

Sri Lanka's Achievements in Defeating Terrorism: A Possible Global Model

Abstract

Ethnic conflict which haunted Sri Lanka for nearly three decades was the most crucial issue in post-independence period. The conflict badly affected the socio-economic and political aspects of almost every Sri Lankan life. The present paper attempts to analyse the achievements of Sri Lanka in defeating terrorism and resolving the ethnic conflict within its historical, economic and political context. The attention has been paid towards a number of factors behind the emergence and the complication of the conflict. The communal representation, language and university admission policies were important among them. The demand for a separate state emerged in 1972, after the adoption of the Second Republican constitution. The rejection of the demands presented by the Federal party to the Constitutional Assembly was the main factor behind the above demand.

Sri Lankan governments attempted to find a peaceful solution to the problem from 1985 to until 2006. All these attempts were not successful. As soon as peace negotiations ailed, the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime adopted a military offensive against the LTTE. The defeating of a powerful guerrilla movement like Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) by Sri Lanka can be considered as a possible global model.

1. Introduction

Ethnic conflict which haunted Sri Lanka for nearly three decades was the most crucial issue in post-independence period. The conflict badly affected the socio-economic and political aspects of almost every Sri Lankan life. The defeating of terrorism of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which waged a bloody civil war with the Sri Lankan governments for nearly three decades, in May 2009 was a decisive achievement by Sri Lanka.

The present paper attempts to analyse the achievements of Sri Lanka in defeating terrorism and resolving the ethnic conflict within its historical, economic and political context. It highlights the importance of the achievements as a possible global model.

The analysis of this paper is presented in four cohesive sections dealing first with the issues underpinning the conflict in Sri Lanka, then the attempts to resolve the issues of conflict within the democratic framework, and thereafter the reasons why the developments gave rise to terrorism, and lastly, the way terrorism was defeated in a legitimate manner.

2. The Emergence of the Ethnic Issue in Sri Lanka

2.1 Communal representation and colonisation schemes

The roots of the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict go back to the British period. The introduction of communal representation in selecting members to the Legislative Council in 1833 in response to the Colebrook Cameron Reform Commission recommendations was the beginning of the competition between the Sinhalese and the Tamil ethnic communities in Sri Lanka. The commission recommended the establishment of a Legislative Council comprising 15 members; nine members to be nominated as officials and six as un-official members by the Governor. The un-official members were solely nominated on the basis of ethnicity. Three Europeans and three Sri Lankans were nominated to represent the Sinhalese, the Tamil and the Burgher communities in the country. In addition to the communal representative system, a limited elective principle was introduced in

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1912. However, the communal representative system which was in operation as the main system until 1931 badly affected the relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities in the political system, and within the nationalist movement. The communal representation was viewed as a 'canker in the body polity' of Sri Lanka by the Donoughmore in 1931. It was recommended that it should be abolished (Ceylon, 1928).

Though the system of communal representation was abolished in 1931, and instead introduced the Universal Adult Franchise in the same year, the suspicions that grew between the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities did not disappear from the Sri Lankan politics. The creation of a 'Pan Sinhala Board of Ministers' in 1936 under the Donoughmore constitution was a clear evidence for this predicament. On the side of the Tamils, the call for 'balanced representation' or the '50:50 proposal' presented by G.G. Ponnambalam, the leader of the Tamil Congress, before the Soulbery Commission in 1946 was the example for this communal suspicion which continued between the Sinhalese and the Tamils (Ceylon, 1945).

Also, the Colonisation Schemes initiated in the 1930s, during the Donoughmore period, were closely linked to the ethnic competition in the country or perceived as such. While the colonisation schemes were initiated by the Sinhala leaders, the Tamil political parties demanded not to establish colonisation schemes in the Northern or the Eastern provinces. In their

argument, the establishment of these schemes would badly affect the ethnic composition of these provinces; the schemes would lead to Tamils in these areas becoming a virtual minority. The Sinhala leaders argued that no province is an exclusive preserve of any community and the purpose of the schemes would be to address the issues of poverty, development and land settlement for agriculture development irrespective of ethnicity.

2.2 Language issue

Language became an important issue in Sri Lankan politics after and even before independence. The language conflict also emerged initially as a result of the British language policy introduced in 1833 under the Colebrooke Cameron Reforms. English was made formally the official language in Sri Lanka by this reform. The majority of the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities were discriminated by this language policy. There was a congruence of interests initially between the two communities which led to a common understanding on the language issue. This was the policy of *Swabasha* with parity of status. The parity of status which aimed at making both the Sinhala and Tamil as official languages emerged with a view to providing opportunities for the general public in the spheres of education and recruitment to the public service (Kearney, 1967).

However, the objectives of the *Swabasha* language movement became changed after independence particularly, in the 1950s. The prevailing 'parity of status' movement became converted into the Sinhala only movement. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) in 1955 adopted a resolution which called that Sinhala should be the sole official language in the country. In 1956, the United National Party (UNP) also followed suit and adopted the Sinhala only policy. The making of Sinhala as the only official language in Sri Lanka by the Mahajana Eksath Peramuna (MEP) government in 1956 badly affected the

relations remained between the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities for nearly two decades.

2.3 University admissions policy

The changes introduced to the existing university admissions policy by the United Front (UF) government in the 1970s was also another milestone in the already strained majority-minority relations in Sri Lanka. In 1973, the government adopted the media-wise standardisation policy to admit students to the universities in Sri Lanka. The strategy was to bring the Sinhala, the Tamil and the English mediums into one common standard. However, after the introduction of this policy the percentage of the Tamil students admitted to science-based courses in the universities became drastically reduced (Silva, 1978). Thereafter, in 1974, another change was introduced. Under the new scheme, in addition to the media-wise standardisation, the government introduced the formula of district-based admissions policy. The admission of students to universities in proportion to the population of the respective districts was the logic behind this policy. This policy was introduced to ensure equity in education, because there was a regional disparity in educational facilities available in schools in different districts, and hence the existing university admission policy provided an advantage to the students who studied in the districts with high educational facilities in the process of selecting to universities. The government attempted to rectify this injustice by introducing district-based admission policy. However, the introduction of this policy badly affected the districts with high educational facilities like Colombo and Jaffna.

Both formulas of media standardisation and district basis were employed to admit students to the universities. The number of Tamil students admitted to science-based courses in universities in 1974 became further reduced compared to 1973 (Silva, 1978). The Tamil political

parties attempted to look at these policies as discrimination against Tamil students. But, it should be understood that the intention of introduction of these policies by the government was to ensure justice to all communities living in both privileged and under privileged areas of the country, since provision of equitable educational facilities to all districts was not possible.

2.4 Demand for a separate State

As discussed earlier, the relations that existed earlier between the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities began to further deteriorate due to the Sinhala Only Act in 1956 and the university admissions policies since 1973. Under this background, the United Front (UF) government came into power in 1970 at the end of the general election. The making of a new constitution was an electoral promise given by the UF coalition. In keeping with that promise, the government established a Constituent Assembly in 1970. All representatives of Parliament became the members of this body. The Federal Party also was a constituent partner of this Assembly and participated in its deliberations. The party presented a six-point plan to the Constituent Assembly, but the government eventually rejected the proposal as detrimental to the country's current interests (Tiruchelvam, 1977). Again a nine-point proposal formulated by all Tamil political parties, with a view to protecting the rights of the Tamil people, was presented to the government in February 1971 as an amendment to the constitution, but this was also rejected by the UF government. The situation badly affected the majority-minority relations in the country.

By 1972, there emerged a broad consensus among Tamil political parties, and the consensus led to the formation of a broad Tamil coalition which called the Tamil United Front (TUF). Later, the TUF became converted into and renamed as the

Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in 1976. Thereafter, the TULF officially declared that it would strive to establish a separate state or Eelam in Sri Lanka in order to achieve what they called the legitimate rights of the Tamils, as perceived by them (Balasooriya, 1983). The TULF fielded its candidates for the 1977 General Election by making a promise to establish Eelam or separate state through the means of non-violence or violence. The party was able to obtain 22 seats in Parliament as the largest opposition party and its leader V. Amirthalingam sworn in as the leader of the opposition. The post-1977 period first led to a low-intensity civil war in the country. The 1983 Black July provided a good opportunity to Tamil leaders to spread the issue to the international arena.

3. Attempts Toward a Political Solution

3.1 Thimpu talks

Aftermath of the 1983 July incidents, a number of Tamil youth groups began to emerge as guerrilla organisations in the Northern and Eastern provinces in Sri Lanka. The incidents themselves were triggered by the Liberation Tigers for Tamil Eelam (LTTE) themselves. The LTTE, the People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students (EROS), Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) became the major five guerrilla groups thereafter.

After 1983 Black July, a large number of Tamils fled to India and took refugee status in Tamil Nadu. The refugee situation, among other factors, led the Tamil Nadu government to pressurise the central government of India to intervene in the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka. Thimpu talk which took place in July 1985 at Thimpu, the capital of Bhutan, on the initiative of India was one outcome of the Indian intervention. The LTTE participated at

the talks as one constituent partner of the Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF) comprising EPRLF, TELO and EROS as other partners. The PLOTE and the TULF which were outside the ENLF, which were also parties to the talks, broadly agreed with the political strategy put forward by the ENLF. There was consensus among the militant groups who participated in this dialogue. The LTTE presented four principles which required a base of any possible political settlement acceptable to Tamil nationalists within the framework of the Sri Lankan state. The four principles were:

- (1) recognition of Tamils in Sri Lanka as distinct nationality;
- (2) recognition of Tamil homeland and its territorial sovereignty;
- (3) right of self-determination of Tamil people; and
- (4) recognition by the state of the right of citizenship and other democratic rights of the Tamil people. (Moshin et al., 2003).

The Sri Lankan delegation rejected the above principles, claiming that the acceptance would lead to the disintegration of the state and breach the sovereignty. The armed groups deliberately avoided in presenting meaningful or practical proposals to fulfil the aspirations of the Tamil people at the Thimpu talks. Their stances were extremely ideological.

3.2 India-Sri Lanka accord

The failure to come to an agreement at the Thimpu discussions contributed towards creating conditions for more and more violent activities in the country. The Sri Lankan government forces attempted to capture Prabhakaran, the leader of the LTTE, at the Vadamarachchi operations in 1987. The operations were largely successful. It was at this moment that the Indian government imposed a political solution to Sri Lanka through compelling the Sri Lankan government

to sign an accord. The 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord signed by the two leaders of India and Sri Lanka was the final outcome of the series of Indian involvement in the Sri Lankan situation. However, the LTTE leader Prabhakaran was reluctant to agree with the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in July 1987 that the two countries signed. According to some writers, Prabhakaran even received financial support from India and an assurance of majority representation in the interim administration to agree with the Accord (Raman et al., 2006). It was after the failure of the LTTE to agree upon the Accord that the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKFP) was sent to Sri Lanka.

The LTTE viewed the India-Sri Lanka Accord as a clever-device to snatch away the fruits of their hard-won struggle. J.N.Dixit, a former Indian High Commissioner, pointed out that the underestimation of Prabhakaran's passionate commitment to the course of Tamil Eelam was a miscalculation of India (Ibid.). The LTTE did not accept the Provincial Council system which was established by the 13th Amendment added to the 1978 constitution as a result of the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement. There were also misgivings about the Accord on the part of the new President elected in Sri Lanka in December 1988.

3.3 Premadasa-LTTE talks

President Ranasingha Premadasa's negotiations with the LTTE continued from May 1989 to June 1990. The two hitherto antagonistic forces, the government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the LTTE, came together because they found a convergence of interests to get the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKFP) out of Sri Lanka. The friendly relations between the Premadasa regime and the LTTE lasted until the IPKFP left the island on 30 March 1990. The vacuum left by the IPKFP was filled by the LTTE, and as such, it gained complete control of the North-East of Sri Lanka. After IPKFP left, Prabhakaran put forward two demands. The dissolution of the North-

East Provincial Council and the repealing of the Sixth Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution were the two demands of the LTTE. The government rejected both of these demands, and consequently the 'Second Eelam War' commenced.

3.4 Kumaratunga-LTTE talks

The post-1994 period was the next phase of effort which attempted to find a peaceful solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. The negotiations continued between the LTTE and President Chandrika Kumaratunga from November 1994 to August 1995. After the electoral victory of President Kumaratunga in 1994, she pledged that she would bring about 'ethnic reconciliation' in the island. She even expressed her readiness to start negotiations with the LTTE 'without any pre-condition.' As a first step in this direction, the government lifted the embargo on certain items to the LTTE controlled areas as gesture of goodwill for peaceful negotiations. The basic difference which existed between the government and the LTTE in finding a solution to the ethnic problem was revealed by the letters that were exchanged between the LTTE and the government during this period.

The LTTE claimed that they wanted first the government to take necessary steps to restore normalcy and create a peaceful environment. Only after normalcy is restored, talks could be started to find a peaceful solution. The government, on the other hand, maintained that there should be simultaneous talks addressing the day-to-day problems of the people and also finding a political solution in the long run. The negotiations were deadlocked. Finally, the LTTE accused the government of acting in 'bad faith' and started the 'Third Eelam War' in April 1995. Chandrika Kumaratunga explained the LTTE's behaviour to N. Ram, the Editor of the *Frontline*, as follows:

"The LTTE will do what they have always done....That is drag on and

on until they build themselves up again militarily, and then start attacking again"

(quoted in Raman, et al., 2006).

After the collapse of negotiations between the government and the LTTE, the 'Third Eelam war' began and both sides fought with determination. The President argued that the weakening of the LTTE is the only way to bring it back to the negotiating table. This strategy was described as a 'War for Peace.' The strategy resulted in capturing main parts of the Jaffna Peninsula by the security forces. However, the government also experienced some setbacks in the war. It was at this juncture that the President realised the importance of obtaining the support of a third party in order to initiate negotiations with the LTTE. This understanding resulted in inviting the Norwegians as facilitators to the Sri Lanka's peace process. The LTTE also had to make some gestures and concessions. The LTTE's unilateral ceasefire declaration in December 2001 has to be viewed in the backdrop of certain important developments. The most important factor was the growing international isolation of the LTTE. India, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK) and Canada banned the LTTE as a terrorist organisation. The countries like Australia, members of the European Union, Malaysia and Singapore also kept the LTTE under strict surveillance. The killing of innocent civilians, the attack on Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the 'Sacred Tooth'), the assassination of a prominent Tamil intellectual like Neelam Tiruchelvam, the savage attack on Katunayake air base and the Bandaranaike International Airport, and recruitment of child soldiers had created a sense of revulsion among large sections of intelligentsia in different parts of the world (Raman et al., 2006).

In the above backdrop, Prabhakaran attempted to project his movement as a national liberation organisation. He highlighted the cooperation extended

by the LTTE to the Norwegian initiative to defuse the crisis and start the peace process. Prabhakaran wanted the international community to believe that Tigers were not terrorists.

"We are not mentally demented as to commit blind acts of violence impelled by racist and religious fanaticism. We are fighting and sacrificing our lives for the love of a noble course, i.e., human freedom. We are freedom fighters," he said (Raman, et al., 2006).

3.5 Ceasefire agreement of 2002

It was in the above circumstances that the UNP fought the 2001 Parliamentary General Election on the basis of a peace agenda. Ranil Wickramasingha, the leader of the UNP, promised to establish an interim administration incorporating the LTTE. The United National Front (UNF) government which remained in power for a short period of time took steps to initiate a ceasefire agreement (CFA) with the LTTE in February 2002. The Norwegians provided the assistance for this agreement.

The UNF government believed that once an interim administration is established, conditions would be created for a negotiated settlement. The ban on the LTTE was lifted. The LTTE was recognised as the sole representative of the Sri Lankan Tamils. After signing of the Ceasefire Agreement in 2002 there were five rounds of talks between the government of Sri Lanka and the LTTE. Nevertheless, the LTTE first suspended the negotiations and then completely abandoned them on the excuse that they were not invited to a donor conference held in Washington organised by the United States in April 2003. The CFA nevertheless was in operation. Irrespective of its conditions, assassinations and abductions continued. The Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), a body of Scandinavians peace monitors, and the Norwegian facilitators both raised the

issue with the LTTE over the increasing number of killings without much avail.

The task of safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka was the contentious issue during the period. The Sri Lankan Navy had a special duty in this regard. However, the Navy was prohibited by the ceasefire agreement for engaging 'offensive military operations against LTTE.' In addition, the SLMM attempted to carve out separate areas for 'Sea Tigers' as if the objective of the peace process is to create a separate state in the LTTE controlled areas. In the meanwhile, there were reports that the LTTE's cadre strength had increased. The total strength of armed LTTE cadres that stood at 9,390 before the ceasefire had increased to 19,750 (Raman et al., 2006).

4. Failure of the Peace Process

4.1 Change of governments

President Kumaratunga was not pleased with the Wickramasingha government's peace negotiations conducted with the LTTE. It was alleged that the LTTE was not interested in finding a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem. The LTTE attempted to strengthen its military capability under the Norwegian-brokered peace accord. In this situation, the President had to dissolve the Parliament on 2 February 2004 after having made an electoral pact with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

The UNF led by Wickramasingha government was voted out of power when it managed only to win 82 of the 225 seats in Parliament at the 2004 elections. Kumaratunga's United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), a coalition dominated by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the JVP won 105 seats, however, eight short of securing a majority. The LTTE-backed Tamil National Alliance (TNA) won 22 seats, thus becoming the third largest party. The *Jathika Hela Urumaya (JHU)* contesting for the first time, won nine

seats. After the conclusion of the 2004 general elections, President Kumaratunga attempted to continue the CFA with the LTTE with the support of the Norwegians. However, these efforts failed. The UPFA government headed by President Kumaratunga was in fact forced to continue with low intensity military operations against the LTTE. The government argued that these operations were necessary to create an environment for peace negotiations as the LTTE was stubborn and adamant.

4.2 Negotiations under new paradigm

Mahinda Rajapaksha, the new leader and presidential candidate of the SLFP after Kumaratunga at the presidential elections in November 2005, promised that he would pursue 'a permanent resolution to the ethnic conflict through a political solution based on United Sri Lanka.' He won the elections with a considerable margin, according to some, thanks to the LTTE-imposed boycott of elections by the Northern Tamils. (<http://www.flonnet.com>). On November 19th the day Mahinda Rajapaksha sworn in as President, he promised to forge a 'new Sri Lanka' in which he would strive for an 'honourable peace' without dividing the conflict-ridden island nation. President at his speech said that

"war is not my method. I will initiate a new round of talks with all those who have stake in the solution of the national question." He further reiterated his desire to engage in direct talks with the LTTE leader Prabhakaran. In the meanwhile, the LTTE had commenced violent attacks in chosen targets in the Northern and Eastern provinces. The war has been termed as the 'People's war' and is undertaken by a front outfit of the LTTE, loosely termed as a people's force

(Frontline, 2006).

On 25 January 2005 after some international persuasion, the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE agreed to hold direct talk in Geneva.

In the meanwhile, the LTTE did not display a genuine commitment to find a political solution to the ethnic conflict in the country. They appeared to be single minded in pursuing the objective of the separate state or Eelam. They had very clearly attempted to strengthen their military capabilities under the Ceasefire Agreement of 2002. Though the Mahinda Rajapaksha regime attempted to negotiate peace with the LTTE, it did not neglect the military or weaken the government's military capabilities. The appointment of well-experienced and committed army officers to high ranking positions in the army was a reflection of this commitment of the government. Gotabaya Rajapaksha, a former Colonel of the Army and who participated in a number of army operations against the LTTE, was appointed to the post of Secretary to the Ministry of Defence. Meanwhile, another committed army officer Lieutenant General Sarath Fonseka was appointed as the chief of the Army. Thus, the government was able to understand the motives of the LTTE and take necessary measures to strengthen the military capabilities against the LTTE.

In April 2006, a good opportunity and a convincing justification were provided to the government to launch offensive operations against the LTTE. The LTTE took an arbitrary decision to close down the Mavil Aru sluice gate in the East. The act badly affected nearly 30,000 families who involved in paddy farming in the Eastern province. The government at the beginning attempted to find a peaceful solution to the controversy, but the LTTE was adamant. The situation warranted the Army to take offensive operations against the LTTE. The operation was named as a 'humanitarian operation' to liberate the innocent civilians from the clutches of the LTTE. The government, however, did not confine the offensive operations only to the Mavil Aru area. The operations soon were extended to the whole of the

Eastern province soon became liberated from the LTTE. Once the Eastern province was liberated, the 'humanitarian operations' were directed towards the Northern province of the country. The whole operation was concluded after defeating the LTTE organisation in May 2009.

The military victory against the LTTE is a great military achievement for Sri Lanka. The forces followed their own indigenous strategies in defeating the most ruthless terrorist movement in the world. The importance of this military victory can be examined from an international perspective. At the time of its defeat, the LTTE appeared as one of the most powerful guerrilla movements in the world.

5. Sri Lanka as a Possible Global Model of Defeating Terrorism

5.1 Defeating a terrorist movement

By the time of defeating the LTTE, it has become a deadly terrorist group, making an utmost threat to the country. The situation has been analysed by Mahinda Rajapaksha, the President of Sri Lanka, when he declared open the fourth session of Parliament on 19 May 2009. According to the President,

"they had acquired ships, aircraft, submarines and the most advanced weaponry in the world. They controlled civil administrations, international frauds and scams, banks, web sites and radio stations and had also issued currency"

(*Ceylon Daily News*, 20 May 2009).

The LTTE's position has been correctly examined by the *Washington Times* news paper. According to the editorial of the newspaper

"the LTTE is considered one of the deadliest terrorist groups, having invented the concept of the modern-day suicide bomber and carried out the murder of two sitting heads of state. In addition, the Tamil Tigers pioneered the use of female suicide bombers, homemade mini-submarines, ultra-

light aircraft and 'warehouse ships' pre-positioned on the high seas to re-supply terrorist operations on shore"

(*Washington Times*, 22 June 2009).

The widely-held belief in the world before the Sri Lankan experience was that a terrorist movement cannot be defeated by the means of military action. The advocates of this view held that the 'root causes' of the terrorist movements should be addressed and should be found a solution. The conflict resolution theories were used to support this view by superficially studying the ethno-political conflicts emerged in the world after the Second World War.

It is correct that most of the ethno-political conflicts in Asia, Africa and Europe have been in existence for a long period. At the time of obtaining independence, India was divided into two countries, namely, India and Pakistan, due to ethno/religious conflict. Indian governments have attempted to find peaceful solutions to Kashmir and Nagaland problems, but have yet failed. The post-independent Indian governments have been fighting with these guerrilla movements, but could not defeat these organisations. The Bengali movement which emerged in the Eastern part of Pakistan also led to the division of Pakistan. The emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign country in 1971 was the final outcome of this struggle. In addition to South Asia, a large number of terrorist groups which emerged out of ethno-political conflicts are found in Africa, Latin America and Europe. The most of the governments in these countries could not find solutions to these problems or could not defeat them militarily.

Sri Lanka also was not exempted from the above experiences. Since 1985, a number of post-independent governments in Sri Lanka had been attempting to find a political solution to the problem. Mahinda Rajapaksha fought the 2005 presidential election under the United People's Freedom

Alliance (UPFA) ticket. The UPFA's election manifesto highlighted the ethnic conflict and promised to find a solution within the framework of a united Sri Lanka. After the electoral victory, President Rajapaksha attempted to negotiate with the LTTE to find a political solution to the ethnic problem under the Ceasefire Agreement of 2002. These discussions were not fruitful. The LTTE attempted to build its military strength under the Norwegian-brokered Ceasefire Agreement of 2002. At the time of the new President was elected to the office, the LTTE's military strength has become a serious threat to the state. The defeating of the LTTE by the government in 2009 has become an important phenomenon.

5.3 Lessons to other countries

One can argue that the defeating of a powerful guerrilla movement like the LTTE organisation by a small country like Sri Lanka as a possible global model. According to some experts on international terrorism, the LTTE gained its military capability through the process of drug trafficking.

"Tamil Tigers have received drugs and arms "on consignment" from traditional criminal enterprises in Myanmar and India. Tamil Tigers sell the consigned drugs, pay for the weapons and repeat cycle as a method to build their arsenals"

(Martin, 2003).

In the classification of terrorism as old and new forms, the LTTE has been categorised into the 'old terrorist' camp (Spencer, 2006). Most of the characteristics of 'old terrorist' organisations were inherited by the LTTE. The using of chemical weapons against the enemy was an important feature of this 'old terrorists' (Spencer, 2006). In 1990 the Tamil Tigers attacked a Sri Lankan military camp with chlorine gas (Ibid.). In this context, one could argue that the Sri Lankan government's military victory against the LTTE as a possible global model.

As discussed before, Sri Lankan governments attempted to find a political solution to the problem from 1985 to up to 2006. All these negotiations were not successful. Mahinda Rajapaksa government also initiated peace negotiations with the LTTE as soon as his government came into power in 2005. Rajapaksa administration, however, was prudent enough not to repeat the mistakes done by his predecessors. As soon as peace negotiations failed with the LTTE, the government adopted a military offensive against the LTTE.

The defeating of the LTTE guerrilla movement has been described as a lesson to the United States and other countries in the West by the editorial of the *Washington Times* (22 June 2009). The editorial has been written by Peter Leitner, President of the Higgins Counterterrorism Research Centre who previously served for 31 years in various national security positions, and Rajika Jayatilaka, a Sri Lankan expert. In the editorial the *Washington Times* newspaper said, there are nine lessons the United States and other countries could learn from Sri Lanka. The first one is that the widely-held belief that terrorism cannot be defeated militarily should be debunked. As it said, "perhaps the most important lesson is the debunking of the widely held belief that terrorism cannot be quelled militarily. The Sri Lankan military demonstrated that professionalism, strategy, discipline and unswerving commitment can beat terrorism". There were two schools of thought with regard to the defeating of a terrorist group in the world. A terrorist group cannot be defeated through a process of military offensive was the argument of one school of thought. They argued that terrorism could be defeated only by a means of providing a political solution. The other school of thought argued that a terrorist group can be defeated through a process of military offensive. The Sri Lankan governments more or less were inclined with the former school of

thought in regard to the defeating of terrorism in the country from 1985 to until the election of the Mahinda Rajapaksa regime. As soon as peace negotiations failed, the Rajapaksa administration was committed to defeat the LTTE through the process of military offensive.

The paper said that another lesson is those terrorists engage in hollow ceasefire arrangements to opportunistically to buy time in order to regroup, rearm and initiate surprise offensives. There is no doubt that the ceasefire agreement which was signed by the Sri Lankan government with the LTTE in 2002 created a good environment for the LTTE to strengthen its military capability. Further, the newspaper warned the countries which allowed raising funds in their countries to support terrorist activities in other countries. The newspaper described this as hypocrisy of those countries. The editorial explained that third parties interferences as a great obstacle for a successful military solution. As we discussed earlier, Sri Lankan governments experienced this obstacle from time to time when they attempted to crush the LTTE through the process of military offensive. The Vadamarachchi operations carried out by the Sri Lankan forces in 1987 were largely successful. It was at this moment that the Indian government imposed a political solution to Sri Lanka through compelling the Sri Lankan government to sign an accord. Even at the last stage of the Sri Lanka military offensive against the LTTE, Sri Lanka received international pressure from Britain, France and Norway. However, Sri Lanka ignored this pressure and continued its military offensive against the LTTE. This resulted in convening a UN Human Right Council Special session in Geneva (Daily News, 29, May 2009). In this session, Britain, France, Norway and other few countries presented a resolution against Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, some world leaders described the Sri Lankan victory over the LTTE terrorist organisation as a great achievement. Mr. Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, the Prime Minister of Bahrain, commended the defeat of terrorism in Sri Lanka under the leadership of President Mahinda Rajapaksa as both admirable and commendable to other countries facing the threat to freedom today (<http://www/priu.gov.lk/news>). The Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, described the Sri Lanka's victory over a terrorist group as "a role model in defeating terrorism" (<http://firstlanka.com/english/news>). He further said that "Sri Lanka is the only country to successfully eliminate terrorism in the world". After defeating of the LTTE organisation Sri Lanka Intelligence service achieved a great victory. The arresting of Kumaran Pathmanathan or K.P. by the Sri Lanka army intelligence unit was a great achievement. According to Colonel Hari Haran, the chief of the intelligent unit of the Peace keeping force in Sri Lanka, prior to this, this type of operations have been performed only by the USA, Israel and Russia. He kept Sri Lanka as equivalent to the above countries in the world (Sunday Divaina, 30 August 2009).

Conclusion

The LTTE emerged as a terrorist movement due to the failure of successive governments in post independent Sri Lanka providing solutions to the ethnicity-based terrorist problem in the country. After 1983, this problem has been spread to the international arena. Since 1985, Sri Lankan governments and the LTTE organisation attempted to find a political solution without success. In the meanwhile, terrorist activities of the LTTE had become an extremely serious danger to the country's sovereignty under the CFA of 2002. Mahinda Rajapaksa regime understood the motives of the LTTE and the organisation was completely defeated.

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The existing conflict resolution theories presented by the West have been challenged by the Sri Lankan victory. Finally, it could be concluded that the Sri Lankan victory as a possible global model.

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