decentralization, and to a referendum on the issue of devolution in the near future (de Silva 1993). For its part, India would provide a sixteen-thousand- to nineteen-thousand-man Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to whom the Tamil rebels would turn over their weapons. The IPKF also would be responsible for monitoring the cease-fire.

Serious discontent with the accord produced an attempt on Jayewardene's life on 18 August 1987 within the grounds of Sri Lanka's parliament. Speculation at the time lay with the Sinhalese left, possibly the JVP. The attack seemed to galvanize the president's decision making; Jayewardene believed he had little alternative to forging ahead in collaboration with India to end the conflict. Retreat now became unthinkable.

Given the fact that the India had taken over from the Sri Lankan army in the north and east, New Delhi had a surprisingly optimistic view of recent events. For India, unlike Sri Lanka, no time pressure existed to complete the

accord. The government of India expected a settlement with the LTTE within six weeks. During that period the IPKF would have departed.

From the Sri Lankan perspective, Indian support for the LTTE, overt or covert, looked like affirmation of the only group capable of forcing Colombo into political compromises. Although the government of India did not support Tamil Eelam (i.e., independence), it could not easily endure assaults on the Sri Lankan Tamil community, which ultimately would compromise its legitimacy within South India. Sri Lanka viewed Indian boldness as guarantor of peace as a step beyond good offices. The Indian decision to take on the LTTE derived from the belief that (*a*) the Indian Army could meet any LTTE challenges and (*b*) the LTTE did not have widespread support among the Eastern Province Tamils. The Indian government believed at this time that the Sri Lankan Tamil community still welcomed the IPKF.

By this point in the crisis it had become clear to Jayewardene that the agenda-setting power and creation of a time frame for IPKF withdrawal stood beyond the reach of the Sri Lankan government. Sri Lankan decision making at this time must be considered in light of India's two main foreign policy objectives—reasserting its role as South Asia's security manager and preventing the export of Tamil secession. Until these two objectives had been achieved, Sri Lanka would remain a hostage to Indian political interests.

Lack of cohesive leadership within the Sri Lankan government was emphasized again by its conspicuous absence from negotiations between the Tigers and the IPKF. This absence provoked indignation among Sinhalese nationalists in Jayewardene's cabinet and fueled the fires of widespread Sinhalese discontent against India.

Time pressure on the Sri Lankan government to resolve the domestic crisis became equally significant. The government had to pass the legislation through parliament, provide a Supreme Court ruling on the constitutionality of the Provincial Councils Bill, and hold Provincial Council elections—and all before 31 January 1987. The IPKF was to have withdrawn before this time. Jayewardene's highly personalized decision making, tempered by the assault on his life, cabinet defections, and Sinhalese opposition to the accord, led him to believe that he had to find a political solution because of the Indian government's stated intention of IPKF withdrawal (Samarasinghe and Liyanage 1993).

By late September 1987, India's attitude toward the LTTE had changed only slightly, while that of Sri Lanka showed strains under pressure from Sinhalese extremists. Indian perceptions tended to play down the growing number of clashes between the IPKF and the LTTE. The Indian government cited the psychological difficulties of the LTTE that would stand in the way

of converting it to a peacetime role. The Sri Lankan government, on the other hand, found itself increasingly isolated from the Sinhalese people. When the UNP managed to get the Provincial Councils bill through Parliament, a second bomb ripped through a Colombo market, killing thirty-two people, including Gamini Jayasuriya, a member of Parliament who had left the government rather than vote for the accord.

By the beginning of November 1987, the LTTE brought civil administration to a standstill in the northern and eastern provinces by killing one hundred or more members of rival groups. In contrast, the IPKF gave the appearance of being in complete disarray; the Indian government denied allegations of strengthening its peacekeeping contingent while maintaining complete "neutrality."

It should be noted that the accord, as designed, represented an agreement between the governments of Sri Lanka and India. The LTTE, on whose agreement the peaceful transfer to the Provincial Councils hinged, did not sign the agreement. Thus a crucial flaw in the accord became obvious: It depended on a group that did not participate in the peace talks (de Silva 1993). The accord provided only a partial solution to the inherent ethnic problem (Shastri 1997). The IPKF could not succeed in disarming the LTTE and eventually had to fight it.

Both Jayewardene and Gandhi realized that since the LTTE refused to lay down their arms and negotiate, they would have to be eliminated. After obtaining from the Indian government an agreement that its forces would depart quickly after removing the threat of the Tigers, Jayewardene agreed to an increase in the number of IPKF forces on Sri Lankan soil. In a joint press conference held on 9 October 1987, India's defense minister and Jayewardene asserted that "the days of gentle persuasion were over." The amnesty would be lifted from the LTTE, and the IPKF would be increased to twenty thousand troops.

By December 1987 the IPKF became involved in major search and destroy operations in Batticaloa and Mulavattu in northeast Sri Lanka. The IPKF, however, remained incapable of removing the Tigers from Jaffna peninsula and had become involved in a stagnating military operation, at the cost of U.S. $100 million and five hundred dead soldiers (Taras and Ganguly 2002).

4.2 Loss of Autonomy and Internal Cleavage

By this point in the crisis it had become clear to Jayewardene that the agenda-setting power and creation of a time frame for IPKF withdrawal remained beyond the reach of the Sri Lankan government. Sri Lankan decision making

at this time must be considered in light of India's two main foreign policy objectives: reasserting its role as South Asia's security manager and preventing the export of Tamil secession. Until these two objectives had been achieved, Sri Lanka would remain a hostage to Indian political interests. While the Sri Lankan government acquiesced to Indian demands, both opposition parties, the SLFP and Sri Lankan Freedom Party, and, more importantly, the JVP, had taken up opposition to the accord and Indian "occupation." This transformation and revival of the JVP invoked a steady increase of anarchy and terrorism in the south and the spectre of a government seemingly helpless to prevent it. As Bruce Matthews from Nova Scotia has pointed out, the JVP, despite its small size (ten thousand active members), determined the political agenda for 1988. All of the universities and most of the schools, many factories, and even Colombo itself (on 12 September) had been shut down by the terrorist activities of the JVP. These attacks represented a major blow to Sri Lankan national security and marked a dangerous phase in the southern campaign to topple the government. Furthermore, at this time the JVP, the SLFP, and the Buddhist monastic order attempted to undermine the possible benefits of the accord and claim it was the source of all Sri Lanka's problems. Both argued that the presence of the Indian army on Sri Lankan soil, along with the perceived fusion of the provinces, constituted the end of the unitary state.

Prolonged Indian presence in Sri Lanka therefore not only conditioned the response patterns of the Sri Lankan government and the JVP, but also contributed to the increasing intensity of hostile internal acts (Samarasinghe and Liyanage 1993). JVP violence influenced not only the perceptions of Sri Lanka's decision makers toward India as the hostile aggressor, but also the gravity of the crisis situation. The unity and fabric of Sri Lankan society, it would seem, faced destruction from within by a force that identified as its main oppressor the Indian government.

In light of these developments the Indo-Sri Lankan accord cannot be viewed as successful in bringing peaceful resolution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Like Rupesinghe (1989), over a decade earlier Taras and Ganguly (2002: 201 and 1988) had observed that "it brought about an intensification and transformation of the conflict; the conflict now was not only between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan/Indian forces but also within the Sinhalese community between the JVP and the government." In the early 1990s, the conflict between Sri Lankan Tamils and Muslims in the eastern part of Sri Lanka became part of an already very complex conflict structure. Due to this complexity, regional powers proved incapable of solving the protracted conflict (Taras and Ganguly 2002).

For its part, the Indian government, through various tactics, had succeeded

in marginalizing Sri Lankan participation in the north and east and had solidified its military position by doing so. The rise to power of President Ranasinghe Premadasa signaled an escalation in verbal hostilities between Sri Lanka and India.[12] For example, at the 10 January 1989 installation ceremony of the president at the nation's most sacred Buddhist shrine, the Temple of the Tooth (in the former Royal Capital of Kandy surrounded by Buddhist monks), Premadasa announced that his priority would be to resolve Sri Lanka's conflicts. He asked the JVP to rejoin the political process. On relations with India he sounded the following nationalist note: "Whatever the cost, I will not surrender an inch of Sri Lankan territory. Whatever the cost I will not surrender a shred of our sovereignty. We should not and will not create situations that provoke or invite intervention" (*South,* February 1989: 12).

4.3 Renewed Tensions between India and Sri Lanka

Right after his election, President Premadasa announced his intention to ask the Indian government to withdraw "as far as possible" the entire IPKF (now forty-five thousand) from Sri Lanka by 29 July 1989. The president said that "[a]fter July 29, the IPKF has no authority whatsoever over even one inch of my land" (*South,* February 1989: 12). Significantly, he made the decision without the benefit of cabinet consultation, its rhetoric shaped in order to appease the JVP's demand for IPKF withdrawal and thereby refurbish his nationalist declarations.

Risks associated with this strategy were apparent to Premadasa. A refusal of the Indians to leave within a reasonable time limit would reveal the hollowness of the president's power. Overhasty compliance would thrust the president and the Sri Lankan army on the tender mercies of Tamil and Sinhalese insurgents. Naturally, the government of India became incensed by Premadasa's unilateral decision and argued that it violated the bilateral agreement enshrined in the original accord. For Gandhi the stakes suddenly became higher as well. Giving into Premadasa's unilateral demand would be an embarrassment he could ill afford in an election year. On 7 July 1989 Premadasa reimposed a state of emergency across the nation. The previous order had been lifted in January after being in operation for six years. After two years of being confined to barracks, the Sri Lankan army went back on patrol.

4.4 Postcrisis—27 July 1989 to the Present

On 27 July the JVP launched a campaign of protest directed against the failure of the IPKF to comply with Premadasa's order to leave the country by 29

July 1989. On the diplomatic front, Premadasa sent clear signals to India. On 15 July 1989, Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Wijeratne announced a "misunderstanding" between Sri Lanka and India on the withdrawal issue. Wijeratne said that Premadasa would be flexible on the deadline if India agreed on a phased pullout and gave some assurance on dates, recognized Premadasa as commander in chief, and announced a cessation of hostilities with the LTTE. The Indian government responded by rejecting Premadasa's latter two conditions and responded in turn that the IPKF would not withdraw until the devolution package was in place. In response, Premadasa dropped the second demand, retained the third, and added that India should announce a token withdrawal of troops immediately.

For Premadasa, linking the IPKF withdrawal and granting of greater devolution to the provincial governments did not stand out as the key issue. From his previous statements on devolution, it is clear Premadasa believed that as a sovereign nation, Sri Lanka must not be told how to conduct its parliamentary affairs. In contrast to Premadasa's position, the government of India held that if a devolution package could be devised, then an IPKF withdrawal could take place.

When the cabinet and parliament talks ended on 11 August the president advised his personal envoy, Bradman Weekaroon, to pursue talks in Delhi. They agreed on a timetable and hoped to complete the removal by February 1990 at a rate of fifteen hundred to sixteen hundred personnel per week. The two governments, however, could not agree on withdrawal and implementation of devolution.

After high-level talks in September 1989, an agreement between India and Sri Lanka provided for an observer group consisting of the Sri Lankan army commander and the Indian commander of IPKF to report on violations of the cease-fire and report consequential action. The agreement furthermore specified that there would be a phased handover from the IPKF to Sri Lankan forces in the north and east supervised by Provincial Councils, the government of Sri Lanka, and the government of India.

By the beginning of 1990, the political situation in Sri Lanka stood on shaky ground. The antiaccord sentiment among the Sinhalese opposition remained strong, and India's frequent miscalculations continued to bedevil its military operations in the north and east. Premadasa remained suspicious of Indian intentions. JVP opposition in the south was effectively quelled by February 1990—but not without a cost. Although beginning a phased pullout, Indian troops remained entrenched in the north. Over the next thirteen months of talks in Colombo, Premadasa made significant concessions to the Tigers.

In June 1990, four months after the Indian troops completed their withdrawal, civil war broke out again in the north, and the councils designed to give autonomous government to the Tamils were abolished. By 1991, India now had moved formally out of the picture. India suffered at least one serious side effect from the conflict; Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated on 21 May 1991. Opposition leaders, dedicated to complete Indian withdrawal from the conflict, succeeded him.

Throughout 1991 and 1992 a multiparty parliamentary committee began to consider ways to offer Tamils alternatives to supporting the Tigers. A plan was devised with the proviso that the Northern and Eastern Provinces would not merge. More power would be devolved to the north and the east to protect minority Muslims living in the region. The plan was contingent on Tamil agreement to abandon merging the north and the east. The agreement generated significant hope among the participants for a peaceful solution to the conflict.

President Premadasa's assassination on 1 May 1993, possibly by Tamil Tigers, came as a significant blow to the various initiatives in progress. In less than a two-week period, assassins had erased the country's president and the only other man to challenge him, opposition leader Lalith Athulathmudali. Assassinated on 23 May 1993, Ahulathmudali, a former UNP member, had led a failed impeachment in August 1991 against his rival, accusing the president of abuse of power. He then formed the Democratic United National Front and, under Sri Lanka's council system, could have had power equal to that of the president (*Asiaweek,* 12 May 1993).

In November 1993, LTTE forces seized the government military base close to Jaffna, and only after several days of intense fighting could government forces manage to recover it. Indeed, from 1990 onward, the LTTE gradually increased its power in most of the Jaffna Peninsula, and in 1995 the LTTE seemed to govern Jaffna as a de facto state.

Presidential elections were held in August 1994 and resulted in a coalition of SLFP-led parties coming to power under the leadership of Chandrika Kumaratunga. Later she also won the presidency with 62.3 percent of the vote and committed herself to finding a solution for the problem. In 1995 Kumaratunga promised to devolve some power to the provincial level, and the LTTE agreed to a cease fire. The LTTE, however, insisted on the idea of a separate Tamil state, so the agreement for a cease-fire broke, and clashes between the LTTE and Sri Lankan military started again (Shastri 1997).

Sri Lanka's domestic protracted conflict was sustained by two reinforcing factors. The government was in disarray and leaderless and the Indian government clearly remained unwilling to mediate the conflict. Without either

mediation or concerted international effort—and with the LTTE's stubbornness—little hope existed that Sri Lanka's conflict would be resolved anytime soon (de Silva and Samarasinghe 1993). According to a MAR Project assessment, the LTTE committed to its military campaign over the long term. At the end of 1995, it carried out assaults against military targets and moderate Tamil leaders who favored the president's devolution plan. The Tigers were well equipped, highly disciplined, and determined, so it seemed unlikely that the Tamil separatist campaign would disappear. Low-level violence remained likely, as the Tigers regrouped to continue their struggle (http://www/cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/data/sriindtchro.htm). Unfortunately, it seemed as if terrorism and fighting would continue to be the main characteristics of Sri Lankan politics in the near future.

Talks between the LTTE and the government resumed in January 1995, with a cease-fire declared after a series of talks. Due to differences of opinions and agendas between the president and the LTTE's leader, Velleupillai Prabhakaran, talks did not produce a mutually acceptable solution. The peace talks stalled in April 1995 and fighting resumed when the LTTE unilaterally abrogated the cease-fire by launching an attack against the Sri Lankan army.

In August 1995, as a concrete step toward peace, the government of Sri Lanka proposed a plan for devolution of power. DeVotta (2002) argues that Kumaratunga had for a long time seen the 1978 constitution as a major impediment to solving the ethnic problem since it rendered any structural change impossible. Although she sent reform proposals to parliament about a new constitutional scheme and new electoral laws, Kumaratunga could not get the response she wanted. The idea behind the proposals was that such change eventually would provide the two-thirds majority needed to enact constitutional changes and pass devolutionary measures. However, due to opposition from extremist Sinhalese politicians and Buddhist clergy—the Tamil Tigers in particular rejected the proposals as being inadequate—she failed to put together the needed two-thirds majority in parliament. The president abandoned constitutional reform proposals and called for new elections (Shastri 2002).

In December 1995, government forces regained control of Jaffna and cleared the peninsula of LTTE fighters. This was the first time for a long time that government forces had claimed control over this area (de Silva 1997). Eventually the LTTE had to withdraw from the city of Jaffna and move to the south. In July 1996 they launched an attack on a Colombo commuter train, which resulted in seventy deaths and significant material damage.

The LTTE continued its activities and organized suicide bombings—for example, a January 1998 assault on Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist temple that

killed thirteen people. In February 2000, the Norwegian government offered to mediate in the peace talks between Kumaratunga's government and the LTTE but that had no discernible impact.

Held in October 2000, the election generated more violence than ever. The People's Alliance (PA) gained 107 seats to the UNP's 89 and two extremist Sinhalese parties, five minority parties, and independent groups captured a total of 29 seats (DeVotta 2002). Since at least 113 seats are necessary for any party to operate as majority in the Parliament, the PA established an alliance with a small minority party, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC). Nevertheless, due to failures in the peace talks and an inability to solve economic problems, the PA lost its credibility, and December 2001 elections produced a victory for the United National Party (UNP) (Shastri 2002). When the president realized that the UNP could not carry a "no confidence" motion to save her minority government from defeat in July 2001, Kumaratunga suspended parliament for two months. This event also contributed to the loss of confidence on her side. Soon after the suspension, the LTTE's attack on the country's only airport and its adjacent air force base destroyed thirteen military and civilian aircraft (DeVotta 2002).

Led by Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, the new cabinet responded favorably to a unilateral cease-fire declared by the Tigers. On 22 February 2002, with the sponsorship of Norway, both sides signed a permanent cease-fire agreement with the hope of ending the destructive ethnic conflict. A couple of months later the main highways linking the Jaffna peninsula with the rest of Sri Lanka reopened after twelve years.

In September 2002 the first round of talks took place in Thailand, and the Sri Lankan government decided to lift the ban on participation by the Tamil Tigers. Both the government and the Tamil Tigers expressed their optimism and hope for a solution to the conflict. The Tigers dropped their demand for a separate state and opted for regional autonomy within a democratic Sri Lanka. In December 2002, the two sides came to an agreement on the issue of power sharing, and the Tamils committed themselves to autonomy in a federal system within an undivided Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan government expressed its willingness to give a substantial measure of autonomy to the Tamils in the north and east as long as Sri Lanka remains united as a federal state.

Peace talks, however, stalled in 2003. In July 2004, the first suicide bombing since 2001 took place in Colombo. At the time of this writing, Sri Lanka is one of the countries worst hit by the tsunami in December 2004, with over 45,000 dead, 750,000 displaced, and thousands missing. According to the Indo-Asian News service, on 1 January, President Kamaratunga stated her

willingness to shake hands with the Tamil Tigers and thanked India for the help provided in the wake of the tsunami disaster. Despite these recent positive signs in the wake of the natural disaster and some degree of ongoing optimism in the international community, the failure of all past attempts toward a peaceful solution makes it very hard to foresee Sri Lanka's future.

5. Analysis and Propositions

Three stages of the Indo-Sri Lankan crisis relate directly to the stages within the framework. At stage 1, both states exhibited apprehensiveness in formulating foreign policies that would lead to confrontation. Judging from the evidence, this was primarily a result of their ethnically diverse characteristics. Less apparent, especially for Sri Lanka, is the constraining role that institutions were assumed to play in inhibiting ethnically based foreign policies. Even prior to crisis onset, Sinhalese hypernationalism undermined institutional constraints.

Consistent outbidding among Sinhalese politicians occurred at stage 2, whose efforts to build domestic support in light of the presumed threat from India and the Tamils of Sri Lanka led to a kind of belligerence that belies Sri Lanka's small-state status. This is evident in the kinds of speeches given by Sri Lankan leaders, but more concretely, the consistent refusal of Sri Lankan leaders to participate in regional attempts at conflict resolution and their escalation of the conflict in 1987 when the Sri Lankan army was dispatched to the north and began its campaign of terror against Tamil civilians. These last two actions ultimately resulted in a spiraling of tensions between the two states and stage 3 interactions.

At stage 3, neither state was predisposed to using force against the other, this being true especially for India, which easily could have taken formal control of Sri Lanka. Perhaps, facing fewer domestic constraints, it might have done so. As a result, India chose an alternative and ultimately less successful strategy to protect Tamil civilians living in Sri Lanka and to prevent the conflict from spilling over into South India. In sum, the linkages between the various stages of the framework appear to apply to this case with two exceptions. First, it is difficult to determine, from the evidence provided, the exact role that institutions played in foreign policy formation and, second, it is not yet clear if, in fact, high-constraint states are indeed less belligerent. More exactly, India found covert ways of achieving its objectives. This may be true of democratic states in general.

The two-level game perspective finds support when attention is given to

India's own ethnic politics—an important but sometimes neglected aspect of the Sri Lankan conflict. India is an ethnically diverse society that has proved relatively successful in managing ethnic tensions. Political decisions in India rarely have been made without allowing for their differential impact on respective ethnic groups. India's inherited parliamentary structure initially might have seemed unsuitable to such an ethnically diverse society. Preindependence mechanisms had been developed for separating Hindu/Muslims, upper/lower castes, and ethnic minorities; the colonial period itself is a critical factor in explaining the sensitivity of Indian elites to ethnic group demands. For example, the British gave official preference to the Bengali language and Urdu in the north, provided separate concessions to Sikhs and Muslims, and patronized the non-Brahmin movement (Brass 1990).

After independence the Indian government adopted Hindi in an attempt to displace Urdu. The government also adopted pluralist policies in relation to major language and cultural movements. It recognized most of the large language groups, among whom major mobilizations had developed for creation of separate linguistic states (Kohli 1990). The weak status of Hindi in the early years of independence, along with concern over separatist movements among linguistic groups, provided the basis for linguistic reorganization of states. Simultaneously, the Congress Party took measures to insure that linguistic reordering carried out in the mid-1950s would not legitimize separatist demands. Nor would the government tolerate regional demands based upon religious differences (Brecher 1959; Nayar 1966).

Although the Congress government met with considerable success in confronting language issues through linguistic federalism, more recent governments have been less successful in managing the political demands of non-Hindu and tribal minority groups (Nayar 1966; Weiner 1987; Brass 1991). Since the breakup of a unified Congress Party in 1967, India's significant political transformations include a decline in order and authority, erosion of vertical patterns of fealty, a lost capacity to influence the political behavior of communal political parties, the increasing use of force in internal and external affairs, and a disturbing tendency toward patronage democracy as the long-term pattern of conflict management (Kohli 1990; Chandra 2004).

During the period of rapid growth in Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka, the Indian political process experienced a parallel political transformation. The Indian political landscape changed from one dedicated to the principles of unity, order, and secularism—a model of a dominant, strongly centralized, and somewhat autonomous state—to a state dependent on the mobilization of ethnic groups for support at the regional level. India's elites increasingly

became constrained by a diverse and clamoring multiethnic population. How India's policy toward its ethnic groups led to a crisis with Sri Lanka is explained by three factors.

First, initial Indian involvement stemmed from the government of Sri Lanka's decision not to extend citizenship to Indian Tamil plantation workers. The government contended that despite their long residence, these workers remained affiliated with their country of origin. By 1964 an estimated 975,000 "stateless" persons resided in the country. Agreements in 1964 and 1974 between the two governments led to the return of many, but not all, of the Tamils to India. The agreement had the net effect of establishing a precedent for future relations with Sri Lanka on the Tamil issue.

The second factor was the delicate political balance between the regional government of Tamil Nadu and the national government of the Congress Party. Since the 1950s, the Congress Party had never been in a position to win the state of Tamil Nadu on its own in an election. The two major Tamil Nadu parties, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), looked to Congress for support. In turn, the Congress Party depended equally on them to consolidate its own position at the state level. Given traditional Tamil Nadu sympathies for the Sri Lankan Tamils, the issue has been important to Congress. For example, Indira Gandhi's astute political maneuvering through the 1970s and early 1980s found her forging alliances first with the DMK and then the AIADMK. From 1980 until her death, Gandhi continued to support the AIADMK and its leader, M. G. Ramachandran, because of his ability to contain the more militant brand of Tamil nationalism espoused by the DMK.

To remain alive in South Indian politics, the Congress Party often found itself being tested on its foreign policy toward Sri Lanka. The conflict in Sri Lanka provided significant political mileage not only for leaders of the AIADMK and the DMK but for Congress as well. For its part, the AIADMK called for active mediation in the Sri Lankan conflict, while the DMK pursued a more hard-line approach. It demanded that the Sri Lankan government grant full autonomy to the Tamils (Sivarajah 1990). Both the AIADMK and the DMK called for some form of Indian intervention, UN mediation, and self-determination for Sri Lankan Tamils. The more moderate AIADMK had to play the ethnic game in order to prevent the DMK from capitalizing on its inaction. For example, Ramachandran pressured the Indian government to issue Indian passports to some of the rebel leaders to facilitate their movement within India and the global community (Khory 1992).

The third factor has been informal linkages between Tamils across the Palk Straits, including economic and military support. The most dramatic exam-

ple was establishment of rebel training camps in the Tamil Nadu state in South India. Indian former servicemen and members of India's foreign Intelligence Agency frequently provided training (Research and Analysis Wing–RAW) (Khory 1992).

Collectively, these factors amounted to increasing Indian involvement in Sri Lankan domestic affairs. The Indian government perpetuated a public image as an active mediator concerned with finding an agreement acceptable to parties on all sides. Less apparent in the preceding analysis is the complex domestic political game that Congress has been forced to play in order to ensure political longevity and maintain regional preeminence in South India (Taras and Ganguly 2002). Until recently, national leaders have managed the pressures of multiethnic constituencies through an overburdened federal political structure. In that context, South India always played an important role in Indian politics. It is well understood that long-term support from Tamil Nadu, a linguistically defined state, has been crucial to the political longevity of Congress. Thus, at one level, the structure of India's political system would appear to be at odds with a foreign policy based on ethnicity. Raising the salience of ethnicity as a component of its foreign policy could have repercussions for relations with India's other neighbors, most notably Pakistan. The salience of several additional and compounding factors, however, made such policies imperative.

India is a parliamentary democracy and not without success in maintaining appropriate constraints on elected officials (Brass 1990; Kohli 1990). More precisely, India's institutions are designed to prevent any one ethnic group from achieving dominance, although persistence of the caste system and emergence of the Bharata Janata Party are notable exceptions.[13] In principle, the federation scatters power territorially. It decentralizes and allows for autonomy, assigning to different groups the right to decide on domestic issues of concern to them. The central idea behind this approach is to create conditions necessary for permanent conflict resolution between ethnic groups.

Faced with potential losses on the electoral front, India's decision makers inferred that involvement would mean lower net costs. India provided support in two ways, through tacit sponsorship of Tamil insurgents and later direct intervention—all of the time portraying itself as an active and impartial mediator in the conflict. Colombo, as described earlier, lifted the embargo and ceased military operations against the rebels. At the time, political opinion in India insisted that Gandhi must have given the Sri Lankan president the option of accepting the Indian ultimatum or facing an armed Indian invasion. When Gandhi sent IPKF troops to Jaffna in July 1987, Sri Lanka's

President Jayewardene launched a full-scale diplomatic protest that officially condemned the Indian action. Then, however, having become aware of the fact that he had limited options, Jayewardene signed the accord with Gandhi in Colombo on 29 July 1987. India would provide a sixteen-thousand- to nineteen-thousand-man IPKF (later increased to forty thousand) to whom the Tamil rebels would turn over their weapons.

Several basic findings derive from research on this case. These results pertain to commitment, autonomy, domestic costs, and manipulation of perceptions.

Consider Proposition P_1, which concerns commitment to one or more strategies of intervention. The Indo-Sri Lankan case supports this proposition. When a domestic constituency is influential, as in India, leaders indeed do face difficulty in mobilizing an optimal response to an international opportunity. For leaders of democratic societies, risky strategies of intervention, for example, have highly concentrated costs and diffuse benefits. Therefore, even when they share constituents' preferences at the outset, leaders prefer not to have their "hands tied" by constituents (Evans 1993).

India's leaders pursued a variety of strategies to reduce the costs that the conflict imposed on India's domestic political scene. These multiple strategies arose precisely because Congress leaders did not want too close of a connection to any particular constituency (in this case, the AIADMK). In attempting to escape this problem the Indian government explicitly denied any official involvement in aiding the Tamil rebels, all the while pursuing active mediation and other good offices. A survey of events indicates that the Indian government moved from being essentially dovelike (that is, showing explicit disinterest in the conflict in its honest broker role) to becoming an agent of a particular group of interests, namely, South Indian politicians. For India, the domestic costs of not pursuing involvement in Sri Lanka's internal conflict became too high to ignore. In choosing involvement, India's decision makers had to consider the domestic ramifications entailed by regional politics. Faced with potential losses on the electoral front, India's decision makers inferred the costs of involvement to be lower than not being involved at all. They decided to provide support in two ways, initially through tacit backing for the Tamil insurgents and later through direct intervention. During this period, India also attempted to negotiate a peaceful settlement to the conflict (Heraclides 1997). In short, use of different strategies can be traced to India's status as a highly constrained state.

Proposition P_2, which focuses on the preference for nonviolent intervention among ethnically diverse states, also finds support. In this instance, the more clearly Indian regional interests became defined within the Sri Lankan

context, the more India's leaders experienced constraints imposed by mobilized regional groups' support for noncoercive strategies. This approach resulted in a strategic dilemma because Indian leaders could not convince Sri Lankan leaders that their hands indeed had been tied by domestic forces. This lack of credibility on the part of India's leaders clearly paralleled a failed peacekeeping accord. The evidence does indicate that India had been constrained in using force against the state of Sri Lanka, but it tried everything short of that in pursuing domestic and international objectives (such as imposing a solution of regional autonomy on the Sri Lankan government).

As mentioned earlier, the separatist demands of Sri Lankan Tamils affected India's interests in two ways: (*a*) Tamils fled to India due to Sri Lankan policies and (*b*) the situation in Sri Lanka influenced ethnic conflict insurgencies in India. The possibility of great power involvement emerged as a major concern. Therefore, India's elites could not allow Sri Lankan aggression against Tamil civilians in the north to go unchecked because that strategy had an impact on politics in India in general and South India in particular. Thus the solution of sending "peacekeeping" troops to Sri Lanka reflected a compromise intended to appease both the Sri Lankan government and South Indian Tamils.

Proposition P_3 focuses on forceful intervention and the concentration of costs and benefits. Forceful intervention is most likely when there are low institutional constraints and limited political resistance among constituents (authoritarian regimes) or generic, all-purpose support from members of the same ethnic group (ethnic group dominance), as is the case for Type I_a states.

When constraints are low or one ethnic group is dominant, as noted in chapter 2, these types of states can show belligerence as third-party interveners. Without internal constraints, elite action is decisive in shaping outcomes, and pursuit of an ethnically oriented foreign policy becomes attractive for leaders. Since elites do not see any significant threat to their power, they move forward.

India, as an ethnically diverse state (i.e., not Type I_a), faced a mixture of constraints and incentives to act since the beginning of the conflict. Use of ethnicity as an issue represented a very risky option for India's leaders. Thus they had to evaluate alternative policies and strategies and then decide what to do. In line with expectations from the typology, India adopted a mild attitude on the issue of Tamil autonomy at first and then tried to mediate between the two sides in Sri Lanka. When good offices and mediation efforts did not produce a peaceful solution, only then did India (as a Type II_b state) decide to intervene.

As noted, however, India's intervention had been "invited." Although it had been coercive, there is no indication that India would have intervened

militarily against the Sri Lankan regime if mediation had succeeded. This is because politically constrained but aggressive leaders have a difficult time in sustaining the credibility of their threats. Constituents who see little benefit in the policy will resist any costs to them. By contrast, India's more conciliatory approach created the opportunity for highly effective collusion with Sri Lanka's leader in the interest of "selling" domestic constituents on the desirability of an agreement. This result is consistent with assessments of crisis bargaining that reveal generally disappointing results for intensely confrontational tactics (Leng 1993; Maoz 1997a; Brecher and Wilkenfeld 1997b).

Proposition P_4, which concerns intensifying effects of affinities and cleavage, also finds general support in this case. Lack of control over ethnic insurgents and diasporas helped to generate uncertainty and exacerbate tensions in Sri Lanka. In more general terms, manipulation of foreign perceptions through control of ethnic allies appears to have been an ineffective strategy for India. Efforts by India to conceal its covert support for the Tamil insurgency resulted in loss of credibility in the eyes of both the Sri Lankan government and its supporters, adding fuel to the fire. From an ex ante perspective, the accord between the Sri Lankan and Indian governments was doomed to failure because of domestic interests in each state. A major actor in the conflict, the Tamil rebels, had not signed the accord, and the dispatch of the IPKF evoked only a tepid response. Successful blocking of the accord by Sri Lankan interests presumably had not been anticipated by India's decision makers. With the collapse of the accord and withdrawal of some seventy thousand troops from Sri Lanka, India's leaders had to reevaluate the strategy of covert support for the rebels.

Proposition P_5, which concerns the relative likelihood of ethnic intervention, also finds support from this case. India is characterized as a Type II_b state, that is, high in both institutional constraint and ethnic diversity. India therefore would be expected to adopt *realpolitik* policies in relation to third-party intervention. Not only institutional constraints but also diversity in Indian society reduced the feasibility of a risky foreign policy. The Indian government therefore was very careful in evaluating alternative strategies in order to find the best available option. In other words, the dovish or mild character of Indian foreign policy, which appeared in the form of good offices directed toward the autonomy of ethnic brethren, can be seen as evidence of the importance of domestic sensitivities.

The need for an outcome agreeable to all constituents, or retaining at least a plurality of popular support to maintain political power, kept leaders of India away from ethnic adventurism. Therefore, as expected, Indian inter-

vention took place when strong preferences among the state's ethnic groups existed and important reasons emerged, such as the refugee flow and danger of great power meddling.

To summarize, India's mixed and shifting objectives resulted in the dispatch of "peacekeeping" troops to Sri Lanka. India never was predisposed to using overt force in achieving its geopolitical objectives; it could have taken formal control of Sri Lanka with only a limited effort. Perhaps other leaders, if faced with fewer domestic constraints, might have done so. Instead, the federal government initiated covert support for Tamil rebel movements. Supporting these rebels had considerable domestic ramifications for India's leaders, helping them in their bid to retain political viability in South India. Yet India's decision makers had to be concerned about the conflict spilling back into India. The shift toward a policy of intervention is clearly an extension of India's own domestic communal problems. Sri Lanka's internal strife provided an opportunity for India's leaders to appease South Indian Tamils and generate support at home. Nevertheless, the presumed low-cost approach did not succeed entirely: The influence and power of the Congress Party has been severely eroded at both the state and federal level, India's internal cleavages have worsened, and the army is playing an increasing role in managing domestic political problems (Brass 1990; Heraclides 1997).

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, this chapter has served two purposes. The first was to assess the usefulness of the four variables, and their linkages, in explaining an interstate ethnic conflict in a secessionist setting. The results indicate that ethnic diversity and institutional constraints possess the capacity to explain an elite's decision to become involved in a separatism conflict. The other two variables, affinity and cleavage, also appear to be valid sources of explanation.

The second task of this chapter was to evaluate the propositions from the framework. In the case of India, it appears that domestic and international pressures led an institutionally constrained, ethnically diverse state to explore multiple avenues of conflict management, including mediation. Outbidding, however, ultimately produced confrontation as well.

Less conclusive is whether states such as India are likely to use force. Force appears to be a choice of last resort, when outbidding, cleavages, and the potential for diffusion are very high. Even then, however, force will not necessarily resolve the conflict, especially if multiple interests must be satisfied.

With respect to India's geostrategic interests, the evidence suggests that

India's stated goal of preventing major power involvement was a "red herring." India's primary interests lay in meeting domestic demands. As early as 1983, the United States and other Western states had made it clear they would not come to Sri Lanka's aid, while the declining Soviet Union was not in a position to become involved in an extraregional conflict.

A related conclusion from this analysis is that states with an affective stake in the conflict make poor peacekeepers. Foreign policy objectives work against one another, objectivity will be difficult to maintain, and thus outcomes are likely to be suboptimal. India's peacekeeping effort, which attempted to satisfy multiple interests, ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.

Somalia, 2004. http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/