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National Security Concepts of States: Sri Lanka

Vernon L. B. Mendis



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Preface

Research into the national security concepts of states has been an important component of UNIDIR's research programme for many years. After the early monographs that were published UNIDIR has now begun to publish research reports describing and analyzing the basic concepts that shape and influence the foreign and security policies of states including their approaches to disarmament. We are convinced that this series of research reports will engender a greater understanding of national policies in the international context facilitating the discussions and negotiations that go on.

The epochal change in international relations that we have witnessed, from the bipolar confrontation of the Cold War to the more co-operative global system with the United Nations being empowered to perform its Charter functions, has affected all countries. The contours of the new world situation have still to be defined. In this transitional period several research reports on the national security concepts that were being written have had to be revised or delayed. Thus UNIDIR hopes to publish more reports in this series in the future.

This research report on the National Security Concepts of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is a comprehensive description and analysis of the security and disarmament policies of a small developing country in South Asia. Dr. Vernon Mendis is excellently equipped to write on the subject with his long diplomatic experience and his academic credentials as a distinguished Sri Lankan scholar. The views expressed in the book are of course his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Sri Lanka.

Dr. Mendis describes the basic features of Sri Lanka and provides an interesting account of the historical evolution of the country. This provides insights into the formulation of the country's present policies on disarmament and security issues. The writer also analyses issues in their national, regional and global contexts giving us the background to Sri Lanka's current ethnic crisis; describing regional initiatives like the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace Declaration and the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation of which Sri Lanka is the current Chairman; and outlining the growth and development of the Non-aligned Movement of which Sri Lanka is a founder-member and former Chairman.

The views expressed in the book are the responsibility of the author and not of UNIDIR. We do, however, commend it to the attention of our readers.

Jayantha Dhanapala
Director

List of Acronyms

DMK	Dravida Munnetra Kalagam - A major political party in Tamil Nadu representing a Pan Tamil movement for the realization of a Greater Tamilnad combining all Tamil peoples and opposed to the domination of South India by the North
AIADMK	All Indian Anna D.M.K. the rival party opposed to the D.M.K.
Eelam	The name of the independent State which was proposed by the Tamil militants
IPKF	Indian Peace Keeping Force
JVP	Jathika Vimukthi Peramuna - People's Liberation Front which in 1971 was referred to as the Che Guevarist movement after the well known Latin American revolutionary leader
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MGR	M.G. Ramachandran Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and one time film idol
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
UNP	United National Party

Acknowledgements

First of all I wish to thank the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and its distinguished Director Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala for nominating me to undertake this study in respect of Sri Lanka under their series on the subject of Concepts of National Security of countries. I attended a conference which was held under the auspices of the UNIDIR in Moscow in October 1989 to consider guidelines for this study, and this study on Sri Lanka follows the decisions of that conference. It is the first study of its kind to be attempted on Sri Lanka, and is therefore very timely at this moment when Sri Lanka is faced with serious security problems.

My sincere thanks are due to the Council of Management of the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies and in particular its distinguished President former Prime Minister Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike for appointing me as a Senior Research Fellow for purposes of this study and for extending facilities for it in the way of the use of an office on the premises for my work. I wish to specially thank its Director Mr. R. J. F. Forbes for his unfailing courtesy and help on every occasion and his steadfast support and to the staff of the BCIS Library for their assistance in furnishing me with the required documents. It should be mentioned that the BCIS Library is one of the best of its kind in the island and is a depository for United Nations documentation and is associated as a Research Centre with the UNIDIR. To that extent the BCIS has been officially associated with this study. In fact this link offers a good avenue for the BCIS in its future programmes.

I further wish to express my appreciation to the Secretariat of the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall and specially to its Secretary General and Director for the assistance and facilities extended to me for the use of the BCIS premises. This Hall is one of the first of its kind in the region with outstanding facilities which were internationally recognised when it was the venue of the Colombo Non Aligned Summit of August 1976. It should be able to play an important role as a venue for international activities in the region.

At the official level I wish to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Secretary Mr. B. P. Tilakaratna for giving approval to this study and to my nomination and for authorising the necessary facilities to be given. In this connection I place on record my appreciation of the arrangements made by the Ministry of Defence through its Secretary and staff to meet senior staff of the various services and of the useful briefings which I received from them. I trust that this study would be of some interest to them in considering questions relating to the security of Sri Lanka in the future.

At a personal level I express my deepest gratitude to my family members and close friends for their support and help. They include my wife and son who were both solicitous about by work and gave useful advice, Dr. (Mrs) Lorna Dewaraja who gave me the benefit of her time and professional experience as one of the eminent historians of Sri Lanka, in reading the proofs, Lester James and Sumithra Pieris for their suggestions and help in various ways. The typing of these proofs was done single handedly by Mrs. Griselda Fernando who was previously my personal assistant as Chairman of the Telecommunications Board of Sri Lanka and I am indebted to her for her dedication, competency and integrity. I am likewise grateful for the assistance given to me by Mrs. Devika Ratnasiri who was previously my Deputy as Chairman. Thanks to the support and cooperation which I have thus received from several quarters I was able to complete my assignment well in advance of the deadline. May

I add a personal note that it was a pleasure for me and a privilege to undertake this task on behalf of my country Sri Lanka which I have served as a career diplomat for over 30 years and if this study would help towards an appreciation by the international community of the security dilemma of a country like Sri Lanka in the world of today, it will have served its purpose.

By way of a footnote I should say that the material for this study was drawn from standard published works on Sri Lanka history and a wide range of published documentation including those from the UN General Assembly, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the Non-Aligned movement, the Government of Sri Lanka, the official Hansards of the Senate and House of Representatives of Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan newspapers and journals.

Vernon L. B. Mendis

Introduction

This study is an attempt to survey and analyse the national security concept of Sri Lanka throughout its exceptionally long history as a sovereign state of around 2,500 years. Sri Lanka's security problems are the product primarily of its geography, where geopolitically, it can be said that it occupies one of the most exposed and central positions for any country in the world. Sri Lanka is at the heart of the Indian Ocean which along with the Mediterranean is one of great oceanic cockpits of history in the world. While the Mediterranean was the cockpit of the most ancient East and later Western history, Sri Lanka played that role in Asia. The latter can be compared to that of historic islands like Cyprus, Crete, Malta in respect of the course of European history. The difference however is that Sri Lanka is much larger and is in fact one of the biggest among the island states in the world. It has served in several capacities like islands of this kind as an entrepot, a mid point meeting place for ships and mariners in the course of long inter oceanic voyages, a harbour, a source of primarily religious and exotic goods in demand in those times, an emporium for international merchandise and a landfall. In the early centuries of the first millennium of the Christian era trade in this region was at its height and the accent was on the commercial importance and potential of the island.

The history of the island in terms of security concepts can be divided broadly speaking into two phases with the 16th century as the rough dividing line. During the first phase, the security factor arose as a result of its participation in the power politics of the region. In the second phase, Sri Lanka became and was viewed as important to the security of other countries. The first phase covers the period from the beginnings of an organised kingdom in Sri Lanka till the establishment of its seat of power in the Western provinces. The second is from the time of the entry of Western powers to the scene until the present day. Throughout the first period the island's security problems if and when they arose almost exclusively from the Indian subcontinent except for two incursions from South East Asia and China later.

From before and during the first half of the first millennium Sri Lanka did not seem to have a security problem except of contending with sporadic invasions from South India which were like the Danish invasions of Britain. In fact in the 3rd century BC Sri Lanka established a very close relationship with the contemporary Mauryan empire in India through the person of its great Emperor Asoka. The latter used Buddhism and its propagation as a vehicle for preaching a message of peace in international relations. Later Sri Lanka became a centre of Buddhism and it is possible that it consciously carried out a role as an apostle of Buddhism in this region. In the early centuries of the first millennium Sri Lanka attracted great Buddhist scholars from South India and China and had friendly relations with the latter to which it sent a number of delegations. It is plausible to think from these events that Sri Lanka at this time was following the Asokan model of pursuing Buddhism and its ethical code as a means of promoting peace. After the 5th century the situation changed and a new element entered the situation in the form of prolonged civil wars inside the country. The first of them was associated with the artist-builder of the famous rock fortress of Sigiriya whose brother who had fled to India returned with an army and overthrew him.¹ During the 6th and 7th centuries

¹ This refers to the well known episode in Sri Lankan history where Kassapa murdered his father the famous King Dhatusena and became King as Kassapa I. He was the creator of the celebrated Sigiriya or "Lion Rock" which is believed to have been a fortified palace. The fame of Sigiriya rests on its unique architecture as it is built on a massive rock and the

there were protracted civil wars in the course of which the practice developed for contenders to obtain mercenary armies from South India to fight for them. The outcome of these events was that adventurers from India began to take interest in the affairs of the island while local leaders looked upon India as a sanctuary and as a source of military aid and patronage. This trend culminated in the installation of a ruler Manavamma in 684 on the throne of Anuradhapura by the South Indian Pallava ruler Narasinhavarman. It seemed as if at this time Indian political concepts and theories had entered the island replacing the earlier Asokan ideas with militaristic approaches. This rather aggressive spirit even entered into the field of religion where during the 4th century there was a violent conflict in which the Mahavihara, the centre of orthodox Buddhism was attacked by the Sri Lankan ruler Mahasen under instigation by an Indian religious teacher. This shows the impact of Indian ideas of the post Guptan period reflecting the influence of classical Hinduism. Sri Lanka was thus following the power patterns of South Indian politics and this led it inevitably to involvement in the prevailing power struggle in South India for mastery. This was a balance of power contest rather than one aimed at territorial expansion or annexation. Sri Lanka adopted a policy of offensive defence where on the one hand it allied itself with a particular State namely, Pandya and on the other hand it sent expeditionary forces to South India to help its ally. Inevitably the tide flowed back and Sri Lanka was engulfed in it, with its defeat and occupation by the Cholian empire.

After this Cholian chapter the political pattern of alliances with Indian rulers continued. This policy however backfired because the Sri Lankan kingdom became a plaything of South Indian power politics. A new pattern developed in which the Sri Lankan kingdom sought the assistance of Indian rulers who intervened in the island on behalf of the Sri Lankan ruler reducing the latter to satellite status. This was in fact the dilemma of the 13th century where though the Sri Lanka ruler got valuable assistance from India the latter took the opportunity to manipulate politics within the island. During the 14th century Sri Lanka was undisturbed by threats from India, perhaps because the Muslim traders were its allies and they in turn probably had rapports with the Turkish overlords of India. In the 15th century this relationship with India came to an end and presumably the Turkish conquerors did not wish to extend their commitments to the island.

The second phase began in the 16th century with the arrival of the Portuguese in Sri Lanka as the first of several invaders from the West. Not long after, they were drawn into local conflicts where one local ruler following the traditional policy of defensive pacts allied himself with the Portuguese and his rival had the help of the kingdom of Calicut from South India. The result of this conflict was that the Portuguese gained control of the maritime seaboard. The ruler once more true to his diplomatic instincts, invited the Dutch to expel the Portuguese resulting in their replacing the Portuguese as conquerors. Initially the Dutch had no enemies to fear from the outside and their problems were with the Kandyan kingdom with whom they waged a Cold War. In 1784 as the aftermath of the War of American Independence the situation changed radically when because of the Dutch alliance with France, the British perceived the Dutch as potential enemies.

It is from this point that the conception of Sri Lanka being a threat to a Third Power gained ground and basically it continues to be the major problem until now. This is not a case of fearing aggression by Sri Lanka but of the latter becoming the instrument of a third party.

Thus the British occupied the Dutch possessions in Sri Lanka in 1796 ostensibly to prevent them falling into the hands of their enemy the French. The importance of either defusing Sri Lanka or possessing it was its strategic potential in respect of the region and of India in particular. This importance centred on the port of Trincomalee which was deemed essential to gain naval mastery in the region. Thus Sri Lanka became a coveted object both negatively and positively as possession gave a strategic advantage and neutralizing it denied it to a third party.

After independence in 1948, the first Sri Lankan independence government feared for its security because of prevailing turmoil in Asia and it opted for the Defence Pact with the UK for protection. This suited the UK admirably because its own need for an ally and the strategic situation of Sri Lanka rendered it ideal for the purpose. At the same time Sri Lanka explored regional avenues for security. The defence pact policy was repudiated by the SLFP government which opted for neutralism and later Non-Alignment as a basis for security acting through international initiatives. This was based on faith in peaceful coexistence as an alternative to confrontation and the belief that a policy of outward goodwill will be automatically reciprocated. It was the carefree attitude of the blacksmith in the English poem as expressed in his words "I envy nobody no not I and nobody envies me". This policy of neutralism pinned its hopes on the United Nations as a guarantee for peace and security particularly of small nations unable to fend for themselves. This policy did not restrict itself to being an act of faith or pious hope but attempted realistically to strive for peaceful settlement of disputes and international co-operation through the initiatives of the Non-Aligned movement. The latter gained much prestige during the seventies and seemed to measure up to expectation of the Third World. During the eighties the picture changed with conflicts between members and deterioration in their economic problems in a background of intensified tensions particularly in regions. It seemed that while the international situation was reasonably stable, tensions were being shifted to the regions possibly by collusion of the big powers who were content to act through proxies.

The history of Sri Lanka's security problems is an apt illustration of Toynbee's famous verdict on the decline of states that "we are betrayed by what is false within."² Invasions from outside have coincided with disunity and division within, which the former exploited. If ever there was a case for the need for solidarity it is Sri Lanka's experience in this regard. It is necessary therefore to identify the sources of this disunity in order to consider means of dealing with it. In early times it was caused by fractional strife and rebellious against the central authority but later there was a polarization of the country into rival kingdoms which resulted in a power struggle between them. In post independence times the causes have been ethnic minority grievances and socio-economic disaffection both of which have led to insurrections. The ethnic problem was aggravated by the support extended to the local authorities by their fellow ethnic communities abroad while the revolutionary movement drew inspiration and perhaps support from Communist societies and terrorist groups abroad. In all these cases the security forces of the country were called upon to shoulder the burden and save the country from severe disruption and possible collapse.

² Quoted by Arnold Toynbee in *Study of History* Vol. IV, Oxford University Press, 1939, pp. 120, from poem by George Meredith - *Loves Graves* viz

In tragic life, God wot
No villain need be! Passions and spirit the plot
We are betrayed by what is false within.

These domestic events in the independence period particularly in the last decade has caused soul searching about its foreign policy and its security implications. After the repudiation of the defence pact policy by the SLFP government the security of the nation was entrusted to the United Nations and other international initiatives. In a sense this meant that it turned its back on its own region hoping or assuming that it would fall into place within global UN and other international movements for peace and security. This was a serious oversight because in the first place experience showed that the UN was not effective as a regional or international police and international movements were themselves divided or lacked the power and the influence to make an impact. In fact the great powers tended to make their own security arrangements where they would probably countenance establishment of spheres of influence and other forms of power sharing for mutual advantage. Small countries were thus left in a dangerously exposed condition at the mercy of these vagaries of the international power game.

The defence of a small state which had rejected the defence pact option lay in its diplomacy. Also it seemed self evident that this diplomacy should begin at home and have its roots in its own geographical environ. While an universal umbrella was consistent with the ideals of the UN Charter still in practice, it would be out of reach when dealing with neighbourhood situations. This vital aspect was neglected in the universality approach. If, at all, the latter to be effective called for a high powered diplomatic machinery on a global scale such as Sri Lanka which is hard put to maintain its own modest system, could never have been able to mount in its wildest dreams. What was needed was a strategic deployment of diplomatic resources according to a given strategy. The security dilemma of Sri Lanka are the apprehensions and threat perceptions which others have of it regarding its possible use by others. At the same time one should not underrate its value even in this nuclear age as a naval base for use by flotillas of nuclear powered submarines.

The situation calls for action at various levels and of different kinds. At the root should be a neighbourhood base which is probably the more difficult to attain. It should be an interlocking combination of the neighbouring countries for political and economic cooperation which provide a foundation for their security. The formation of SAARC to fill the void is timely and it could make a decisive contribution as a means of confidence-building and also conflict resolving.³ The danger to avoid is of the big powers becoming preponderant and perhaps swallowing the minnows. It should also not be a closed zone but should admit participation of outsiders for mutual advantage. The second level is that its combination or Sri Lanka individually should have an extended regional base. That would counteract excessive dependence on the neighbourhood group and actually supplement the latter. For Sri Lanka this should mean the countries of South East Asia with which it has long standing historical and cultural links all being rooted in a similar cultural configuration. At the third level in the ascending scale should be close bilateral links with the peripheral and outside big powers such as Australia, Japan, China, the former USSR and the USA. The formation of a regional organization on the lines of the OECD in which these big powers will participate with the regional states is worth considering. This would discourage the big powers from pursuing conflicting policies and have the effect of containing their activities within a

³ South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation which was established in 1980 as South Asian Regional Co-operative forum (SARC). It has since made impressive headway and become Regional Organization comparable to ASEAN which holds annual Summits at Head of State level. It has the potential to play a major role in shaping the future of South Asia.

framework. To complete this scenario it is essential to introduce some element of disarmament or restraint in militarization and for this purpose the adoption of the nuclear free zone or peace zone concept could be considered. If on the other hand there is a prospect of the UN sponsored measures such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty or the Comprehensive Test Ban materializing they would have the same effect as a denuclearized zone. In whatever form a denuclearized or demilitarized atmosphere is deemed essential to free the states from threat perceptions and divert expenditure incurred on them for development.

The other scenario which has to be explored is the domestic situation which is the corollary of the external factors. A state today faces many challenges because of the impact of democracy, of education and economic development. They produce the phenomenon of rising expectations where the more one gives the more one needs. Thus governments are in a process of being called upon to be giving more continuously without any increase in the quantum of resources. These challenges could be dissatisfaction over government policies in which case they are rectifiable by normal means. This would call for statesmanship, appreciation of the problem and meaningful and timely measures which could avert a breakdown. These are the duties of a democratic state and to deal with these problem a primary requisite is a healthy, clean and efficient administration manned by officials with dedication and technical competency. The administration of a modern state unlike that of a colonial regime requires not only public servants with basic education but those with special skills as the character of administration has changed and developing countries need managerial skills, planning abilities and a professional approach. In this context one of the greatest tragedies in the developing world is its growing politicization of the governing machinery and dependence as it was said of George III on the King's friends.⁴ Insurrections which are socio economic phenomena have been a common feature in history but not so the kind of ethnic movements one is witnessing today where within the confines of a unitary state, small groups are setting themselves up resorting even to arms with the help of willing accomplices outside. This calls for a combination of firmness and statesmanship the first in asserting the lawful authority of the state and the second in taking measures of restructuring if necessary and a recasting of the political system so as to defuse such demand and give a sense of common purpose to the nation. This calls for meaningful measures rather than political tactics which could exacerbate the situation. In Sri Lanka this approach has been attempted in the introduction of devolution and measures for greater community participation.

The role of the security forces therefore should continue to be to deal with enforcement of law and order and combat attempts to subvert the state. This is itself a heavy drain on the state because of the sophisticated nature and cost of modern arms and the availability of such arms to terrorists. A modern army in fighting terrorists find that they are meeting their match in armaments and equipment. However there is no alternative if a state is to survive and not be reduced to chaos by subversion and terrorism and general destabilization. Many big states have made a fine art of destabilization which is to undermine another state by insidious means under cover of good relations. This is done through supply of arms, training of militants

⁴ George III British monarch of the Hanoverian line who reigned from 1760 to 1820. However in 1820 he retired due to ill health and the Prince of Wales took over as Regent. George III is associated with a personal form of government where he tried to rule independent of Parliament through personal nominees known as King's friends. Horace Walpole commented on this as follows : "It is intimated that he means to employ the same Ministers but with reserve to himself of more authority than has lately been the fashion".

working according to a master plan of an undercover organization. The agency known as Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has been referred to frequently in relation to events in Sri Lanka.⁵ Another very severe handicap to a state when contending with domestic insurrections are the international campaigns of malicious propaganda and disinformation directed against it to prejudice world opinion. These campaigns have to be met by diplomatic action and vigorous counter measures at an international level.

The structure and deployment of armed forces, their relations with normal security agencies will depend on their identification and appreciation of likely threats. In Sri Lanka the experience of combatting three major insurrections would have given them ample experience in anticipating the likely dangers and preparing for them. In Sri Lanka these deterrent activities have to be necessarily confined to the territorial limits of the island rather than attempting to its coping with foreign invaders. If it ever comes to that the only hope is the UN which has been a vain one on many occasions. The sympathetic support of friendly states could be of help but this also calls for cultivation and building up of such durable friendships in advance through intensive and purposeful diplomacy.

At the present time super powers, big and small states face uncertain prospects. They are alike vulnerable to the epidemic of ethnic conflicts, minority movements which are spreading throughout the world threatening the very foundations of states and sovereignty. The recent experience of Canada, the Soviet Union, India, provide evidence of this danger which can destroy the existing state structure. This can trigger off a number of highly dangerous trends. They can destabilize states and make them vulnerable to absorption by others in which case there would be a power struggle to gain the ascendancy, which would increase tensions. Secondly states endangered by these threats would seek the help of others and here again there could be rivalry. Others will reassert their authority and become more authoritarian at the expense of democratic rights. Thus international tensions will if at all increase and the end of the global tension will only make way for proliferation of regional and local tensions. Super power rivalry in a sense was able to contain regional conflicts but now they may resort to a sphere of influence policy. Small states which are caught up in this turmoil face the prospect of being swallowed or reduced to satellite status and it will be with great difficulty that they could preserve their sovereign identity let alone behave like sovereign states. The strengthening of regionalism would be one answer which would afford a forum and a group within which to assert their identity. There is always the alternative of becoming the ally of a super power through offer of bases but recent history is no advertisement for it where patrons have jettisoned their allies when conditions changed and there is a move to eliminate foreign bases. Thus in considering security concepts for Sri Lanka in the future the answer seems to be that it should fall back on the level of regional security and concentrate on strengthening relations with the generality of states in the region on a foundation of special ties with the neighbours within a framework of SAARC or otherwise which will secure it against neighbourhood pressures exploiting local disturbances and at the same time ward off great power penetration of the region. The UN and international movements for their part can play a complementary role of affording an umbrella of disarmament and at least nuclear restraint for the regional efforts.

This study of the concept of National Security of Sri Lanka considers the subject in three

⁵ Research and Analysis Wing which was established in 1968 and was the official Intelligence Agency of the Indian Government which conducted undercover operations in neighbouring countries.

parts. The first deals with the general background of the island and gives an introduction to the different facets of the country such as its history, geography, political and social systems. The second chapter analyses factors which renders its security vulnerable, in the light of past and present experience. This covers a wide range of subjects such as geographical location, ethnic composition, state and prospects for the economy, social problems, political trends and constitutional issues, national aspirations, each one being a potential source of disruption with security implications. The argument is that in a small developing country like Sri Lanka, vulnerability is not confined to aggressive pressures or actions by outside powers alone and can be due to destabilization and unrest caused by socio-economic factors which open it to outside intervention on various grounds. They need counter measures which may be described as social defence as distinct from armed forces, which will strengthen and invigorate the infrastructure and foundations of the nation.

Part II comes to grips with the subject proper and approaches it from three standpoints and perspectives. These are national which concern unilateral initiatives through one's own efforts, regional which are endeavours in association with neighbours, and global which are activities at the United Nations and multilateral organizations aimed at realising security. In the case of Sri Lanka these are represented by the initial policy of deterrence through a defence pact, to regionalism through the Colombo Powers and Afro-Asianism and finally universality as practised by dynamic neutralism and United Nations initiatives. It seems that in the evolution of security concepts and policies, the wheel has now turned a full circle as at the present time Sri Lanka membership in SAARC and its expectations of it suggest that it is being considered as a feasible security option for Sri Lanka. In SAARC unlike previous initiatives of this kind like the Colombo Powers or the Afro Asianism of Bandung, is an organized, concrete regional body conceived by the member states as a means of fostering both economic co-operation and harmony between them. It embodies institutional machinery for the implementation of its objectives at a political and administrative level. Its groundwork of technical committees is a practical way of coordinating activities in various development fields.

Part III is a survey of the contemporary situation and attempts to identify the coming challenges and the responsibility which will devolve on the security forces. The emerging picture is of intensified rivalry inside the region between regional states and outside powers with the latter concerned about the possibility of destabilization through regional rivalry. The only antidote for this is regional solidarity provides that this would not place the smaller states at the mercy of the big powers. Regional rivalry can be healthy competition in trade and economic relations but they can be transformed into militaristic confrontation with grave consequences to peace and security in the region. The Armed forces will be obliged to gear themselves to the evolving situation. So far in the light of experience for the last 30 years the focus of the Armed force has been on internal unrest and insurrection. The need for vigil in this regard will be much greater in the future but it may be necessary to consider an external dimension to this where some degree of defensive systems for the protection of coastal waters and air space should be considered. This is part of the legitimate self defence of a nation which is recognised by the UN Charter and it will act however modest it is as a deterrent to an outside intruder with impunity. Experience has shown that the posture of resignation and bowing to a show of force has not protected the country from victimization. Obviously non-violence and innocence does not win respect or security and it is just as well that the country should consider measures of self defence to the furthest extent that its resources will allow. A policy of sheer trust as a concept of security such as was attempted in the late 50s and 60s

has lost credibility in the light of recent experience. An ideal would be a setting of a peace zone which will reduce militaristic rivalry but not militate against legitimate self defence. Other measures should also be considered at a national level to gear the nation and people to face up to challenges. These would have the effect of instilling a sense of purpose and resolve to the nation and of responsibility to the people that the future of the country lies in their hands. Thus a new chapter is opening in concepts of national security where the country should attune its policies in the light of experience and the new challenges and arrive at policies and solutions appropriate to them.

The record of Sri Lanka is essentially of efforts on its part to pursue security through peace, through a repudiation of the defence option at times in favour of trust and goodwill. Yet sadly it has been continually a victim of threats and invasion from outside partly because of its strategic situation where it is vulnerable to the political tides of one of the most embattled oceans in the world, namely the Indian Ocean. Immediately after independence Sri Lanka enjoyed a period of relative peace when it was able to pursue pancha sila oriented Non-Aligned policies in respect of its security. During the last decade the situation changed and Sri Lanka has been faced with serious domestic insurrections which are being exploited by outside forces seeking to destabilize it. These circumstances have obliged the country to fall back on defensive measures through the action of its security forces to safeguard its sovereign independence. These measures are being forced upon it and are without prejudice to the whole hearted commitment of the country to peace which has been the mainspring of its outlook through history.

This study should therefore be treated as a case in point of the security dilemma of a small Third World state at the mercy of forces, subversive and destructive of its integrity and independence, despite a fervent desire on its part for peace and to live in harmony with member states in the international community. This series of studies should therefor serve as an eye opener to the international community on such problems which are not normally highlighted as the emphasis in studies of Third World countries is usually on their economic dilemma. It should induce the international community to address its mind to the subject without shrugging it off as some internal or regional matter which can be settled by self appointed regional policemen. It is hoped that the experience of Sri Lanka and of several other countries in contending with these dangers will bring about an appropriate response from the international community, since this is an integral part of the responsibilities of the United Nations in respect of international peace and security as envisaged in the UN Charter.

Part I

Background

Chapter 1

Historical Introduction of Sri Lanka

History

The recorded history of Sri Lanka appears to have begun around the 5th century BC when according to a legend related in its ancient and generally trustworthy Chronicle - The Mahavamsa a band of adventurers had arrived on the island from India and established settlements. Whatever the credibility of this story, they were clearly the last of many waves of settlers whether Indo Aryan or otherwise who had entered the island at least 1,000 years before from the Indian subcontinent or elsewhere and had colonized it with their own culture. This was agrarian in character and characterized by the use of iron and a socio political system based on small decentralised and self contained units. Prior to these settlements there were probably prehistoric societies of varying cultural levels in the island the vestiges of which remained and which coalesced with the later settlers and laid the foundations of a durable civilization. The legendary visitors of the 5th century BC were linked with Indian kingdoms and their advent gave an impetus to the process of political and social evolution in the island leading to the establishment of the kingdom of Anuradhapura under a ruler who claimed sovereignty over the island. From the outset this kingdom showed signs of creative genius, one of them being the beginnings of a system of tank irrigation. During the 3rd century BC an event occurred which was historical turning point and transformed the kingdom of Anuradhapura from a parochial society into a sophisticated state. This was the friendly relationship which was established between the Anuradhapura ruler Devanampiya Tissa and his illustrious contemporary the Mayryan Emperor Asoka the immediate outcome of which was the introduction of Buddhism to Sri Lanka through the personal emissaries of the Emperor. The patronage extended by the great Emperor to his Sri Lankan colleague and the willing adoption of Buddhism by the State and people was an immense political and cultural boost to the Anuradhapura kingdom which gave it international recognition and launched it on its career as a rising state in the region. Not long after it acquired a distinctive role in the region as the centre of Theravada Buddhism, after the decline of Buddhism in India following the eclipse of the Mauryan. The fostering of Buddhism within the country and its propagation outside became from thereon a cardinal objective in the policy of Sri Lankan kingdoms as well as their premier historical contribution. The history of the Anuradhapura kingdom as it is called which was the first of a succession of kingdoms which ruled Sri Lanka throughout its history, lasted till the 10th century AD. This was a period of great achievements which represented almost the zenith of Sri Lanka civilization, where its rulers excelled as temple builders, as patrons of the Buddhist faith and order the well being of which was one of his solemn duties. In this capacity he was responsible for great architectural creations in the form of temple complexes, stupas and similar works which are among the greatest of their kind in the world. Sri Lanka thus created an unique chapter in the history of Buddhism and its art. The other unique contribution of the Anuradhapura kingdom was a sophisticated system of irrigation through the building of massive storage tanks and a network of feeder canals for the cultivation of its staple crop rice which earned for it the reputation of the Granary of Asia.

This system is a marvel of engineering with no parallel in the world and is a testament to the technical genius of its people and the stature of its rulers.

During this period the Anuradhapura kingdom had extensive links with states in the region. The predominant influences were from India in the form of Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism but it also had commercial relations with Aksum in Africa and the Persians. A highlight of these regional contacts was its relationship with China where Sri Lanka sent several delegations to the Emperor and also traded in various goods primarily of a religious nature. This relationship was linked with the rise of Buddhism under the Tang dynasty. In overall terms, Sri Lanka was an entrepot and an emporium for the trade of the region where merchants and sea farers met in the course of their voyages and exchanged goods. Sri Lanka was thus at that time at regional and international crossroads. The reports of travellers and contemporary records testify to the role of Sri Lanka in this regard.

Politically during the latter part of the first millennium AD, the Anuradhapura kingdom was overshadowed by security threats from South India, where it became inevitably involved in the power struggle in the peninsula between rival kingdoms. Despite sound statesmanship and courageous leadership it was unable to avert its conquest at the end of the 10th century by the maritime empire of Chola. The Chollian occupation lasted 70 years and was followed by the new kingdom of Polonnaruwa which was situated South-East of Anuradhapura and was logistically and strategically better suited to meet the escalating military pressures from South India. This kingdom is famous as it produced two kings who are considered to be the greatest rulers of Sri Lanka. They were Vijayabahu who expelled the Cholians and Parakramabahu 1 who is deservedly called "the Great" from his exploits in launching invasions against Burma and South India and his ruthless unification of the country under his imperious rule. His rule and personality was the highest point in the fortunes of Sri Lanka up to then but after him there was a precipitous drop when the kingdom dissolved into anarchy which was exploited by adventurers and rivals. The upshot was the installation of a kingdom in Polonnaruwa by a foreign adventurer and the expulsion of the Sri Lankan monarchy from the land which was the scene of its glory. In the 13th century, with the expulsion of the Sri Lankan kingdoms from the North, Sri Lanka entered a new era in its history the keynote of which was the efforts of the monarchs to re-establish themselves in the South-West of the country in a seat of power from which they could resume exercise of their sovereignty. This became an ordeal because of the challenges which the monarchs had to face from all sides by way of hostile kingdoms within, insurrections and external rivals and invaders. In the 13th and 14th centuries the capital was moved to a number of places mainly rock fortresses for defence but the resultant kingdom were shortlived because of the overwhelming odds. During the 15th century there was a respite under the kingdom of Kotte which asserted itself and revived some of the glory of the past. However in the 16th century the Portuguese entered the scene initially as traders and their impact transformed the political scene.

The 16th century ushered in yet another crucial era in the fortunes of Sri Lanka which has been described by some historians as the European period. Its keynote was the effort of successive European powers namely the Portuguese, Dutch, French, British in that order to secure a foothold commercial or territorial in the island. The first two by adroit handling of their relations with the Sri Lankan kingdoms and exploiting of their divisions were able to gain the maritime provinces but failed to overcome the hill country kingdom of Kandy which held out through a mixture of diplomacy and defensive combat. The French and the British appeared on the scene almost simultaneously in the course of their colonial rivalry but the British were able partly through their naval superiority to outmanoeuvre the French and with

the Revolutionary War in Europe occupied the maritime provinces of the island at the end of the 18th century. Fifteen years later they gained possession of Kandy and became masters of the island.

The period of British occupation of Sri Lanka lasted from 1815 to 1948. The initial importance of the island was as a strategic base in their struggle against the French in India and as a bastion for the security of India. The security factor became less important after the end of the Napoleonic war and the founding of Singapore as a naval bastion. The British then developed a plantation economy in the island, starting with coffee and then tea which became very lucrative and transformed the basic economy of the country. It now became an export economy dependent on the sale of primary commodities through foreign trading interests instead of the self contained agricultural economy it had once been. On this economic foundation, Sri Lanka developed as a typical colonial society where while the interests of the rulers were paramount it still reaped various benefits like English education, the growth of a Western educated intelligentsia, and administrative and judicial system based on the rule of law and British concepts, the gradual distribution of wealth among certain strata of the inhabitants and the beginnings of participation in representative government. All these trends had their inevitable sequel in the early 20th century with the rise of an affluent and educated class and a progressive demand from them for self government. The Congress movement in India and the general upheavals in the world following the First World War were an impetus. Yet both India and Sri Lanka had to wait till after the Second World War and the chastening experience of the Pacific war for the British to finally concede independence which they did in 1947 for India and Pakistan and in 1948 for Sri Lanka.

It is 42 years to date since Sri Lanka resumed its independence and this has been understandably a period of tremendous developments, transformations, progress, achievement and also turmoil and turbulence. This is to be expected when a nation starts on its own, handicapped by the disabilities of colonialism. However to date Sri Lanka has been able to maintain an unbroken continuity of political and social life. Politically Sri Lanka embarked on its career as an independent state with a Westminster democratic constitution which was however modified into a republican form and later into the Executive President form which it is at present. This system however acting through a basically biparty structure produced a succession of 6 democratically elected governments evenly balanced between the two major parties where the Freedom Party (SLFP) had 3 and the United National Party (UNP) now in power also had 3. Party ideologies have changed from the initial Conservative to espousal of progressive socialistic by all parties aimed at amelioration of serious socio economic problem in the country centering round disparities. Foreign policy has been marked likewise by an initial conservatism symbolized by the Defence Pact with the UK in 1948 to later regionalism and then Non-Alignment which since 1961 is the keynote. Within the region Sri Lanka has been active as a member of the Colombo Powers (1953-1956), Bandung community and Afro-Asianism, Non-Alignment and now membership in SAARC. In many spheres the nation has made much headway such as in high standards of literacy, cultural upsurge, industrial and scientific development, economic advancement where the Mahaveli Ganga scheme is outstanding as a multi purpose scheme. It has attained self sufficiency in food and developed many industries and exports through measures like the Free Trade Zones. Since 1978 the country has followed a free enterprise, open economy policy aimed at promotion of the private sector and entrepreneurship and restructuring of State ventures and public utilities.

Much of the economic benefits derived from these policies, which were reflected in substantial increase in the per capita income and GNP, were lost however through conflicts

and violence arising from ethnic problems and insurrections which have necessitated tremendous expenditure on defence more than the nation could remotely afford let alone a developing country striving earnestly to alleviate the lot of its peoples. These conflicts which were sparked off in 1983 led to several years of armed conflict, destruction, colossal loss to property and threats to sovereignty. These were followed by a terrorist movement from the mid 1987 which further devastate parts of the country and unleashed an atmosphere of lawlessness and rebellion against authority. These problems have by and large been brought under control through the firm stand of the present government. Not the least of these problems was the threat to sovereignty and foreign intervention in internal affairs, sabotage and exploitation of internal problems which resulted and demonstrated in a way the helplessness of a small state when faced with subversion by foreign elements in league with local disaffected groups. Many problems still remain and the security factor and vulnerability to foreign infiltration continue to be of utmost importance. However preoccupation with these subjects does not mean any sacrifice of urgent domestic problems such as poverty and want and proposals of the government notably the Janasaviya movement of the President are aimed at producing quick relief.¹

Geography

Sri Lanka is an island situated off the South-Eastern tip of the peninsula of South India, lying between 5,55° and 9,50° North latitude and 79,42° and 81,52°E longitude. It has the shape of a pear and an area of 25,332 sq miles which is about a quarter of the size of UK and almost the equal of Ireland. It is separated from the Indian subcontinent by a narrow strip of ocean known as the Palk Strait which is 15 miles broad at its narrowest point. The island stands on a continental shelf which extends a distance of 5 to 25 miles off the South and East dropping abruptly to great depths. This is a vestige of a geological connection between the island and the Southern part of India which may have been a part of some massive continent since submerged but leaving vestiges of rocky island off the North of Sri Lanka which on the Western side from a broken land bridge known as Adam's Bridge and on the east the Pedro banks and the shallow sea between them is the Palk Strait. This shelf today is a coral bed teeming with marine life.

Structurally the physical features of Sri Lanka are similar to that of the Deccan in South India and confirms their earlier geological connection. The island can be divided into the hill country occupying a fifth of the total area and a coastal belt which is narrow in the South and West but broadens in the North into a vast plain which was called the dry zone and was the scene of the ancient civilization. The length of the island from North to South is 279 miles and its breadth is 140 miles. Its vegetation which covers its entire land surface varies from the lush luxuriant forests and flora of the hill country to the scrub jungle and dry growth in the arid zones, reflecting the differences in rainfall between the hill country and the plains and there are intermediate zones mainly cultivated with food crops which are lush and fertile. The hill country which appears like a rock fortress in relation to the rest of the country has a mountain range with an altitude of 7,000 feet that tapers down to a secondary level of 4,000 ft after which it descends gradually to the coast except in some areas where the drop is

¹ For full exposition see Address by the President entitled "Providing assets to the assetless" to a high level officials conference on 13 February 1989, published by Presidential Press Secretariat, Colombo 1989.

precipitous. It served literally as a rock fortress in the 3 centuries preceding the British conquest. Its rainfall, in the form of the annual South-West and North-East monsoon, varies from 40 inches in the North and East to up to 200 inches in the centre and South-West. Sri Lanka is well supplied with rivers, there being 16 principal ones, of which the longest is the Mahaveli in the North with a length of 206 miles. The majority of these rivers that originate in the hill zone are in the South and altogether add not only to the fertility of the soil but also to its scenic grandeur. These non-navigable rivers were harnessed by the ancient civilizations to feed and sustain their magnificent system of irrigation. In the modern age they are the source of multi purpose development schemes like the Mahaveli Diversion scheme and the earlier Gal Oya valley of the 50s which provided hydro power and brought millions of acres under cultivation. Their role in the life of the country has been in irrigation for food cultivation rather than in navigation and trade.

Population

According to the latest available figures, the population of Sri Lanka at the present time is 16.58 million. This represents an increase of about 30% since 1971 when the population was 12.69 million. This is an annual increase of about 1.5% which is good compared to other Asian countries. Sri Lanka has a mixed population composed of 3 principal ethnic groups, namely the Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims and smaller groups of Burghers and Malays. These races have entered the island at different times in the course of its history and contributed to form a single nation. The earliest were the Sinhalese who were Indo-Aryan in culture and the Tamils representative of Dravidian culture from South India. The Muslims were immigrants from the area of the Persian Gulf and Red Sea initially and later from Western India who came from the 7th century in an increasing stream as traders and settled in coastal areas of the island as commercial communities. The Burghers and Europeans in general are the descendants of representatives of Western powers which established themselves in parts of the island from the 16th century culminating in its conquest by the British. The latest immigrants to the island were the group known as Indian Tamils who were brought from South India by the British administration to work on plantations and hence inhabit part of the hill country. The present distribution of races in the island is 74% Sinhalese, 12.7% Tamils, 5.52% Indian Tamils, 7.5% Muslims and the rest those of European origin and Malays. As regards their geographical distribution, this has changed with the vicissitudes of history and the present position is that the Sinhalese are concentrated in the South, West and Centre, the Tamils are predominantly in the North and East while the Muslims are predominantly grouped in the South, East and West of the island.

The ethnic diversity in Sri Lanka has given it a multi cultural character as the races correspond to different faiths. While Buddhism is predominant as the religion of the majority community the other faiths have made their contribution in an atmosphere of religious harmony and freedom. The others are Hinduism for the Tamils, Islam for the Muslims and there is also a Christian community. This is the outcome of a historical background where originally the ancient civilization was Buddhist in character. In the course of history other races and cultures have entered the mainstream of history and given rise to cultural diversity.

Political

The early political system was that of kingdoms where the king had almost absolute powers tempered by respect for tradition and other responsibilities of his office such as patronage of the religion and the order which enjoined on him a life of virtue and righteousness. This system remained until the island fell to colonial invaders. British rule which followed was no less absolute except for the participation in the closing decades of the rule of a Legislature with limited powers. However the supreme power of the Governor remained. During that period there was local agitation for self government and political freedom from colonial rule. The grant of independence by Britain in January 1948 was accompanied by a Constitution which was modelled on that of Britain and embodied many of its features. These included provisions for two houses of Parliaments one of which was elected by universal suffrage and a Senate or Upper house in part nominated by the latter, where executive power resided and was exercised through a Prime Minister and Cabinet representative of the majority party. There was an independent Judiciary enshrining the principle of rule of Law. Under this constitution Sri Lanka was a Dominion in the Commonwealth and acknowledged the Queen of the UK as its Head of State who in turn nominated a Governor General as ostensibly her representative. This was in contrast to India which opted for a Republican constitution. Sri Lanka obtained such a constitution in 1972 when the earlier one was revised by the abolition of the Senate, and the replacement of the Governor General by a President nominated by the Government as Head of State with almost the same powers as the erstwhile Governor General. Another change was the adoption of Sri Lanka, its ancient name, as the official name of the island instead of Ceylon. There was a second revision in 1978 when the second Republican Constitution was adopted which vested executive power in the President as Head of State who was elected by a referendum. While other features of the earlier constitution were generally retained, a new feature, being the adoption of a system of proportional representation for voting of candidates, was introduced.

The Sri Lankan Constitution after independence has been unitary in character reflecting the centralized system of administration and rule inherited from British times. There was a significant change in this with the adoption in Parliament in 1988 of the Provincial Councils Bill which set up a system of devolution for power sharing between the Centre and elected Councils in the provinces. Power is exercised in terms of the classification of subjects into three categories which are exclusively for the Councils, for power sharing and the reserved list for the centre. This system was adopted in response to an agitation from ethnic groups and provincial opinion for a devolution of power which would recognise their interests and give them a share in responsibility. The operative principle of Sri Lankan politics is the party system which is yet another input from Britain and modelled on the same lines in being essentially bi-party in character. The main parties are the United National Party and the Sri Lanka Freedom party which have held power alternately with an equal number of terms. There are a number of small parties representative of minority interests and leftist ideologies. In their comparative philosophies the UNP throughout has been an advocate of free enterprise and open economy while the SLFP has been socialistic in approach favouring nationalization. In foreign policy the UNP was initially restricted in its initiatives while the SLFP was for universality, which led to Non-Alignment. These differences have narrowed, as Non-Alignment is the official policy avowed by all administrations and in other respects too they are less pronounced. The problems of development of Third World countries do not allow that

much room for variance of views, and hence there is a growing uniformity of outlook among parties.

Economy

The economy of Sri Lanka has developed through many stages. In the early kingdoms it was mainly agrarian based on the cultivation of its staple crop rice which it did very successfully through what was called the hydraulic culture. This was through an artificial system of irrigation which in this case was a feat of engineering. This rice age ended around the 12th century with the shift of the centres of power to the South-West of the country where it developed a commercial economy based on the export of spices. It was this setting that attracted European powers to the island and through their efforts to control the spice trade, conflicts arose which led to its conquest by Britain. British rule in economic terms was associated with the development of a plantation economy where commercial crops like coffee, rubber and tea were cultivated at the expense of food crops resulting in the island's dependence on food imports and export earnings for its revenue. These plantations were controlled by British business houses and were a facet of the colonial power structure. Domestic agriculture was neglected and so were the cultivators who constituted the bulk of the population.

These problems were inherited by the independence regimes whose main preoccupation had been to rectify them and create an independent economy which will ensure the best interests of the people. This has been a massive effort on many fronts. The main features are the campaign for self sufficiency in food through restoration of the hydraulic culture, immense multi purpose development schemes, industrial policy for local needs and export which has yielded good returns in fields such as garment manufacture, and diversification of exports to tap the country's full potential, a significant breakthrough being gems. Plans for the restructuring of the economy to enable efficiency in performance are afoot which would attract foreign investors for profitable joint ventures. In these economic perspectives for development there have been differences of approach as between different administrations. The SLFP governments favoured a policy of nationalisation operated through State enterprises. This was the keynote of policy from 1970 to 1977. This period saw other significant steps for liberation of the economy from foreign controls, in the nationalisation of plantations foreign owned interests like oil and insurance which brought all these activities under State control. There was a decisive break in this policy by the UNP administration where in accordance with its philosophy of free enterprise, it announced an open economy marked by relaxation of controls, reduction of subsidies, incentives for local industry, encouragement of foreign investment, and similar measures aimed at liberalization of the economy from state control, and freedom of action to the entrepreneur. A symbol of this new order was the creation of Free Trade Zones the best known being the Greater Colombo Economic Commission which is inter alia a centre for joint ventures with foreign partners. The open economy policy yielded impressive results in the increase in the GNP and the per capita income, the availability of goods and the decrease in unemployment. It created an atmosphere of buoyancy where the entrepreneurial spirit flourished. These healthy trends were adversely affected by the heavy load of expenditure on defence, which the government had to bear after 1983, owing to local conflicts. This tremendous burden had a disruptive effect on the economy, cancelled out gains and caused problems of crisis proportions. Coping with these problems has been the main preoccupation of the present administration of President

Premadasa which took office at the beginning of 1989 and this has been achieved with a measure of success which holds promise of good prospects in the future.

An important feature of economy of post Independent Sri Lanka has been the role of economic aid. From the outset it was a recipient from several sources of different kinds of aid but in the last decade a major source has been through the Aid Consortium of the World Bank which has made decisive contributions for the major development undertakings of the government. Its latest grant in October 1989 of 780 million rupees was of crucial significance and a measure of confidence. As regards the economic future of Sri Lanka this will depend on the extent to which it can generate sufficient income both foreign and otherwise which will enable it to finance its development schemes which are the key to infrastructural change and also measures aimed at the ameliorating of the needy sections of the community.

Sri Lanka in the World

Sri Lanka is one of the best known islands in the world, whether in ancient or modern times. The evidence for this is the number of names by which it is called and the wide range of literary references to it in the literature of the world. It was known as Taprobane to the Greeks, Palaesimundu and Taprobane to the Romans, Serendib to the Arabs, Tambapanni and Lanka to the Indians, Si lan to the Chinese and Ceylon to the European powers who came to the island from the 16th century and thereafter, until 1972 when it reverted to its classical name of Lanka. In literature it is referred to in the Indian epic Ramayana, in the works of the Roman writer Pliny who drew from reports of members of Alexander's expedition to India, in the Geographia of Ptolemy, in the travel literature of the time like the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea", in the writings of Arab authors based on reports of travellers like Abou Zeyd, the Tales of Sinbad, in the official annals of Chinese dynasties which are meticulous and precise records, in the books of visitors from China like Fa Hsian. This gives an idea of the range of countries and civilizations in which the island was known. References to it abound in modern literature, one of the best known being that of D. H. Lawrence. The reason for this wide knowledge of the island and its reputation was first of all its unrivalled location at virtually the dead centre of Asia and of the highways between the Far East and the African and Arab worlds. This situation was a matter of incalculable importance because it meant that it was a kind of port of call or staging post for travellers and mariners in those vast regions extending from the East African coast to the coast of China, traversing in the process so many centres of civilization such as the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the coast of India, Sri Vijay, kingdoms and principalities in South-East Asia and finally the immense coastline of China. Another reason were unique products which seemed to literally dazzle visitors and these were its precious stones. In the Arab chronicles this is a recurring theme and even the Chinese refer to this item. To visitors from the Far East such as the scholar pilgrims from China, the main attraction was Sri Lanka's reputation as a centre of Buddhism, held sacred therefore in the eyes of Buddhists the world over. The physical beauty of the island is referred to but clearly the precious stones were a greater attraction. It is possible that certain legends in the Homeric epic the Odyssey are echoes of the island, like the story of Circe and the sirens because these same legends are attributed to the island by mariners who refer to sirens luring the unwary traveller or the story of Kuveni as related in the chronicles. Clearly the country, the people and the government were very receptive to the outside world and this is demonstrated by the story of a Roman who was cast adrift on the shores of the island and was so impressed by the kindness and hospitality of the King and the inhabitants

that he took with him a delegation from the island to the court of the Roman Emperor Claudius. From all these accounts it is clear that Sri Lanka was not only well known but well liked.²

² See H. A. J. Hulugalle, "Ceylon Yesterday, Sri Lanka Today", Sturteforlaget- AB Sweden, *Early Travellers*, 1976.

Chapter 2

Factors Relevant to National Security

By factors relevant to National Security, one means those features in a State whether of geography, situation, internal politics, population, socio-economic condition, attitudes and ideologies and other facets which can render it vulnerable to security threats from outside and within. Every country is open to such threats but some more than others depending on the nature of these factors. States could ordinarily take measures to eliminate threats in respect of factors which are controllable but there are circumstances, such as external aggression by a powerful invader which it is not possible to unilaterally eliminate. In the order of security threats there is one which is exceptional and act independent and irrespective of specific circumstances. This is the vulnerability of all states regardless of size and power to attack and destruction in the event of a nuclear war. There are no safeguards which can be taken against mass destruction in a global nuclear conflagration, except the elimination of the possibility of nuclear war through the action of the international community. One will therefore only consider those features in a state which under ordinary circumstances and under normal conditions could open it to security threats.

As far as Sri Lanka is concerned its historical record throughout its 2,500 years of existence which itself is exceptional for a society is an open book, in which one can identify all these major security threats. Its history in the recent past going back to the start of the last decade is in fact an object lesson in this vulnerability to threats which was experienced as never before in its long history. The present time is therefore an ideal moment in which to undertake such an analysis and investigation, in that one has witnessed all these relevant factors at work in the last few years. There was a similar situation during the 13th century when a combination of factors beset the island and engulfed it.¹ This parallel shows the possibility of the recurrence of patterns of vulnerability in Sri Lanka.

The factors which are relevant to the national security of Sri Lanka are necessarily personal to it and may not apply to other states. These factors are rooted in its geography and historical experience and specific attributes which are built in. Other countries may have some of these factors but they would not operate in the same way which would be peculiar to the particular circumstances prevailing in Sri Lanka. Thus no general rule can be formulated that a particular set of factors could produce an outcome because in each country the factors would act differently. The factors relevant to Sri Lanka can be divided broadly speaking into two categories, namely, external and domestic. The external side concerns primarily its geographical location, its neighbourhood and regional environ, its relation and role in the neighbourhood and region. The domestic factors are mainly its geographical configuration, the composition of its population and being heterogenous relations within, its political system and the nature of its political forces and life, its economic situation and prospects, its social conditions from the standpoint of social justice and other aspects, its cultural profile and aspirations, its ideology and value, the general national psychology as borne out in history and the record of behaviour.

¹ For details see V. L. B. Mendis, *Currents of Asian History*, Lake House Investments Ltd., 1981, Chapter 5.

External

Geographical location is an unalterable fact of nature and geology that can shape the destiny of a country. It is an inescapable reality which can dictate the pattern of its history. The differences in the historical experience of countries is largely the result of their respective locations. The task of a nation therefore is to evolve a policy through which it could adjust itself to these realities. The cardinal geographical facts of Sri Lanka are threefold, namely:

1. Physically it is an island of considerable size;
2. It is located very close to the South Indian peninsula with only a distance of 15 miles between them at the narrowest point;
3. It stands at the centre of the region at a point which is almost equidistant from the East coast of Africa and the coast of China and is the intersection between the sea lanes linking Africa and the Far East and Europe and the Far East and Australia.

These three basic factors have been of incalculable importance as we shall see in shaping the course of history of Sri Lanka.

1. As an island it has no frontier or border problems as its boundaries are its shoreline. As an independent geographical entity it has developed a distinctive political and cultural personality and a civilization. It is an island which is physically compact and integrated unlike other states in the region which are groups of small islands like the Maldives or a vast archipelago like Indonesia. Its considerable size and the range of natural resources with which it has been endowed has enabled it throughout its long history to create and sustain a highly advanced civilization which was known and respected in its time, and until the present day. To that extent it belongs to the category of the great island civilization of the world like Britain, Ireland, Japan and New Zealand.
2. The advantage as an island, of being an independent state and personality has been cancelled out to some extent by the very close proximity to the Indian subcontinent at the latter's Southern extremity. As a consequence of this contiguity Sri Lanka has cultivated close relations with Indian kingdoms and has been a recipient of political and cultural influences from the subcontinent. At the same time this stream of influences has also engulfed the island in the affairs of the continent to its detriment. Thus Sri Lanka is in the paradoxical position that while it is an independent state and personality, still because of its links with the Indian subcontinent it is prone and susceptible to developments from that quarter which could be threats to its sovereignty. Conversely from the standpoint of kingdoms of the subcontinent, there is a tendency by the latter at various times to regard the island as relevant to their security. The classic expression of this view was the statement of the Indian historian Panikkar that "Ceylon is integral to the defence of India". This is a concept of the subordination of the island to the wider interests of the subcontinent. This juxtaposition of being apart but yet so close has given rise to a situation which has repeatedly manifested itself in history where Sri Lanka has been continuously and inexorably subjected to the impact of developments in the subcontinent at times with disruptive consequences. This is not to suggest that there is some deliberate pressure from that quarter to involve Sri Lanka but that the geopolitical situation tends to draw the island into the affairs of the subcontinent or be at the receiving end.

3. Sri Lanka's location on the sea lanes and maritime highways crossing the region represents another geographical dimension which alternates with the subcontinental dimension and conflicts with it. During the early civilizations Sri Lanka had extensive trade links in the region and served as an entrepot while being politically close to India. After the advent of European powers to the region, the history of Sri Lanka took an independent course quite free of events in the subcontinent until the expansion of British power in the subcontinent when the situation changed and the island became enmeshed in the power politics of British India. The pattern of events and relations which resulted from the geographical location of Sri Lanka should be further considered in some detail with special reference to the security implications and threats. The relationship with India became of paramount importance because of the contiguity where as we will see later even the early settlers in the island originated for the greater part in the subcontinent. This relationship was two-fold in character. Initially it was the Mauryan empire of North India, whose Emperor Asoka Maurya established friendly relations with the contemporary Sri Lanka ruler Devanampiya Tissa. One result was the introduction of Buddhism to the island through the personal intervention of the Emperor who sent his son as an apostle. This act established a very enduring foundation for the relationship between the two countries, as well as for the civilization of Sri Lanka which since became a centre of Buddhism from where it was propagated to the rest of Asia. It should be emphasized that this relationship with the modest kingdom of Sri Lanka and the exalted Mauryan Emperor was free of any security implications for Sri Lanka. In the second half of the first millennium, the focus of Sri Lanka's relations with India shifted from the North to the South where it entered into close contacts with the succession of kingdoms which arose in South India. As a result Sri Lanka was drawn into the power politics of these kingdoms and became to an extent diplomatically involved in them. At the same time there was a tradition of interaction between Sri Lanka and South India where aspirants to power or pretenders or unsuccessful candidates for kingship tended to recruit mercenary armies from South India to fight their battles in the island. This happened particularly during civil strife or secession disputes in Sri Lanka and there was one significant event where such a candidate who had taken refuge in a South Indian continent was installed as the ruler in Sri Lanka by his South Indian patron.² This interaction apart from opening Sri Lanka to infiltration from South India gave rise to a large population of South Indian soldiery in the island which was a grave security threat to the ruler. This was the background to the events which led to the conquest of Sri Lanka by the Cholian empire of South India in the beginning of the 11th century. In the aftermath of the Cholian conquest and following the expulsion of the latter, South Indian kingdoms continued to play a dominant role in Sri Lankan affairs both as allies of the ruler against his local enemies and at times in possible collusion with them. This was the context of the shift of the seat of power by the ruler from the North where the kingdom had stood for 17 centuries to the South-West in an effort to find a new capital from where to resume his sovereignty.³ This security threat originating in South India ceased in the 14th century with the conquest of that area by the Turkish dynasty of North India.

² *Ibid.* p. 84.

³ *Ibid.* Chapter 5.

Concurrent with the relationship with India, Sri Lanka also had extensive links with other countries both in the region and outside. The character of these contacts varied with the countries concerned but their context was the central geographical location of the island where it served as a staging extending from the coast of China to the Horn of Africa and thence to the Red Sea and beyond into the Mediterranean. These were friendly, cordial relations in which clearly the island and its people enjoyed a good reputation. Specifically these contacts on the western side were with Aksum and Persia and possibly Roman Egypt. On the Eastern side the focus was the relationship with China which was primarily cultural. Sri Lanka did play a role in the spread of Buddhism in China. In the centuries immediately after the Cholian conquest, Sri Lanka had the unusual experience of invasions from unexpected quarters. These were by a ruler from a kingdom near ancient Cambodia during the 13th century and by the naval expedition of Admiral Cheng Ho in the early 15th century which reportedly kidnapped the ruler of that time.⁴ These were both isolated events which however indicated certain changes in the power patterns of the region, with China attempting to assert itself. These trends were arrested with the appearance of European powers from the 16th century.

The first European power to establish contact with Sri Lanka was Portugal when its representatives visited the island in 1505. They entered into a trade agreement for the purchase of a quantity of cinnamon with the local ruler at the latter's request but did not show any particular interest in the island. The situation changed a few decades later when they were sucked into the power politics of the island as the ally of the ruler of lowland kingdom of Kotte against his brother in a civil war between them.⁵ From this beginning which gave them a foothold in the island, events led to their conquest of the maritime provinces of the island. Their efforts to capture the hill country kingdom of Kandy failed. In the middle of the 17th century they were ousted and replaced by the Dutch at the invitation of the ruler of Kandy, who was outwitted by the Dutch as his expectation was that they would confine themselves to the expulsion of the Portuguese but they remained in occupation of the earlier Portuguese domain. An uneasy relationship prevailed between them and the Kandyan king with the latter grudgingly entering into a trade arrangement with them but anxious to be rid of them though unable to effect it.⁶ The opportunity came around 1762 when the rising power of Britain in India showed an interest in the island and sent an envoy to discuss trade. Beginning with the contact the British became increasingly interested in the strategic value of the island in the context of their power struggle in India against France. With the outbreak of the Revolutionary war in 1795, Sri Lanka became to Britain a place of cardinal importance and accordingly they sent an expeditionary force which occupied the maritime provinces ostensibly in trust for the Dutch. However at the Treaty of Amiens of 1802 they gained possession of it and in 1815 they took advantage of dissension within the kingdom of Kandy to overrun it thus gaining control of the whole island.⁷

The conclusion which one can draw from the European experience was the importance which was attached by European powers to the island and the circumstances in which they gained possession of it. Two facts emerge. Firstly, the importance of the island to the Portuguese and Dutch was commercial as a source of supply of good cinnamon, and to the British and French it was strategic. The strategic importance centred round the relevance

⁴ See G. P. V. Somaratne, *Political History of the Kotte Kingdom*, Deepanee Printers, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka, p. 65.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 175.

⁶ For background see S. Arasaratnam, *Dutch Power in Ceylon*, Amsterdam, 1958.

⁷ For background see University of Ceylon, *History of Ceylon*, Vol. 111, Colombo, 1973, Chapter IV.

logistically of Sri Lanka in relation to the power struggle in India and in particular of the harbour of Trincomalee situated on the North-Eastern coast of the island. If there was one factor which attracted the British to Sri Lanka it was certainly the desire to gain possession of it as a vital naval base in their military and naval struggle against France from as early as the War of American Independence. Where in lay the strategic value of Trincomalee? It seemed to reside in three basic circumstances.⁸ As a harbour it was the finest natural port of its kind which it was said in extent and security could safely shelter the whole British navy of that time. As a naval base and in modern times a submarine base it was unequalled. In the entire coastline of India there was no harbour to compare with it. As Bombay was on the West coast, the East coast which looked on the crucial Bay of Bengal was devoid of a harbour except that as Madras, which was shallow and exposed to the onslaught of the North-East monsoon. Thus the particular merit of Trincomalee at that time was that it was the key for domination of the Bay of Bengal and hence indispensable to Britain in the setting of the expansion of its power in India. At that time European statesmen were aware of its importance which was stressed by William Pitt the British Prime Minister and Napoleon Bonaparte both of whom are on record as extolling the value of Trincomalee.⁹ Another advantage of Trincomalee was that its hinterland was relatively bare and hence occupation of it did not have serious territorial implications. It would have been possible theoretically to lease it which proposal was made by Britain to the Dutch at one time. Thus geopolitically and in terms of naval strategy in the Indian Ocean it seemed to Britain at the end of the 18th century that possession of this great harbour was a *sine qua non* for purposes of their power struggle with France in India and retaining possession of the latter. After the British conquest Trincomalee retained this image of a great naval base dominating the Indian Ocean even though it was supplanted to some extent by Singapore which was built and developed as a British naval bastion by Stamford Raffles from the early 19th century. In fact Trincomalee has a new lease of life and a re-emphasis of its strategic importance in 1942 when with the Japanese conquest of South-East Asia it became the sole remaining naval bastion for Britain in Asia.¹⁰

Under British rule Sri Lanka developed and acquired a new dimension of importance both naval and commercial in relation to the international sea lanes linking Britain with the Far East. The focus of this was the harbour of Colombo which was built in the last quarter of the 19th century on the South-West coast of the island and soon became a premier commercial port in Asia. It was referred to as the Clapham junction of the East and was a focal point not only for traffic between Britain and the Far East particularly Australia but served as the outlet for the plantation industry which was developed by the British in the island. In the world of modern commerce as much as in the naval strategy and logistics in the Indian Ocean in the past, Sri Lanka thus played a premier role. In terms of the security implications of these events, it will be seen that Sri Lanka initially was engulfed in the spill

⁸ Vide V. L. B. Mendis, *Advent of the British of Ceylon*, Tisara Prakasakayo, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka, 1971, Chapter IV.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ As a result of the Japanese invasion of South-East Asia, and the collapse of British resistance, Sri Lanka found itself dangerously exposed. In 1942 it was a target of attack by an aircraft Carrier Task Force under the Pearl Harbour veteran Admiral Naguno and the island experienced some bombing attacks. However this was not an invasion fleet but mainly a scouting operation to clear the Indian Ocean of hostile fleets. This they failed to do as the British East India fleet escaped detection. In 1943 the island was pitchforked into the centre of the Pacific war with the establishment in Kandy of the South-East Asia Command under Admiral Mountbatten. The island became virtually a base for the projected invasion of Japan from where campaigns were planned.

over of South Indian power politics which became a serious destabilizing security threat and encompassed the destruction of the two early kingdoms of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. Later Sri Lanka became a coveted source of cinnamon in the spice trade and thereafter a naval base and strategic point in relation to the security of the subcontinent and the contiguous zones. The concept was thus fostered that it was relevant to the security of the Indian subcontinent which conversely amounted to a threat in turn to the security of Sri Lanka as it could serve as a justification to erode the sovereignty of the latter. In addition as a commercial centre, with a fine harbour like Colombo it played a dominant role in the commerce of the region. The subjection of both India and Sri Lanka to British rule as colonies of the empire gave rise to a notion of a common political identity and link between the two even though Sri Lanka except for a few years at the outset was administered as an independent entity in no way subordinate to India.¹¹ This was a recognition by Britain that they were independent personalities. However after independence notions have gained of the need for some kind of link between them as a federation or other form. This has no precedent in the past as the island has never been regarded as a part of the subcontinent except when in the vicissitudes of history it was overrun by Indian kingdoms but these were shortlived in duration. Even the great Mauryan empire made a point of acknowledging the sovereignty of the Sri Lanka ruler and dealt with him on equal terms. The notion that there should be a link or subordination therefore has no basis in history.

In recent times there was a dangerous manifestation of the island's vulnerability to security threats and pressures from the neighbourhood arising from its geographical location. This was the situation where Tamil refugees from the ethnic disturbances in the island in 1983 found sanctuary in Tamil Nadu and trained and armed themselves as militants. They returned to the island and engaged in an armed conflict with the security forces of Sri Lanka in Jaffna in the North demanding an independent Tamil state known as Elam within the island. It is known that there were special training camps in Tamil Nadu where the militants were supplied with arms and given courses by professional instructors. There was besides a violent political campaign in Tamil Nadu in support of the militants which accused the Sri Lanka government of genocide and brought pressure on the Central government to take punitive action against Sri Lanka. The Indian government for its part lent its good offices and sent a number of emissaries in an effort to mediate and arrive at a peaceful solution. However the conflict continued unabated and escalated to a point when the New Delhi government by a show of force intervened in the middle of 1987 with an air drop of food supplies to Jaffna in violation of Sri Lankan air space and sovereignty. This was the prelude to the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Pact in July 1987 in which India undertook to disarm the militants and bring about peace as preparatory steps to a political settlement. As it happened the Indian troops were unable to disarm the militants who fought against them and a new conflict now ensued between the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) and the LTTE who were the leading militants. This conflict lasted for over two years at the end of which the Indian government agreed to withdraw the IPKF in early 1990, leaving it to the Sri Lanka government to arrive at a final settlement. This ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and the involvement of the Government of New Delhi and of Tamil Nadu and the active logistical and political support given to the militants in their armed conflict with the Sri Lanka security forces and the sequel of direct intervention by the Government of India and the stationing of Indian forces in the island is

¹¹ See Colvin R. de Silva, *Ceylon under British*.

a glaring case of the vulnerability of the island and its sovereignty to security threats and pressures from the neighbourhood. The lesson which this experience emphasized was the need for Sri Lanka to take these factors into account in its domestic policies and foreign relations. The alarming aspect of this experience was not only the arming and smuggling of arms to militants but also that Tamil Nadu served as a base for the conduct of an armed struggle by militants against the Government of Sri Lanka.

Domestic

Physical Configuration

The internal configuration of Sri Lanka is such that it does not lend itself to the possibility of a division from within. This is to say that any major mountain ranges or other physical features do not exist inside it which enable division or fragmentation of the country. As an island it is a compact land mass unlike other island states which are groups of islands like Greece, Indonesia or the Maldives. The only possible exception to this could be the peninsula of Jaffna in the North which juts out but it is connected to the mainland by a land bridge. It is true that in the centre of the island there is the Hill country which is marked by large mountain ranges which form something like a rock fortress but it has no easy outlet to the sea and the outside world and could be isolated as the Kandyan kingdom discovered. The rest of the country by and large is a plain except in the South-West which was uneven and mountainous as the hill country descended by stages to the coastal belt.¹² Sri Lanka has a large number of rivers and an abundance of water existing as lakes, lagoons, tanks and occupying around 370 sq miles of the surface of the country. Yet these rivers are not navigable being shallow and clogged by sand banks. They would not serve as a means for penetration or infiltration into the country from outside. Historically there is no evidence of such penetration except in the North where the Malwattu Oya which faces India was a highway for Tamil invaders. The area of vulnerability from a security point of view was really the open flat coastal belt particularly the coast line facing South India on the West and North which has traditionally been well known for smuggling activity but later was a source of illicit immigration into the island from South India. The illicit immigrants made use of the relatively short distance of the Palk Straits and a big traffic developed after the enforcement of immigration policies by the Government of Sri Lanka. The volume of illicit immigration assumed such serious proportions and became a threat to the island that concerted measures were taken by both governments to cope with it and a special Task Force was set up from the Sri Lanka army in coordination with the Navy to combat it. In this case there was ready cooperation between the State government of Tamil Nadu which enabled effective action to be taken. Such co-operation is thus essential but without it illicit immigration could become a grave security threat to the island. The nature of the danger has been seen elsewhere by the problem of the boat peoples, in South-East Asia. Contiguity to a highly populated country as is the case of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu which has a population of 50 million poses this danger.¹³

¹² See Elsie Cook, *Ceylon - Its Geography*.

¹³ See Sir Ivor Jennings, *The Constitution of Ceylon*, London, 1953; and *The Economy of Ceylon*, London, 1951.

The solution lies in close cooperation and joint measures between the authorities concerned. It should be mentioned that in the geographical history of the island there is no evidence of the threat of any major natural disaster or its imminence comparable to the danger of a tidal wave in the Maldives on which grave fears have been expressed by its President.¹⁴ After the geological upheavals which separated the island from the mainland, it was free of any serious disturbance except for the washing away of a considerable portion of the South-Western coast which is recorded in the chronicles. In modern times there is a problem of coastal erosion in the South due to damage caused to the protective coral reef around. In general one can conclude that there is no serious danger of a physical kind facing the island.

Population

Sri Lanka has a mixed population of three major ethnic groups but as the figures quoted elsewhere show, they are in proportions which give the overwhelming majority to one group namely the Sinhalese. However communal differences and conflicts have arisen although one normally associates them with situations like in Fiji and Guyana where the groups are evenly balanced. The causes in Sri Lanka seem to be the fear among minorities of domination by the majority community. The background is that the ancestors of these communities entered the island at different times in its history and became its common inhabitants living together in harmony. In distribution, for historical reasons the Tamils were concentrated in the North and the Musliims mainly on the coastal sea board where they handled the external trade of the early kingdoms. There was no evidence of communal discord and the Muslims as traders were closely associated with the ruler and had his patronage.¹⁵ Under British rule this state of harmony continued. At the end of the colonial rule, with the prospects of independence various demands were made to the imperial government by the minorities for consideration in the new constitution where some claims for representation were in excess of their numerical strength. This was partly inspired by the colonial policy of communal representation which fostered a communal consciousness. However in the early governements representatives of all communities had places in the Cabinet and worked in harmony.

The turning point occurred in 1956 when the SLFP government of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike which was an upsurge of Sinhala nationalism announced the adoption of Sinhala as the official language. The Tamils whose mother tongue was Tamil felt that their interests in the country and position particularly in the administration and education was endangered and started a movement for recognition of their specific personality and interests which was expressed politically as a demand for a form of federation. In this setting communal feelings were aroused and led to the violence and disturbances of 1958 when the Tamils were targets of attack by the Sinhalese resulting in loss of life and damage to property. This resort to violence disrupted the state of communal harmony and created rancour and a legacy of bitterness which was to poison future relations. The efforts of successive administrations to find a permanent solution were unsuccessful owing to extremist pressures on all sides. In the 70s the situation took a dangerous turn with the start of a militant youth movement in Jaffna demanding a separate State. It was marked by a wave of violence in Jaffna of armed robberies, bomb throwing, assassinations including the murder of the Mayor of Jaffna Mr

¹⁴ Refe Address by President Gayoom of the Republic of Maldives to the SAARC Summit, 1987.

¹⁵ See Dr. Lorna Dewaraja, *Muslims of Sri Lanka 900 - 1900*, A Study in Ethnic Harmony to be published.

Alfred Duraiappah. The violence increased to such a point that President Jayawardene appointed Brigadier Weeratunga in July 1979 to take charge of the situation as Commander of the Security forces with specific orders to wipe out the "menace of terrorism". The violence however continued unabated resulting in an incident on 23 July 1983 when 13 Sri Lankan soldiers were blown up in a mine.¹⁶ This sparked off waves of communal violence where the Tamils were targets of attack and they reacted unlike on previous occasions by resorting to armed conflict when thousands of Tamil refugees fled to Tamil Nadu and organized a resistance movement in Jaffna. This took the form of an armed insurrection by armed militants against the Government in Jaffna which was accompanied by terrorist attacks in other parts of the island. The Government employed its security forces to combat the insurrection which now openly demanded the recognition of an independent state of Eelam but the fighting escalated as the militants were well armed and supplied from foreign quarters. This was the background to the intervention of the Central Government of India and the signing of the pact for pacification pending a final settlement. The ethnic problem with the Tamils thus caused a serious political crisis in the island which threatened its sovereignty and unity with the prospect of a political division and which also impinged on its relations with India. The elimination of this problem through a definitive solution to it is therefore vital for peace and security in Sri Lanka in the future.

Another ethnic minority which gave rise to problems was the Indian Tamil population representing 5% of the total population.¹⁷ They were 9.23% in 1971 amounting to 1,424,000 persons. Their number has thus decreased owing to the policy of repatriation. They are the descendants of workers brought from South India by the colonial administration to work on tea plantations and inhabit the hill country where the plantations are located. Under the citizenship laws which were introduced with independence in 1948 many of them failed to qualify for citizenship and the Sri Lanka Government assumed that those who failed to qualify were Indian citizens repatriable to India. The latter did not accept this position and declared them Stateless. The problem of the Stateless became a major issue in Indo-Sri Lanka relations but it was resolved by the Sirima-Sastri pact of 1964 signed by Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka and Prime Minister Sastri of India under which they agreed to absorb the Stateless population on the ratio of 4 to 7 respectively. Under it there has been a process of repatriation to India and the grant of citizenship by Sri Lanka to very sizeable numbers. They have steered clear of involvement in the ethnic disturbances with the Sri Lanka Tamils. At the same time to the extent that they occupy the hill country and have a stranglehold on the tea industry they constitute a key factor as regards the political and economic security of the island.¹⁸

The Muslims have a long and impressive record of cooperation with successive governments and with other communities. No less than the Tamils they have played a significant role in the development of the island. Recently in the context of the ethnic disturbances with the Tamils signs of conflict have appeared between them and the Tamils in the eastern province where the latter is in the majority. These developments are significant and have caused concern in view of the Tamil demand for merger of the Northern and Eastern provinces. Unless these differences are sorted out in a peaceful manner, they would constitute

¹⁶ For details see S. Ratnatunga, *Politics of Terrorism*, Belconnen, Australia, 1988, Chapter 1 Also General Muttukumaru, *The Military History of Ceylon*, Navrang, New Delhi, 1987, p. 194

¹⁷ Refer S. U. Kodikara *Indo-Ceylon Relations since Independence*, Colombo Apothecaries, 1965, Chapter III.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* and 13 above.

a threat to the security of the area and the island as a whole. This survey of the population scene would show that it has become explosive in recent times and can be a fertile field for conflicts and divisions which would weaken the country and render it vulnerable to security threats from outside. As the pattern of recent events and past history has demonstrated an internal disturbance in Sri Lanka opens it to exploitation by outside forces acting in collusion with the local parties. These was a clear demonstration of this in the 13th century when the Sri Lanka ruler was deceived by the very allies whose help he had invoked.¹⁹ The lesson therefore is to ensure communal harmony and national solidarity at all cost and thereby deny openings and opportunities for infiltration and exploitation by outside forces. As far as the latter are concerned their motive is not territorial ambition or aggrandizement as such but rather a feeling that instability in the island would be a threat to their own security in the sense that it would open the latter to infiltration by an outside party to their detriment. It should be mentioned as an illustration that British anxiety to seize the island in 1796 was not only the strategic value of Trincomalee but also to prevent it from falling into the hands of the French. Conversely it could be said that an outside force would like to exploit communal or other division in order to destabilize the country so that it could gain a stranglehold of it, or make it a satellite. Either way the moral is that it is incumbent on the island to ensure internal solidarity so as to eliminate openings for destabilization by an outsider or pretexts for intervention on grounds of law and order or denial to enemies.

Political System

Politically Sri Lanka is a Parliamentary democracy with a constitution which was originally a "Westminster" type modelled on that of Britain with two houses and the Prime Minister as the chief executive. It was revised subsequently and the Upper House was abolished by the 1972 Republican constitution which replaced the Governor General nominated by the Queen of Britain by a President. There was a further revision of the constitution in 1978 under which the President elected by a referendum became the Chief Executive and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, like the US President. Whatever its limitations there can be no doubt about the success of Parliamentary democracy in Sri Lanka up to now, the proof being its unbroken continuity during which six administrations have held office after election through popular suffrage. This is a record of which few countries can boast in view of the vicissitudes in several of them which began with a similar Parliamentary system. The durability in Sri Lanka speaks well for the maturity of the people and society.²⁰

The system has operated as in Britain through parties representative of different opinions, ideologies and points of view and also groups. This identification of parties with particular groups of interests is unavoidable like the British Labour party which was originally a movement of workers. It is also inevitable that they would be identified with ethnic groups or special classes. This trend could vitiate the system and be alien to the spirit of democracy which was intended to rise above class and race. Party politics began in Sri Lanka with the United National Party which was composed of the old guard of freedom fighters who claimed to have gained independence. They were representative to some extent of land owners, the affluent classes and local aristocracy. They were replaced in 1956 in a very crucial political

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 1 above.

²⁰ See H. B. W. Abeynaike, Parliament of Sri Lanka, Lake House "Colombo", 1988.

change by the Sri Lanka Freedom Party which professed Socialist ideas and represented a nationalist and popular upsurge. At the same time there were smaller parties which were Communist and leftist and also a communal party of the Tamil minority. The Freedom Party held office almost continuously for 10 years and pursued policies which had mass appeal resulting in radical legislation.²¹ Their rule gave a popular and nationalistic tone to Sri Lankan interests which until then had been identified with the Western educated intelligentsia. The claim of the Freedom party was that it brought the common man into the political mainstream and this certainly radically changed the character of Sri Lankan politics. This was reflected in subsequent Socialist orientation of all political parties and their espousal of popular ideologies. In their manifesto for the 1977 election, the UNP described their policy as a Democratic Socialist Programme. The essential difference between the two major parties was in their economic policies as the UNP was for free enterprise and an open economy while the SLFP favoured State control and Nationalization.²² A major development in the 1977 election was the emergence of a strong Tamil party called the Tamil United Liberation Front which in their manifesto sought to establish an independent sovereign, secular, socialist state of Tamil Elam.²³ This represented a departure in the trends of party politics up to then, which anticipated and was the background to the later communal conflicts. Politically this militated against the unitary character of the political system and was a step towards division which as events proved became a security threat. As a means of resolving this problem and maintaining the essential unity of the country the Government adopted a Provincial Councils Bill for which purpose it also accepted the 13th amendment to the Constitution under which a system of devolution was set up in which power was shared between the Centre and the 9 provinces. The latter were provided with elective councils under Chief Ministers. The provinces were given limited powers of taxation and funds would be allocated to them by the Centre on the recommendations of a Finance Commission. Subjects were clearly identified and divided into 3 categories which were those in which the Councils had exclusive powers like Education, Housing, Agriculture, Health amounting to 37. Subjects where power would be shared were Higher Education, Planning, Tourism, Trade and Commerce comprising 36 subjects and those reserved for the Centre like National Security, Defence, Foreign Affairs. Conflicts over jurisdiction would be referred for decision to the Supreme Court. Devolution was strongly recommended by the Government of India for adoption by Sri Lanka and it was also written into the 1987 Pact between the two governments as a means recommended by India to afford a solution for the communal problem. Its merit is that it gives due weight and recognition to different sections of the community and country and should enable them to live in peace and harmony without fear of discrimination. On the other hand it is a relatively new experience to Sri Lanka because its knowledge and familiarity for the last 175 years has been with a unitary system. There is the danger that far from placating local and sectional interests it may encourage them to take an independent course. In that sense devolution could open the door to centrifugalism and fragmentation of the island to the condition it was in the 16th century when Portuguese writers claim that it was divided into 8 kingdoms.²⁴ The downfall of Sri Lankan civilization dates from the installation of independent kingdoms within the island which offered openings for infiltration and exploitation. A great responsibility rests

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Vide 4 above.

therefore with the Centre to ensure that the system of devolution is implemented in the right spirit and with the provinces to act with good sense and work in harmony with the Centre for their collective good. Any failure in this regard will be a grave security threat to the island which will take it back to its darkest days. It will be an irony if a step which is intended to combat division becomes a licence to it.

Questions have also arisen not only in Sri Lanka but in several other countries about the role and value of the party system. In Sri Lanka it has operated and served the nation well for several decades and there is no reason why it should not continue. There is a tendency however for a party in office to monopolize power and use it primarily for itself and its followers thereby alienating the rest of the people. This could lead to the so called one party state which is a negation of the party system and can become a form of totalitarianism. The correctives for this are a healthy strong opposition and the upholding of the basic institutions of a democratic society such as the Rule of Law, freedom of speech, as well as an enlightened administration free of discrimination. Otherwise there is a danger that the dictatorship of a party can distort the democratic process and drive a section of the people underground from disaffection and a feeling of alienation. This could cause a climate of hostility and discontent which could become an internal security threat or provide an opening for exploitation from outside. The recent JVP insurrection is a case in point of such a revolt which almost caused a political upheaval in the country, the causes of which were a sense of discrimination and frustration of certain sections of the society. This aspect of security threats arising from economic and social circumstances will be discussed later. Security threats to a State are of two kinds, namely external powers with hostile intent and internal upheavals which cause conditions of anarchy and open it to invasion. Sri Lanka as a developing Third World country belongs to the category of States which are vulnerable internally to social and economic unrest. In the history of the Third World countries hardly a day passes without some unrest or up rising and a state of unsettlement or destabilization caused by socio-economic factors and grievances. Therefore these aspects have to be appreciated as sources of security threats because this is what they ultimately become where governments are unable to provide for the well being of their people. This need not necessarily be due to omissions of the governments because most of the latter are handicapped by crippling lack of resources. At the same time they could be attributed to the short sightedness of governments or wrong priorities or misjudgments in planning or sheer insensitiveness. Whatever the reasons these factors are certainly on a par as far as Third World countries are concerned with military, strategic, logistical considerations and power politics.

Economy

No serious assessment can be made of the security threats to a country without an appreciation of the trends in its economic development. Without that background any assessment made would be unrealistic. This is particularly true of Third World countries which are virtually in a state of chronic susceptibility to economic disruption and destabilization as a result of adverse market forces or inimical trends in the commercial environ as well as setbacks to agriculture due to local factors like bad weather. Such adverse trends could have far reaching consequences and could give rise to political and social upheavals with the potential to be security threats. Third World governments therefore have a tremendous responsibility which can affect their very survival as well as peace and security in the country not only to stabilise the economy and create a durable one but also to

accelerate growth and advancement in the interests of social justice and equitable income distribution. Third World countries have not shirked these responsibilities but their efforts have been greatly handicapped by scarcity of resources, structural limitation and legacies of the colonial past which in many cases distorted their economic progress. Sri Lanka is one such case of a Third World country which is endeavouring to accelerate its economic development and for the purpose restructure its economy, but it faces many odds no less than others like it. Its basic problem is that the mainstay of its economy and principal foreign exchange earner has been its export crops of principally tea, rubber and coconut. Before 1978 they provided 89% of the total export earnings of the country and 8% of its budget. However in the last years there has been a drastic change and reversal of the situation as the earnings declined to 50% and in 1987 to as low as 37% and the contribution to revenue fell to 4.4%. Also the share of all the export crops combining major and minor in the export trade of the country has declined from 79% to 43% in the last ten years. The volume of export of the principal crops has dropped and prices have stagnated.²⁵ The inescapable conclusion from this is that the old order has changed and the country can no longer depend on it as in the past to be the life saver which can bring the economy around. There is no doubt that it will continue to be a vital source of income but it is insufficient to sustain the economy or bear the burden of economic expansion to meet the rapidly rising expectations. This decline of the relative contribution of the major crops has to an extent been offset by the growth of industrial exports which is one of the noteworthy developments of recent times. This is mainly in textile and manufactured garments and other minor products which are now almost replacing tea as a principal earner. Other avenues have been opened with impressive results, like the gem trade and tourism but the future of these new openings is not exactly unclouded. The competition in textiles is very heavy and the headway so far is because of exhausted quotas of rivals and there is the overhanging shadow of textile quotas by developed countries. In fact the whole question of finding export outlets for manufactured products of developing countries is assuming vital importance in view of the protectionist trend among developed countries. Tourism as recent experience has proved is notoriously sensitive to security situations.

The problem of strengthening the export trade thus remains and also of opening other avenues. This is linked up and a facet of the overall economic ideology of the government. The administration of the 1970 to 1977 period was not less mindful of the urgency of accelerated development but ideologically they opted for achieving this through State ownership and nationalization of foreign owned concerns and a wide network of controls numbering about 6000 and subsidies. However this policy did not meet expected objectives and in fact CDP fell from 4.4 to 2.9%. This was combined with stagnation of prices for export crops. Another negative factor was the low level of domestic savings because of the climate of controls which was also a disincentive to foreign investment. Though the government did not openly oppose foreign investment the image of Nationalization was certainly a deterrent to countries like Japan, USA and the policy of appropriation of foreign holdings however justified did not help in attracting investors. All this meant heavy pressure on government to finance development while meeting a heavy bill on social welfare, free education and other benefits. The UNP administration after 1977 was a dramatic change in economic policy in its pursuit of a liberalised, open economy free of controls, subsidies and

²⁵ Refer Budget speeches of Finance Minister of Sri Lanka in the House of Representatives, 1985 & 1986.

going out of its way to attract investors through tempting packages and incentives like tax reliefs and major infra structural ventures like the Free Trade Zone which was given effect in the Greater Colombo Economic Commission. This attracted many investors and led to joint ventures on a considerable scale. There is no doubt that this, policy infused a new spirit into the economy and stimulated entrepreneurship on a large scale. This was shown in an increase of the average growth of the real GDP of 5.6% over the period 78-83 compared to 2.9% average growth for the period 1970 - 1977 under the SLFP. However despite measures to activate the private sector to take a share in industrial and other expansion, the bulk of the efforts was financed by Government, which meant in effect through foreign aid and credits.²⁶ In the field of traditional agriculture which historically is one of the great feats of the ancient civilizations, the government certainly achieved almost spectacular results through its massive Mahaweli diversion scheme and many other schemes for agricultural development in many cases through application of scientific technology. These opened the way to reclamation of large tracts of land, establishment of colonization schemes, growth of townships and the emergence of a new world in neglected parts of the country. These achievements called for massive investments which were by and large met by the World Bank through their Aid Consortium. There is no doubt that as a result the country went a long way to realize self sufficiency in its staple foods.

Despite all this activity and outward buoyancy, the economy did not grow in a real sense as the traditional infrastructure remained unchanged as much as dependence on stagnating export crops and headway if at all was due to massive investments by government which meant that expectations of the open economy were not fulfilled. The growth was primarily in service activity in areas like construction and engineering which were stimulated by the large scale building activities undertaken by the government. Yet with judicious budgeting, good management and careful deployment of expenditure, it could have been possible for the country given the prevailing climate of international support and goodwill to extract better results but these hopes were shattered by the untimely and tragic ethnic conflict of post 1983 followed by the insurrection of the so called JVP which have caused colossal damage to life and property and forfeited for the country much of its image and reputation. It raised defence expenditure to 20% of the annual budget. This was far more than any country could take, least of all a developing country and these setbacks have certainly set back the clock of progress. The Government at present faces staggering burdens of rehabilitation, restoration, rebuilding a virtually war torn country but also curative problems to deal with the roots and sources of these problems. This has to be done in a situation where no new means of earning and increasing incomes and resources have appeared. The best it can do for the present is to implement its declared Policy framework which was announced in the 1987 budget and to pursue the objectives laid out in its public Investment programme for 1987-1991 subject to any adjustments which are required by changing circumstances.²⁷ Of course the success would depend on two factors namely the level of resources available for investment and the parallel performance of the private sector in sharing the load. No doubt the key to it for much time to come will be foreign aid but in this connection a negative factor is the mounting burden of debt service which has risen to around 27%. Unless international action is forthcoming to ease this burden this will have a strangulating effect on Sri Lanka and similar

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ See Report on Public Investment 1987-1991 issued by National Planning Division of Ministry of Finance, Colombo.

economies. To sum up therefore, surveying the position as it stands at present it is difficult to forecast a bright future for the economy in the immediate future. Times of stress are ahead which are containable given good statesmanship and the immediate objective is to sustain the economy until with time it may be possible to develop new resources and find avenues which will enable the economy to break out from its dependence on an outmoded structure and move ahead. To that extent there is no immediate danger of the economy becoming a source of security threats unless there is a further breakdown in the internal political situation or recurrence of conflicts. There has been a striking trend towards normalization which has been the subject of international comment and if this continues Sri Lanka could look forward to a smooth recovery and resumption of its drive towards accelerated economic development.

Social Conditions

A fact which was insufficiently appreciated in the past has come to the forefront recently with the priority given by the present administration to the Poverty Alleviation Programme. Indeed the adoption of such a programme was a timely recognition of both the existence of a problem of dire poverty and its gravity. It seems that beneath the facade of a growth rate, in the GDP of 5% during the 1978-87 period and other achievements there exists a very serious problem of poverty, distress, deprivation and want by at least 30% of the population which it is stated are below the poverty line. The gravity of their plight has been illustrated by the following figures which have been cited. In the budget speech for 1988, the Prime Minister stated that over 50% of the pre school children are affected by nutritional anemia.²⁸ It has been estimated that among 20% of the population the calorie intake has dropped from the already low level of 1490 to 1368. The bulk of those affected are in the rural sector where 43% are believed to have an intake which is well below the minimum level of 2200. The proportions of households living below the poverty line amount to 83% in the rural sector and 14% in the urban. 7.5 million people are receiving food stamps. These conditions could be attributed to a high incidence of unemployment and concentration of it in particular age groups and areas. The number of unemployed at present is estimated at 1.2 million and 35% of them have GCE qualifications and 70% of them are in the Southern and Eastern parts of the island. 40% of the unemployed belong to the 20 to 24 age category. The overall picture is that a substantial part of the population is unemployed, living below the poverty line, and undernourished with an average calorie intake, well below the minimum level and they include a large proportion of educated youths. This amounts to a lethal combination of frustration of youth, malnutrition and extreme poverty. These figures tend to belie some of the claims which have been made about the achievements of the open economy era, the fruits of which would seem mainly benefitted about 10% of the population. While it deserves credit for the increased rate of growth which was a boost to the economy as a whole, this growth was not targeted properly to benefit the needy quarters. The government perhaps relied too much on the free enterprise gospel of percolation of wealth without taking steps to ensure its channelling in the right direction. The result has been a potentially explosive problem of disparities, inequalities and a seriously disadvantageous position for the rising generations of the country. The country unfortunately was called upon from 1987 to 1989 to pay a grievous price for these omissions in the so called JVP insurrection which whatever its ostensible

²⁸ Refer Budget speech of Sri Lanka Minister of Finance the Hon'ble D. B. Wijetunga in 1988.

reasons had its roots definitely in the privations and mood of despair of a vital part of the community. It is no accident that it was primarily of Southern origin because these were the areas which suffered most as they lay below the poverty lines. This insurrection was next to the conflict with the North, the most serious security challenge to the country which during 1989 posed a very grave threat to the government by its massive and wanton destruction of property and toll of lives.²⁹ However thanks to firm measures by the security forces under the direction of the Minister of Defence the terrorist movement was destroyed, the turning point being the capture in quick succession of its leaders. In the aftermath, the government appointed a Presidential Commission to report on the youth problem and their grievances in the context of the insurrection and the Youth Commission report which was published recently has made an in depth analysis of the problem and recommended many corrective and remedial measures.³⁰ The root cause of the insurrection according to the report was the frustration and anger among youth of the country particularly in the rural areas at their alienation from the political process due to the nature of party politics, denial of avenues of employment and deprivation of opportunities to play a role in the country and self advancement due to language handicaps such as not knowing English, political influence in appointments, an employment structure which was too narrow and undiversified and left thousands of educated youth languishing without hopes and the bureaucratic apathy of the administration and insensitivity of the powers that be in their preoccupation with the pursuit of power and clinging on to it and corruption. This had resulted in demoralization among youth and a loss of confidence in the prevailing political and social order and drove them to revolt as the only option in their view open to them. The Report saw the problems of reclaiming them to the fold of society by restructuring some of the relevant institutions and pursuing new policies which would rectify these grievances and restore confidence. The far reaching recommendations of the Commission include setting up of a Nominations Commission to supervise and lay down procedure for appointments, adjustments in the electoral process to allow special representation for youth at different political bodies, the creation of a National Education Commission to plan and formulate policy, a restructuring of the educational system so as to cater effectively to current needs, and the establishment of machinery to evolve and implement strategies in the development of human resources, in industry and agriculture such as would meaningfully absorb the man power potential. These measures in the background of steps towards demilitarization and promotion of ethnic harmony could go a long way towards removing the grievances of disaffected youth and bringing them back to play their due role in the mainstream of national life. Any failure in this regard would be tantamount to leaving a delayed action mine which could have explosive consequences in the country in the future. In such an event it could be a grave security threat of which one should take cognizance. As stated earlier action focused on the youth problem in terms of the recommendations of the Commission along with the special programmes announced by the Government, notably the Janasaviya programme the outstanding merit of which is its focus on those in direst living below the poverty line, should help the nation to emerge from this crisis.

²⁹ C. A. Chandraprema, *JVP Insurrection 1987 - 1989*, Colombo 1989.

³⁰ See Presidential Youth Commission Report, Colombo, 1990.

Cultural Profile

The history of many states in recent times has seen the emergence of a new factor which threatens to disrupt their harmony. This is the cultural factor representing the attempts of a particular group within society to dominate it or demand special recognition. Such manifestations have generally been of a religious nature and are somewhat unexpected in view of the progressive secularization of the state in the modern world. The lethal potential of this factor can be gauged from the devastation caused in Europe by the Wars of the Reformation and the religious wars of the past. In culturally heterogeneous societies this is a lurking danger. Sri Lanka throughout its history has been free of such manifestations and it is noteworthy that the recent ethnic disturbances were not accompanied by religious strife. Sri Lanka has a tradition of cultural harmony between the various groups and denominations which seems likely to endure. This can be attributed primarily to the spirit of tolerance of Buddhism which is the principal faith in the country and which is unique in the world for its advocacy of non-violence, peace and harmony. This tradition of harmony has been a feature of its early history because not only did faiths live in peace but Buddhist rulers were patrons of other religions. It is well known that Muslim and Christian communities were befriended by the King of Kandy when they were persecuted. Muslim traders played a prominent part in these early kingdoms and handled their overseas trade. As between the Buddhists and Hindus, the next largest religious community, there was harmony as the two faiths had affinities and interacted in the island. There are Hindu elements in Buddhist worship and followers of both have common places of pilgrimage. Thus without one faith attempting to dominate over the others and given the official policy of tolerance and freedom of worship, the different faiths coexist and interact in a spirit of concord and amity.

The same picture exists in respect of cultural streams. Historically the island has been subject to European and Indian cultural streams and it was from the latter that the cultural patterns of the early civilizations were derived. In the colonial context Western culture had a paramount place and gave rise to a Western educated intelligentsia which culturally had a dominant role at the expense of the indigenous culture. After independence there was a cultural and nationalist upsurge marked by the priority given to the national languages and new cultural patterns emerging. Among them too there is harmony because although English may not occupy a premier position, it still continues to be a vital cultural force while the nationalist cultures have come to the forefront both revivalist of past traditions and also innovative. One can therefore safely exclude the cultural factor as a source of security threats because of the consistent record of interaction and understanding which has prevailed throughout.

Ideology

In the 20th century and in particular the post 1948 world the ideological factor has become one of the principal motifs in international relations and internal political evolution of States. This was intensified after the Second World War, when the Cold War between the USA and the USSR became also an ideological rivalry which was re-echoed in the internal politics of states. In the latter specially among the newly liberated and independent countries, there was a vogue towards Marxist ideologies which was expressed in the emergence of Communist and other left wing parties. They were viewed with concern by the traditional conservative inclined parties which took office in these states with the grant of independence. The rise of

leftist ideologies was related to the social and economic problems which these countries faced as a result of the colonial experience as their economies had been distorted giving rise to grave income and living standards disparities. In effect the colonial systems had fostered elitist minorities who also controlled economic power. A reaction against this was inevitable.

Sri Lanka was a classic case in this regard because with independence, the leftist parties came to the forefront in a way which alarmed the government. They gained 18 seats in the first parliament after independence and obtained 20.5% of the popular vote. That paradoxically was their peak because in the 1970 election their share fell to 1.3%. They did not pose therefore any major threats to the early governments after Independence. However they had influence and prestige because of the high calibre of their leadership and caused considerable industrial unrest. Also the left wing movement was divided from the outset between Communist party owing allegiance to Moscow, even a Trotskyite party, a Socialist party with a nationalist flavour called the LSSP. The political spectrum underwent a dramatic change with the 1956 election when a Sinhala nationalist government with Socialist inclinations was elected and the ruling UNP party suffered a severe setback. The new Sri Lanka Freedom Party government as it was called also took the wind out of the sails of the leftist parties which moved towards an understanding with it. This had its sequel in the 1970 election when they formed a coalition with the SLFP government of Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranaike which was in office till 1977. These political events reflected a decisive change in the ideological situation where the old leftist parties moved into coalition with the Socialist oriented Freedom Party ending in a sense the earlier ideological postures. This ideological gap was further narrowed when in 1977 the UNP announced in their election manifesto a programme which is democratic and Socialist. This adoption of Socialist objectives by all the major parties in a sense terminated the old ideological dichotomy between the Right and the Left and created a kind of uniformity. It is in this context that one has to view the rise of the JVP parties with objective which were a revival of Marxist ideologies in their most uncompromising and crudest forms. The JVP movement began as an insurrection against the government of 1971 which was destroyed in a few months but caused widespread damage and showed a spirit of daring and determination. After an interval of over 15 years when the movement went underground there was a violent recrudescence in the context of the Indo-Sri Lanka Pact ending the ethnic conflict. This led to a two year conflict which severely taxed the government before it was overcome. The importance of the movement was in its primitive type of Marxism which was its basic ideology. Its policy declaration of 1977 was a faithfully crude repetition of basic Stalinism as it was attempted in the USSR in the thirties. Their objectives as stated in the policy declaration included the following.³¹

Abolition of prevailing capitalist mixed economy and replacement by fully planned Socialist structure; ownership of all natural resources and wealth to be vested in the State; Banks and credit institutions and monopoly industries to be nationalised without compensation; payment of debts and interest due to foreign banks and institutions to be abolished; Foreign trade to be solely by the State; wholesale trade to be State monopoly and retail trade cooperative; heavy and small industries to be state monopoly; private ownership to be abolished; steps to be taken for collectivisation, mechanisation of agriculture; revolutionary land reform to be implemented; establishment of State and cooperative farms.

³¹ Vide 30 above.

It will be seen that with the JVP, the ideological scene in Sri Lanka went back full circle to the beginnings and even beyond that to primitive Marxism. This was unusual at a time when these were being discarded the world over. The JVP movement and its leadership have been destroyed and the implementations of measures announced by the government should bring about its elimination from the country. Any failure in this regard could result in a recurrence in these ideological patterns. That could be a security risk considering the damage that was caused by the last JVP manifestation. In developing countries such manifestations are not a matter for surprise. The rise of persons in desperation, revolts against wretchedness, exploitation are the stuff of history and in recent times there were the Naxalites of India, the Huks of the Philippines and in medieval Europe the Jacquerie in France or the rebellion of Wat the Tyler in Britain. Third World countries with agrarian rural base where problems of rural masses are overlooked have a susceptibility to such upheavals.

National Psychology

It is not easy to define national psychology and many will question whether such a thing exists. In multi racial, plural societies there are obvious difficulties in the way of identifying a national consciousness. Yet societies are the product of history and over the years and centuries people of different origins have lived and interacted together within a common mould. In the process they would have acquired a kind of profile or image which marks them out in comparative terms in the eyes of the outside world. This would be evident in reference to peoples and societies in travel literature where particular traits and qualities are ascribed. There are many such references to Sri Lanka which invest it with different attributes. The predominant trait on which there is concurrence is the receptivity of the people and the tradition of hospitality. This runs as a thread of continuity linking the past with the present from the time when Sri Lanka was a favourite port of all and trading station to modern times when it has been under the rule and influence of successive foreign powers.³² This has bred a mentality that is open hearted and open to the world. This is captioned in tourism literature as a kind and helpful disposition and a national image of goodwill. Historically this is the product of its geographical location where it was from earliest times an international crossroads where foreigners met and mingled with no trace of local hostility. In fact this friendly disposition led to difficulties in dealing with foreign powers. This is not a form of naivete or simple heatedness which has been associated with societies in Oceania. The Sri Lankans have been a very sophisticated people with a highly advanced civilization and hence their outlook was a mature and spontaneous response reflecting a deep humanism which was probably the outcome of their Buddhist heritage and of other cultural influences. Thus whatever the internal differences within the society it is possible on historical grounds to attribute to it a national psychology of inborn goodwill and receptivity to the outside world and a deep international sense. This would explain its pioneer role later in movements for regionalism and internationalism. This is a very positive factor from the standpoint of security threats because it means the absence of xenophobic or aggressive attitudes such as could provoke disruption and conflict in external relations.

³² See Sir Emerson Tennent, *Ceylon*, Tisara Prakasakayo, Colombo, Part V. "There is no island in the world, Great Britain not excepted, that has attracted the attention of authors in so many distant ages and so many distant countries as Ceylon. There is no nation in ancient or modern times possessed of a language and literature, the writers of which have not at the same time made it their theme".

The above is an attempt to make a comprehensive survey of the range of factors from which security threats to Sri Lanka may be apprehended. One can conclude that its geographical location and regional environ has placed it in a position of susceptibility to foreign incursions which its history has borne out. Such incursions are invariably invited by internal upheavals or exploit such situations and hence it is incumbent on the island to ensure that such situations are eliminated. In recent times such conflicts have arisen from ethnic and social factors and there continues to be potential for them to recur. Hence their speedy solution is of urgent importance as a means of achieving internal solidarity which would remove exploitable openings for outside intervention.

At the same time one should consider whether this image of national goodwill is compatible with the record of violence and brutality which has characterized the island during the last decade and tarnished its reputation. Throughout histories there have been societies with national psychologies which have been described as cruel, aggressive, hegemonic, racist, intolerant and have records of inflicting violence on others. It is in contrast to such societies that Sri Lanka can claim to have a reputation for friendliness and a benign disposition as its keynote has been religious tolerance and harmony. This does not exclude the possibility that when feelings of people are aroused and inflamed, they can resort to violence and this has been true of all societies however good a reputation they may otherwise enjoy.

This is the short explanation for the recent breakdown of moral and human values in Sri Lanka where ethnic differences have turned into armed conflict and terrorism on the one hand and grievances among disadvantaged sections especially of the youth have taken the form of a terrorist insurrection against the Government on the other. They have resulted in violence and atrocities associated with terrorism and obliged the Government to resort to strong counter measures to protect human lives and property, uphold the administration and enforce law and order in the land. Amidst this turmoil and bloodshed certain redeeming features stand out like the protection afforded by members of one community to another at the risk of their lives and the religious harmony and tolerance which has prevailed. The manifestations of cruelty witnessed in Sri Lanka recently can therefore be attributed to the psychology of terrorism with its characteristic lack of scruples in the desire to gain their ends and this has been true not only of Sri Lanka but wherever there has been terrorist activity.

Part II

Security Problems and Policies after Independence

Chapter 3

National Security

Ordinarily national security means the safeguarding of the territorial and sovereign independence and identity of a state from invasion, occupation and acquisition by a foreign power. It also means the protection of the government in power against internal subversion and insurrection, seeking to overthrow it by unlawful means. There are many instances in history however where such insurrections have succeeded in overthrowing the government and replacing it and becoming thereby the government in power. An insurrection could therefore be a serious security threat to a government specially because it may be engineered and supported by a foreign power with a view to destabilising or gaining a foothold. Either way these are very grave security threats to a State which should therefore concern itself with them and take appropriate measures to prevent them or deal with them should they materialize. There have been instances of both in the history of Sri Lanka in both ancient and modern times. Of civil wars and insurrections, there were those of the 6th century, of 1971 and 1987 while invasions have been plentiful particularly during the 2nd millennium of this era the latest being the token invasion through a forced food drop by India in 1987.

A sovereign state is therefore obliged to think about security as a matter of self preservation however much it may find the idea morally distasteful, as a kind of thinking evil of others. At the same time it is not unusual for States to talk openly about it, make frequent pronouncements or disclose its ideas. Such statements may if at all be made on specific occasions like a declaration of war, a cessation of hostilities, a commemoration of such events when it is customary to invoke patriotic feelings or affirm determination. Allusions may be made on such occasions to the wider objectives of security which would transcend pure territorial integrity and extend to spiritual beliefs, cultural heritage, national personality and other dimensions. Security from these angles would be perceived as the preservation of a certain way of life of a society, a distinctive personality which may be referred to in popular language as a nation or people. However such attempts to spell out the connotation of security may occur mainly at moments of stress or under emotional strain because ordinarily it would suffice to refer to the need for security as a corollary to independence and sovereignty. The particular context and character of world affairs at a given moment is also a relevant consideration because it is a time of peace and freedom from tension, the need to dwell on security would not arise but in times of trouble and upheaval it would be a preoccupation of states. There are some states like those of Central Europe from whom security is a major preoccupation because of their historical experience where their frontiers have been shifted frequently in the course of wars or been manipulated by designing powers. A classic case of such insecurity over frontiers is the experience of Poland in the last few centuries.

The security factor was a dominant consideration for the Government of Sri Lanka from the outset of the attainment of Independence. It was the major theme in the statement of the Prime Minister Mr. D. S. Senanayake when introducing the Motion for Independence in the House of Representatives to the effect that "that this House rejoices that after many years of subjection to foreign rule, the struggle of the people of Ceylon for freedom has culminated in the attainment of Independence". The burden of his statement was that Independence was tied to security and without the latter the first was meaningless. He frankly confessed that "I

cannot accept the responsibility of being Minister of Defence unless I am provided with the means of Defence".¹ Accordingly he announced the conclusion by his Government of two Agreements with the UK for Defence and for External Affairs. The terms of the Defence Agreement were that

1. The Government of the UK and the Government of Ceylon will give to each other such military assistance for the security of their territories, for defence against external aggression and for the protection of essential communications as it may be in their mutual interest to provide.
2. The Government of Ceylon will grant to the Government of the UK all the necessary facilities for the objects mentioned in Article 1 as may be mutually agreed. These facilities include the use of naval and air bases.
3. The Government of the UK will furnish the Government of Ceylon with such military assistance as may from time to time be required towards the training and development of the Ceylonese armed forces.
4. The two Governments will establish such administrative machinery as they may agree to be desirable for the purpose of cooperation in regard to defence matters and to coordinate and determine the defence requirements of both Governments.
5. The Agreement will take effect on the day when the constitutional measures necessary for conferring on Ceylon fully responsible status within the British Commonwealth of Nations comes into force.²

As this Agreement embodied the security concept of the newly independent administration it was necessary to specify its provisions as above.

The External Affairs Agreement was a companion to the Defence Agreement in that it covered its diplomatic and political implications. The gist of its provisions was that the Government of Ceylon will adopt and follow resolutions of past Imperial conferences; that as regards external affairs, the communication of information and consultations the UK will accord to Ceylon the principles and practices observed by members of the Commonwealth and that Ceylon for its part will reciprocate in equal measure; the two governments will be represented by the High Commissioners; UK will give its full support to Ceylon's application for UN membership; that obligations of the UK Government under international law would devolve on Ceylon.³ The need for this Agreement was to provide for certain responsibilities which would devolve on the two states in the implementation of the Defence arrangements.

The announcements of these Agreements in Parliament had a hot reception from members of the Opposition. Apart from objections by them to the principle of a Defence Agreement, it was pointed out that Ceylon was unique as the only country among the British colonies in Asia to attain independence on the basis of a Defence Agreement. The implication was that independence was in exchange for the Defence Agreement. The gravamen of the Opposition charges was that the Independence conferred was not real Independence but fell short of that accorded to others, the difference being mainly that it was the outcome of the Agreements. The Prime Minister had much explaining to do and his statements provided a good insight into the prevailing security concepts of the UNP Government which took office

¹ Hansard, House of Representatives, December 1947.

² Vide Appendix 1, Lucy M. Jacob, Sri Lanka from Dominion to Republic, Delhi, 1973.

³ *Ibid.*, Appendix II.

as the first Independence Administration. The keynote of the Prime Minister's position was that "Defence is the primary obligation of an independent state" and that in the kind of world which existed at that time a small nation could not feel secure without large and experienced armed forces. Ceylon he felt, was particularly vulnerable because of its strategic situation commanding the highways of trade. Its importance was such that control of it could enable the power concerned to dominate the Indian Ocean. A vital consideration personal to Ceylon was that control of the highways of trade by an enemy would mean starvation for the island as almost happened during the Japanese war. In the circumstances the Prime Minister frankly admitted his inability to discharge his duties both as Prime Minister and Defence Minister without the necessary means at his disposal which were in his own words "I require guns, tanks, fighters, bomber aircraft, aircraft carriers, cruises etc - What is the good of freedom if we cannot defend ourselves."⁴

His justification for the choice of the UK as the defence partner was broadly speaking twofold. The first was an indebtedness to Britain as the country which gave Ceylon its freedom. This amounted to a faith in the British people who "helped us to become a free nation again". This sentimental feeling for Britain as a kind of natural bond was expressed later by the Ceylon High Commissioner in the UK, as a belief that Ceylon "was a little bit of England". The other powerful reason adduced by the Prime Minister was his faith in the Commonwealth not only as a refuge for security but also as a bastion of freedom and peace. In the Throne speech of 1951 it was declared unequivocally that "My Government is keenly aware of the significance and unity of purpose of the Commonwealth in the effort to preserve peace in the post war world and will use its utmost endeavour to cherish and safeguard these valuable associations". Elsewhere this same sentiment was reiterated that "if there is any one body of people who are for maintaining peace in this world I believe it is the peoples of the Commonwealth".⁵

Apart from these sentimental and ideological reasons of which he made no secret, there were other compelling considerations for the choice of the UK as a defence. This was the economic reality that the UK was Ceylon's international banker which had in its custody the Sterling reserves of Ceylon. Also at the time the UK unquestionably held a dominant position in the economy of Ceylon both through its ownership of tea and other plantations but as the market for the bulk of the island's exports specially of tea. To say at that time that the UK had a stranglehold on the economy of the island was not an exaggeration. In these circumstances from an economic standpoint there was scarcely an option. It followed that the UK had a vested interest in the security of its economic assets.⁶

It should be said that from Britain's point of view the Defence Agreement was an ideal arrangement from the viewpoint of safeguarding both her very substantial economic interests in the island but far more keeping a watch over her far flung interests in South and South East Asia at a time of great turmoil in that region. The fabulous reputation of the island in respect of security in the Indian Ocean thus made it an unrivalled watchtower and base for Britain at this juncture. Just as Sri Lanka had faith in Britain and its people the same could be said of British feelings as the colonial relationship had been a relatively peaceful one as much as the attainment of independence. Besides in the ruling intelligentsia in Sri Lanka, Britain found kindred spirits who share the same intellectual and political ethos and traditions.

⁴ Hansard, H of R, December 1947.

⁵ Hansard, H of R, Feb. 1950.

⁶ See W. H. Wriggins, *Ceylon - Dilemmas of a New Nation*, Princeton 1961.

From Britain's viewpoint too it could not have found a more suitable partner. The pact was therefore a clear case of identity of interest of both Sri Lanka and the UK at that time and in the context of the prevailing situation.

While these were the outward reasons given by the Prime Minister which to a large extent are tenable, it is necessary to go deeper into his motivations penetrating even subconscious considerations. The Prime Minister, the Hon'ble D. S. Senanayake must be viewed as the father figure of his time, a highly respected elder statesman and the authentic spokesman of his party and government. His concept of security was that it was an integral part of independence and without it the latter could not exist. It seemed as if the idea of security had precedence over others. In a note tabled by him in Parliament in 1945 he had already committed himself to a defence pact with the UK in stating that "We were aware that Ceylon's strategic position was or might be a position of danger to ourselves. We should be ready and anxious to give all assistance and facilities that His Majesty's Government might require provided that we were given control of our own country."⁷ The Prime Minister's outlook was rooted in a simple belief that security was a prerequisite for independence. He was reflecting the genuine beliefs of a leader of that age who had witnessed two world wars and the fate of countries particularly small ones which were engulfed in them. He was particularly sensitive to the impact of the Japanese war when the countries of South East Asia had been overrun by the Japanese war machine which had almost invaded Sri Lanka and subjected it to aerial attacks. As he admitted the disruption of communications had threatened the island with starvation. Of course the choice of Britain as a defence partner appeared paradoxical in those circumstances considering Britain's initial retreat before the Japanese when there was the prospect that even Sri Lanka may be abandoned. As it happened US naval victories eliminated this danger and the island became the headquarters of SEAC where the counter offensives against Japan were planned. To that extent Britain emerged with prestige from the war even though its credibility was shaken earlier. In the aftermath of victory Britain was recognised next to the USA and the USSR, as a world power.

The experience of the Japanese had therefore left an unshakeable conviction in the mind of the Prime Minister about the need for a security shield for the attainment of independence. He referred specifically to the post war world as "not the sort of world in which small nations can be secure". He thought of the world in terms of classic pre-war balance of power terms where powers were in a state of rivalry, engaged in a struggle for mastery. One could hardly expect him at that time just two years after the inauguration of the UN to have much faith in its credibility and potential to ensure international peace and security. When pointedly asked by an opposition member as to why he did not rely on the UN, his reply was that so long as disarmament is not universal, so long as independent and sovereign states maintain their military forces, so long will we too need the aid of such forces. It is clear from this reply that as far as the Prime Minister was concerned his view of the world was as a continuation of the pre-war political order of imperialism and power rivalries. That being his standpoint his resort to a defensive pact was a logical step.

While as a general explanation this may be acceptable the question still remains as to whether he had any specific perceptions of security threats and if so what they were. Did he have any tangible fear in mind, a definite threat against which he felt it necessary to be on guard? The fear of starvation implied that he had some concrete idea in mind about an agency

⁷ Hansard, H of R, Dec. 1947.

or power capable of causing it, by disruption of communications. A careful survey and analysis of his pronouncements suggest he harboured a number of fears. First of all as a shrewd and perceptive statesman with years of being at the helm and the experience of security matters during the war he had no illusions about the state of Asia at that time in the aftermath of liberation and the Japanese war. He probably saw it as a potential sea of trouble which could engulf his country like a tidal wave as was happening in a number of Asian countries. The opinion of an outsider, the American expert on Asia, Owen Lattimore whose expert knowledge cost him his career in the Macarthy purge, writing in 1949 is pertinens viz "Asia is out of control. From Suez to the Western Pacific we face one problem after another which we cannot settle either by an American decision or by joint action with countries that we consider allies".⁸ The Prime Minister had already seen a sample of this in the holocaust of the partition of India followed by the Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir. Similar signs were appearing elsewhere like Burma, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya, Indo-China compared to which Sri Lanka was an oasis of peace. There was an upheaval in China the outcome of which was predictable at that time. That together with the lengthening shadow of the Soviet Union over East Europe as a consequence of the Potsdam Agreement created the awesome spectre of what Reagan was to describe decades later when that description no longer fitted as an empire of evil, meaning an expansion of Communism. Besides the problems in these countries were not a straight confrontation between Democracy and Communism but a confused, tortuous medley of factional conflicts, insurrections, Communist guerillas, nationalists, anti-colonial struggles and imperialist backlashes all of which were tearing these countries apart and providing fine independence revelries indeed. While Sri Lanka was free of such turmoil the ingredients for it were not lacking in the well organised leftist parties, nationalist aspirations, a reaction against lingering colonial domination in the commercial sphere, problems of inequalities and poverty and other typical features of a post colonial society. They were potential tinder which could ignite given contact with these outside forces. The answer in the Prime Minister's mind lay in insulation which meant the protection of a powerful Navy and what better ally for this purpose than Britain which at that time still continued to rule the waves. By interposing a defensive barrier he hoped to keep the island free of these destructive tides.

While the opposition was critical of a Defence pact with the UK, the Prime Minister expressed other fears that the UK may not be as enthusiastic as was Ceylon for a defence pact and could conceivably seek bases in the Maldives to the detriment of Ceylon. This was probably pure tactics because it is unlikely that the UK thought of the Maldives seriously at that time and they got round to it only much later in the 60s after their withdrawal from Sri Lanka. Scattered throughout these statements there are some pointed references to Russia which may afford a clue to the real thinking of the Prime Minister on security. Referring to Britain he states that "they can keep us free even from the intrusion of the Russian menace". He further states that "I will do all I can to prevent the leftists from having alliances with Russia". The Prime Minister never concealed his disapproval of Russian policy which he described as "Enslavement of the world is what we believe to be their attitude - We will never be with Russia until she gives up her policy".⁹ He was specifically against "Russian method of penetrating into other countries and disturbing the good relations that exist in those

⁸ Owen Lattimore, *The Situation in Asia*, Little, Brown & Co, Boston, 1949, p. 3.

⁹ Hansard, H of R, Dec. 1947.

countries". It is clear that what he had in mind was the possibility of a link between Russian Communism and the leftist forces in the island. No less than Sir John later, the Prime Minister had strong views on leftist politics in Sri Lanka at that time. The leftist parties in Parliament were relatively large and they had leaders of exceptional ability well acquainted with world affairs. Although their following was mainly urban they had considerable influence and in 1947 they fomented industrial unrest in the country. In general in the climate of political turbulence elsewhere in Asia, the Government was inclined to view them with suspicion and concern and possibly over react. They were uneasy over leftist threats of imminent revolution and these fears are echoed in the following statement of the Prime Minister in Parliament that "We must guard against the intentions to bring about revolution in this country, to bring chaos. When it is known that a party has set itself to bring about bloody revolution, division and hatred in a country, we must be on our guard".¹⁰ It is the possible link between these parties and Russian Communism with a view to promoting revolution that the Prime Minister most feared. He felt that Britain and the US as bastions of democracy would be his best protection against these threats. Thus the fear of leftist activities in league with outside forces was at the heart of his thinking on security and shaped his concepts.

It is very significant and somewhat paradoxical in this context that the Prime Minister in a speech made in the UK expressed himself to be in favour of the middle way "in external affairs and suggested that Sri Lanka should keep aloof from power blocs on the one side or the other. In the same speech he expressed the opinion that the position of Sri Lanka should be similar to that of Switzerland. What is significant is that these were the identical sentiments which Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike himself would subscribe to later as the basis of his foreign policy. On another occasion he was quoted by Mr. J. R. Jayawardene as emphasizing the same position in his instructions as regards Sri Lanka's stand at the San Francisco Conference. These were "We are not concerned about favouring this bloc or that bloc. We are concerned about maintaining peace in the world".¹¹ In the light of these statements it would seem that the gulf between him and Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike was not that great. The truth seems to be that while he felt at home within the Commonwealth and welcomed a nexus with the UK, this was not a case of being tied to the chariot wheels of the West but of gaining protection from hostile forces all round at a critical juncture. Probably his first preference was for an independent stand but knowing the world as he did he knew this was not practicable and therefore opted for an alliance for defense to serve until such times as the dangers subsided. He was thinking essentially of his time and place when he felt that his first duty was to shelter and nurture the tender plant of independence from the tempests raging outside.

It has been fashionable in discussing security perceptions at the time of independence to refer to fear of India as a dominant motivation. This has been ascribed as a reason for the defence pact with the UK. Some thought that it was aimed against India and others that it should have been concluded with India. There was also the view that Sri Lanka could have a pact with India as well. There is no indication at this time of any fears being expressed about the threat of India. In fact the idea of a pact with India was dismissed by one member of Parliament on the grounds that India was in a mess. This was a reference to the partition

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Hansard, H of R, Aug. 1951.

upheaval. Even the Indian press did not seem hostile to the pact and a comment of that time in the Madras "Hindu" was quoted in Parliament which stated that "Support of a South East Asia Pact may be justified in the future when India, Burma, Indonesia, become a powerful bloc but in the world of today Ceylon's close adherence to Britain in intelligible and her defence must necessarily depend on British assistance".¹² These fears about India belong to a later date when Indo-Ceylon relations had been soured over the problem of stateless and the two countries did not see eye to eye on matters of foreign policy. At that time publicity was given to chauvinistic statements of Indian writers particularly that of K. R. Panikkar the historian to the effect that Ceylon was integral to the security of India.¹³ What these writers stressed was the need to incorporate Ceylon in a regional defence agreement, or that India and Ceylon should have a common strategy and common defense. Nehru in 1945 even referred to Ceylon as an autonomous unit of the Indian Federation but he repudiated such views later and assured Sri Lanka several times of India's friendship and disavowed any unfriendly intentions. There is no firm evidence at that time of any hostile intentions of India towards Sri Lanka or any perceptions by the latter that India was a security threat. Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake may have sensed some potential danger but it does not seem as of the defence pact with the UK was related to it.

The defence pact with the UK and to some extent membership of the Commonwealth embodied Sri Lanka's concept of national security at that time. As these decisions coincided with the attainment of independence they tended to convey an image of Sri Lanka as a kind of partner in defence with UK. The aspect which was highlighted particularly by the Opposition was not that Sri Lanka resorted to it for its own genuine protection but that it had lent itself as an ally to the UK and was committed to follow the latter's line in its foreign policy. Not all the assurances by Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake and his UNP successors that the pact operated through mutual agreement where either side was free to agree or decline allayed its critics and dispelled these fears. There was always the lingering thought that as a result of the pact Sri Lanka was under obligation to follow the British line. This aspect was to come to the forefront in 1954 under the Prime Ministership of Sir John Kotalawela over the question of membership of SEATO.

In the intervening period in 1952, Sri Lanka entered into the Rice-Rubber pact with the People's Republic of China.¹⁴ Its significance from a security standpoint was that it dispelled the notion that there was a perception of a security threat to Sri Lanka from China as a rising Communist power. It showed that this Communist bogey was not so active an element in Sri Lanka's security perceptions particularly because as a result of the pact Sri Lanka had to run the gauntlet of American displeasure which retaliated by stoppage of economic aid to Sri Lanka in terms of the Battle Act. This was a positive sign that as alleged there was no question of Sri Lanka being tied to the chariot wheels of another power. Despite this evidence to the contrary this became the major issue as stated already during the administration of Sir John Kotalawala from 1953 to 1956. Sir John affirmed his adherence to the foreign policy as pursued by his illustrious predecessor in the matter of the Defence pact with the UK and membership of the Commonwealth, both of which he readily endorsed. However, his foreign policy was marked by a new departure which seemed to be innovative and running counter to the old traditions. This was his initiative in convening the conference of what were known

¹² Hansard, H of R, Dec. 1947, statement of Mr. A. Ratnayake.

¹³ S. U. Kodikara, *Indo-Ceylon Relations since Independence*, Colombo 1965, pp. 24-26.

¹⁴ For details see 6 above and Sir Ivor Jennings, *Economy of Ceylon*.

as the Colombo Powers which were India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Burma. This was a new direction because until then Sri Lankan initiatives had been within a Commonwealth framework. The object of this initiative was ostensibly to meet as independent Asian states with common problems, to exchange views on them and also express their thinking on major international views which were relevant to their interests and existence like nuclear bombs. It was hoped they could form a common front though differences between some of them make this difficult. The Colombo Powers conference which took place in April 1954 was successful and good as far as it went. Its most significant contribution was the consultative role it played in respect of the Geneva conference on Indo-China taking place at that time. Anthony Eden made a point of checking with Sir John and obtaining endorsement of the Colombo Powers for the recommendations of the Geneva conference.¹⁵

The Colombo Powers initiative coincided with the efforts of the USA to promote SEATO as a military organisation like NATO but among Asian states to combat the spread of Communism and protect them against threats from the latter. India rejected it outright and Burma followed suit. However Sir John took the step of convening a meeting of the Colombo Powers to be held in Rangoon in September 1954 to consider the position of these countries as regards membership in SEATO. India, Burma and Indonesia indicated their categorical opposition to membership and hence declined participation and as a result the proposed conference did not materialize. However Sir John's own apparent hesitancy about stating his position unequivocally and keeping an open mind conveyed that he was favourably inclined but not ready to openly declare it for fear of local political repercussions. A number of other events occurred at this time which gave credence to this view. One was a statement reported to have been made by a senior British naval chief Admiral Norris to the effect that Trincomalee would be available for use in the event of a conflict.¹⁶ There was a further report of discussions of Prime Minister Churchill and Anthony Eden in Washington where the question of the availability to Trincomalee to the USA had been discussed and it was thought that a request to that effect could be made to the USA and would be treated favourably. As if to support this view of Sir John's pro-Western inclinations, the permission which he gave around this time for the routing through Sri Lanka of Globemasters carrying French troops for combat in Vietnam was given publicity. He did not help matters when in reply to a question about this, he stated that "even if the devil wants my help to fight Communism I am on his side".¹⁷ He was also quoted as saying that "SEATO is nothing but a defence agreement and we may or we may not avail ourselves of the benefits of that arrangement as the case may be".¹⁸ This attitude of ambivalence was in contrast to the categorical refusal of India, Burma and Indonesia and justified views that Sir John appeared to be in favour of it. It is interesting to observe his description of SEATO as an innocuous defence agreement like the pact with the UK. This seemed to be an underestimate of the implications of membership in SEATO where unlike the Defence pact which was optional it would have involved Sri Lanka militarily in any operations undertaken by the USA with the consequence flowing from that of Sri Lanka becoming a target for retaliatory attack.

It would be seen therefore that the question of membership in SEATO introduced a new security concept for consideration by Sri Lanka. This was whether it was ready to accept the

¹⁵ Sir John Kotelawala, *An Asian Prime Minister's Story*, George Harrap & Co London, 1956, p. 122.

¹⁶ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, *Hansard*, H of R, 1954.

¹⁷ Sir John Kotelawala, *Hansard*, H of R, 6.12.1955.

¹⁸ Sir John Kotelawala, *Times of Ceylon*, 23.2.1955.

obligations of belonging to a military organisation which was an entirely different thing from being party to a bilateral defence agreement based on mutual needs and wishes. It would seem from the discussions in Washington and the reported statement attributed to Admiral Norris about Trincomalee that there seemed to be some change of direction in the offing in Sri Lanka's concept of national security. This was not through any extension of the UK Defence Pact but that the concept of defence was to be broadened to an association with collective security. As it happened no final decision was taken either way by Sir John during his tenure. However there are grounds to think that some rethinking was under consideration which may have extended the scope of Sri Lanka's security concept. The reason for this could have been some disenchantment with the Colombo Powers which after the Bandung conference of 1955 seemed to have lost momentum. Also in the course of Sir John's global tour of 1954 he had established good contacts with the western world and mended fences with the USA over the China Pact and he was therefore receptive to close diplomatic relations with Europe and the USA. It should be added that in the USA he made it very clear that he had reservations about the value of SEATO and similar approaches, because as he said "What SEATO failed to take into account is the fact that the defence of Asia must first be an economic defence. The military aspect is secondary".¹⁹ Thus Sir John was quite explicit about his reservations over SEATO. Why he wavered was that he probably thought of it as some kind of broad defensive umbrella in which he could take shelter on some optional basis. He wanted therefore to watch the situation without closing the door outright. He did not stay in office long enough to give a final answer as his party was defeated in April 1956. This ended the tenure of the UNP.

With the defeat of the UNP one chapter ended in the security approaches and policy of the government and another one began. This was the contribution of the new Prime Minister Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike who had a radically different approach to the problem of national security to which he gave expression while in the Opposition. These ideas and concepts which almost revolutionized foreign policy were part of a different political philosophy and a new outlook on international affairs. His considerable initiatives and decisions in foreign affairs were in accordance with these ideas which were the subject of many pronouncements in Parliament and in international contexts. These views may be examined from three angles namely national, regional and international. At a national level his view of Ceylon was that it should be a Switzerland and occupy a place in Asia that Switzerland did in Europe. He thought that it should practice a Switzerland type neutrality and that Colombo will prove to be a Geneva of Asia. Similar sentiments had been expressed by Sir John and Mr. D. S. Senanayake but they were not matched by a policy of neutrality. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike however stated clearly that being the Switzerland of Asia means for Ceylon following a neutralist policy. The precise meaning of this policy of neutralism was spelt out by him on a number of occasions in the following terms "the philosophy, the reasons and the grounds behind the policy that we follow of neutralism, of a refusal in fact to align ourselves with power blocs and the corollary to that attitude of living and letting live, of being friends with all and having friendly relations with all countries irrespective of their political ideologies."²⁰ Elsewhere he explained "That is the philosophy from which flows our foreign policy, the idea of neutralism. What is this neutralism? It is just that we do not range ourselves with one power bloc or another to divide the world into two worlds each hating the

¹⁹ 15 above, p. 140.

²⁰ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, *Speeches and Writings, Reception to President Tito*, p. 443.

other, each fearing the other which must necessarily lead to war. We like to be friends with all - while understanding our difficulties and differences. So that in the course of time perhaps the world will find some stable state of society that will banish this ever constant and ever present danger of war". This theme of no alternative to peace was further stated viz "In the old days people fought without smashing up all mankind; today we cannot fight without smashing up all mankind and we cannot run the risk of anything like a widespread war. So that we have to live and let live in our own interests".²¹ This concept of neutrality it will be seen discounted the idea of any security threat to Ceylon. If at all there was such a threat it was the risk of involvement in the power politics of military and political blocs. His view was that membership of such blocs intensified the threat to peace while their elimination could defuse the situation and lower tensions leading to conflict. His view of the world was as one where war was not feasible because of its "smashing of all mankind" implications. This was a diametrically opposite view of the world compared to that of Mr. D. S. Senanayake, who saw it as the sort of place where it was not safe for a small state to exist without protection. From this theory of a neutralist posture Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike moved further to what he described as dynamic neutralism. He categorically denied that this was a static attitude, a purely intellectual posture. Instead he emphasized that it was a form of active involvement in which "we are very much committed-committed to the hilt - to peace in a positive form, to friendship amongst all nations and to the peace and prosperity and happiness of all mankind". As regards the practical application of this policy of neutralism which called for a participatory role, Prime Minister Bandaranaike later expressed the view on the basis of his actual experience of international conflict that "the Foreign policy of the Prime Minister of India is probably the best for Asia, may be for the world today".²² This faith in India was based on its diplomatic record of the Geneva Peace Agreement which he described as a victory of the Indian point of view supported by England and France and also India's adoption of the Panchashila as the basis for its Treaty with China in 1954. He saw in the policies of India a practical demonstration of dynamic neutralism in action. It was to him the conversion of a defensive strategy for peace through defence agreements into a positive approach for the same objective of peace.²³

The defence agreement was one of the two principles of the security concepts of the UNP the other being membership of the Commonwealth. This was the equivalent of the regional angle on security. Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake's faith in the Commonwealth in deciding to become a member was not as a military bloc for the sake of security but as was indicated in the Throne Speech of 1950 "My Government is keenly aware of the significance and unity of purpose of the Commonwealth in the effort to preserve peace in the post war world". He saw it as a bastion of democracy and a force for peace. What he had in mind conceivably in view of his known distrust of Communism was that it would be an ally in preserving democracy in the face of the threats of Communism. Of course there no question of the military prestige of the Commonwealth at that time because of the naval strength of Britain. Initially Prime Minister Bandaranaike's view of the Commonwealth was coloured by his political philosophy which had in it an anti colonial strain. He tended to regard the defence agreement and the use of Ceylon bases as vestiges of the colonial link. Hence he

²¹ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Address on "Ceylon in a Changing World" to Commonwealth, Press Association in London, 5.7.1956.

²² S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Hansard, H of R, August 1954.

²³ *Ibid.*

referred to the return of Katunayake as completing independence. For this reason he did not seem enamoured to his early statements of the Commonwealth. This impression was strengthened by his renunciation of imperial honours, postponement of the visit of the Queen Mother who was due in February 1957 and the whole controversy about remaining in the Commonwealth. In April 1956 he stated that "Regional relationships are more important than the Commonwealth relationship. We have to look further into this matter of remaining in the Commonwealth". His reservations seemed to be on two grounds, namely whether membership would detract from sovereignty and whether it would restrict his freedom of action in having pacts with other countries. On the first India's membership and its formula of a republic seemed to allay his doubts. On the second he was hesitant not being quite sure of what precisely he wanted. The question revolved round the principle of membership in a group or in a regional pact. The problem in his mind was whether membership in the Commonwealth or some bloc would be compatible with his neutralist policy. He wondered whether the Commonwealth because of its mixed membership could develop as a third force between the super power blocs or whether it could support his neutralist policy. The heart of his dilemma seemed to be some uncertainty over the need for some security arrangement following the return of the bases signifying his rejection of a defence agreement type security arrangement. What then was the alternative. Questioned on this at a meeting of Ceylon students he had expressed doubts on whether the world situation constituted a security threat to Sri Lanka or whether any country would be disposed to invade it, or even whether Britain's occupation of the bases would have afforded sufficient security. This amounted to an affirmation of his original position of faith in the policy of neutralism as the only course open to it. He also referred at the same time to the possibility of a regional pact with countries like India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia and Malaya. He did not pursue this idea later but the reference to it shows that he had ideas of regional security in association with states in the region.²⁴ However later Prime Minister Bandaranaike affirmed his wish to remain in the Commonwealth but as a republic in the manner of India and his decision was welcomed by the Commonwealth colleagues. This was clearly a change of heart because when Britain became the target of attack over the Suez invasion and Opposition members demanded withdrawal from the Commonwealth in protest, the Prime Minister stood up for the latter arguing that the aberration of the British government did not justify such a step. In effect therefore Prime Minister Bandaranaike finally accepted membership in the Commonwealth irrespective of the fears and implications he had expressed earlier but without explicitly recognizing it as a force for peace as his UNP predecessors had done. The conclusion therefore about his concept of regional security is that while he did not think that the Commonwealth would serve this purpose and personally preferred some regional arrangement, in the absence of the latter he was content to accept the status quo. Certainly his heart seems to have been in some regional approach which would be a realization of his idealistic visions and aspirations of an earlier day when in 1947 at the historic Asian Relations Conference of New Delhi he stated that "Asia may well hold the key to the world situation that is developing and may not only provide the battleground but also prove to be a deciding factor in a future conflict. Her position may even be more crucial. On her may depend momentous issues of whether there is to be a war at all. If Asia is free, reasonably strong and united that future may well be averted. It remains for us to make a supreme effort to achieve unity and

²⁴ See Lucy Jacob, *Sri Lanka from Dominion to Republic*, p. 78.

harmony in Asia. I am sure that it is the hope of us all that this conference is only the beginning of something much greater - a federation of free and equal Asian countries working not merely for our own advantage but for the progress and peace of all mankind".²⁵

At a global level Prime Minister Bandaranaike re-echoed the view of Third World countries in expressing his support of the United Nations as a force for peace. He referred to it as the only life line of humanity and a collective moral force of the world which had in certain cases exercised a restraining influence. He therefore acknowledged its value in certain circumstances but he never regarded it as some automatic panacea to solve problems. On the contrary he was very conscious of its limitations and his comments on its efficacy were guarded. Referring to its role over the Suez crisis he stated that "the United Nations has emerged with its prestige increased, and that the US President is satisfied that they must work through the United Nations in the future to secure the peace of the world. I hope the other great powers will also come to that conclusion and the United Nations will now come into its own. Of course it is absurd to expect the United Nations to make its decisions effective over great powers quickly and to overawe them. It has no forces of its own. It can only bring a moral force to bear on these powers. I think these questions of a permanent force, police force, however small - certain amendments are needed to the UN Charter - will also be taken up without undue delay".²⁶ It is clear from these comments that he did not pin his faith on the UN as the sole instrument to secure peace. Rather he regarded this as ultimately the responsibility of the countries themselves. This was expressed in the following statement - "We want peace as far as it is possible to obtain it in conformity with honour and justice. That is why in the pursuit of peace some of our countries feel that we do not wish to align ourselves with power blocs - power blocs built on mutual fear and suspicion. It is best that we do not align ourselves with these military blocs either of the West or East. This will preserve friendship with all and try to provide a bridge between the two. Dynamic neutralism is in the interest not only of our own countries but of mankind as a whole".²⁷ Thus his recipe for world peace at a global level was dynamic neutralism by a Third force which will attempt to exercise a restraining and constructive influence. It called for a kind of moral armament.

The best known steps and the most representative of his policy on national security taken by him was his withdrawal of the bases provided under the Defence Pact to Britain and resumption thereby of Sri Lanka's control over them. This was in accordance with his view that "The continuance of bases in this country by Britain fundamentally conflicts with my entire conception both of my philosophy on foreign affairs and the position I visualize for my country in world affairs or in the trend of foreign events".²⁸ Following an announcement to this effect he had discussions with the UK government and agreed with the latter on the procedures and modalities for handing over. The British government responded to the request in a friendly spirit but the UK press and opinion in other quarters were not so unruffled. In fact the reaction in certain quarters seemed to justify Prime Minister Bandaranaike's apprehensions about the likelihood of the bases being used by the West in a conflict. A proposal was made that the Commonwealth countries should oppose the withdrawal and gain

²⁵ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March 1947 refer, Speeches and Writings, Department of Information, 1963.

²⁶ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, UN Day Speech, 24.10.1958, 26 above, p. 427.

²⁷ 26 above, p. 375.

²⁸ London Times, 10.5.1956.

possession of the bases themselves for use in defence of the Commonwealth. This was referred to as a Commonwealth plan but it was not pursued seriously. It shows however that given certain circumstances the bases agreement could have caused dangerous consequences for Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister hinted that although Sri Lanka had not joined SEATO, it had still provided bases to the latter through the Defence Agreement with the UK inasmuch as the latter was a SEATO member. As regards the Agreement itself there was no formal abrogation as such because in theory Sri Lanka had acted in terms of its provisions in opting out. In any case the withdrawal of the bases removed one of the main operative provisions of the Agreement and to that extent nullified it. The running down provisions in returning the bases which allowed the UK Government certain continuing facilities were also targets of attack by the Opposition which argued that they could be used in a manner prejudicial to Sri Lanka. These were exaggerated fears which did not materialize. However on hindsight in the light of Britain's action over Suez when it could have happened that the Ceylon bases were used for the operation, one can see that the Prime Minister's fears about the bases being used to our detriment were justified. It is possible that this possibility had not occurred to the previous governments or they thought it was unlikely. What they had not bargained for was the consequences of a change of administration. Whatever special understandings there were between the Government of Prime Minister D. S. Senanayake and that of Attlee would not have known by the Government of Anthony Eden or would not have mattered to the latter. As it is there is no doubt that there was a clear rift between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Government of the UK over the Suez affair in which Sri Lanka supported President Nasser and strongly condemned the UK action. In this Sri Lanka completely identified itself with the stand of the Indian Prime Minister. This is of course a matter of foreign policy rather than security concepts but it shows the extent to which the new security thinking of the Bandaranaike administration had affected its foreign relations. Thus in the realm of national security the Bandaranaike administration is a landmark for its decisive break with the policy of defence alignments but it failed to provide a viable alternative besides the call to dynamic neutralism which in practice was nebulous and difficult in application as the problem of Hungary and Egypt revealed. He was further disenchanted with the UN over the operations in Jordan and Lebanon of British and American troops respectively. These were ostensibly in accordance with UN Resolutions known as "The Essentials of Peace Resolution" and the "Peace through Deeds Resolution" and the Prime Minister expressed doubts and reservations about their validity. Thus the Bandaranaike government took the decisive step of rejecting the security through defence pact option but did not find a suitable alternative.

The policy of dynamic neutralism thus left thinking on security concepts in mid air. Although pursuant to it the policy of neutralism had replaced the concept of defense pacts, it still fell short and was not an organised initiative. It was a posture rather than a viable plan with capacity for effective action. The experiences over Suez and Hungary highlighted the need for dynamic neutralism to assume some concrete shape as an action oriented programme. By itself it was a philosophical concept, a formula without teeth or substance.

This transition from an abstract vision to an action programme was effected by Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike when she became Prime Minister after the assassination of her husband in 1959. This was achieved through her adoption of the policy of Non-Alignment in the formulation of which she played a premier role and was a founder member. The philosophy and practice of Non-Alignment therefore became the official approach to national security of the Government. What this meant is that the concept of national security of the country was merged in that of global security and became part of it. At its face value it

seemed to be an abandonment of national security in favour of international peace and security which would be ensured through adherence to and application of the policy of Non-Alignment. This policy was once described by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike as one of being shaped "on the principle of peaceful coexistence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and non-alignment with military power groupings".²⁹ These were adopted as the basic requirements for the maintenance of international peace and security, so that nations large and small could harness their joint efforts towards meeting and overcoming the challenges of poverty, disease, illiteracy, and fear that face the entire human family. The operative principle of Non-Alignment as a practical course of action was that its adherents were committed to a set of principles which they would apply in their foreign relations. In fact the criteria for the admission of States to membership of the Non-Alignment community were spelt out as follows; adoption of an independent policy based on co-existence of States with different political and social systems, non-membership of military alliances or blocs, consistent support of the movement of or national independence in countries under colonial rule, non-membership of multilateral alliances concluded in the context of Great Power rivalries, any existing military agreements or membership of defence pacts of countries should not be those concluded by the latter in the context of Great power rivalries, and military bases conceded to foreign powers should not have been in the context of such big power rivalries. It will be seen that the emphasis in these criteria was in involvement in great power rivalries, which meant that arrangements made by countries for their individual security were not a disqualification and not frowned upon. To that extent it could be argued that the erstwhile defence pact of Sri Lanka would have been compatible as it was not ostensibly concluded in the Cold War context and was essentially a bilateral pact between the UK and Ceylon to ensure the security of the latter. However Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was categorical in her stand on the bases and affirmed that "It was not until 8 years after the attainment of independence when my late husband was elected that the foreign bases were taken over and a definite and positive policy of non-alignment with power blocs adopted in foreign affairs".³⁰ This standpoint implied that global security became a substitute for national security which it would be assumed was covered by adherence to Non-Alignment and action through it. At the same time the Prime Minister affirmed at the United Nations that "Non-Alignment in foreign affairs must not be misunderstood. It means that Ceylon extends the hand of friendship to all countries. it does not mean that we can give any country licence to subvert our independence as a nation". This affirmed Sri Lanka's right of self defense to protect her independence and sovereignty for which purpose it was therefore free to make this own security arrangements.

However initially her priority was global security and she therefore whole heartedly associated herself with the initiatives of Marshall Tito, President Nasser and Prime Minister Jawarhalal Nehru for the promotion and launching of the movement of Non-Alignment which had its first meeting in Belgrade in September 1961. The context for this Summit was that global security had suddenly become a vital urgent consideration which was uppermost in the minds of the countries concerned because of the imminent threat of an universal conflagration over the Berlin question when both the Soviet Union and the USA were in a stage of

²⁹ Senate Hansard.

³⁰ Address to Non-Aligned summit at Belgrade, September 1961.

brinkmanship.³¹ As it happened the focus of the Belgrade Summit was this Berlin question and its main outcome was a decision to send delegations to exhort restraint and peaceful settlement by the parties concerned. Sri Lanka's espousal of Non-Alignment as her main approach to national security shifts the latter to the plane of Sri Lanka's security initiatives in the global sphere and hence they would be considered later under that category. However after the Belgrade Summit there was a perceptible change in the global security situation which had the effect of shifting the focus from the latter to the Asian region. Firstly although the fiasco of the proposed Eisenhower - Krushchev Summit and the U 2 incident caused dangerous escalation, the Cold war situation slowly but surely improved with the acceptance of the concept of peaceful co-existence, the Sino-Soviet rift and one sign of this was the signing of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban in 1963. This meant that the immediate threat of war in the West receded but it was transferred to Asia with the escalation in the Vietnam war and the growing involvement in it of the USA. At this juncture occurred an extremely serious development as far as Sri Lanka's security was concerned. This was the Sino-Indian border conflict of October 1962 which came as a bombshell to an Asia which was taking pride in its policy of Non-Alignment, Afro-Asianism and Asian brotherhood as the enduring foundations of peace in lieu of military organisations and membership on blocs.

This conflict brought in its train certain unhealthy consequences which had security implications for Sri Lanka. There were some doubts about the attitude of China as it opposed the partial Test Ban Treaty and it was alleged that it had urged Sri Lanka not to be a signatory.³² China also promoted the proposal for a second Bandung in veiled opposition to Non-Alignment but it failed to materialize. There were even efforts to cause bad blood between India and Sri Lanka by allegations by the Opposition that Sri Lanka had betrayed India by not siding with it against the "Warlords of China". However the Prime Minister quite rightly pointed out that her endeavour was to promote peace and end the conflict in the true spirit of Non-Alignment and this could not be achieved by a partisan approach. One serious effect as far as Sri Lanka's security was concerned was that the USA took the opportunity to offer military help to India and as part of it the US 7th Fleet made its appearance in the Indian Ocean moving in from the China Sea. This movement tied in with the US commitment in Vietnam and created the prospect of a US military presence in the Indian Ocean and resultant security implications for Sri Lanka both its own security as well as its Non-Aligned policy. The presence of the US Fleet was an automatic inducement for the Soviet Fleet to also operate in these waters and hence countries like Sri Lanka feared the realization of their worst fears of the Indian Ocean becoming a theatre of Great Power conflict. This further meant the nightmare possibility of the presence of nuclear weapons in the region borne by the carriers and transports of these powers. This prompted the Prime Minister to take the unilateral step

³¹ Berlin crisis in 1961 arose over the announcement of Soviet Prime Minister Krushchev of his intention to sign a Peace Treaty with the GDR and its implications for the status of West Berlin. The announcement was made at a speech in the Kremlin on 21 June 1961, the exact words being that "we and other peace loving states will sign a Peace Treaty with the GDR at the end of this year. We propose giving West Berlin the status of a free city. neither the Soviet Union nor the GDR intends to restrict West Berlin's ties with all countries of the world. But in accordance with international law, the sovereign rights of the GDR through whose territory the communications linking West Berlin with the outside world pass, must be respected". On August 7th and 9th he made inflammatory speeches which threatened West Berlin, Italy and Greece with nuclear destruction, and reiterated the position about signing a Peace Treaty with the GDR. This was the prelude to the erection of the so called Berlin wall which initially was a barbed wire barrier cutting off West Berlin. For detailed study of 1961 Berlin crisis see Robert M. Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961*, John Hopkins University Press, 1973.

³² Hansard, H of R, August 1963, statement of Mr. Philip Gunewardena.

of prohibiting the entry to the ports of Sri Lanka of vessels and carriers bearing nuclear weapons. This was conveyed to diplomatic missions in Sri Lanka in a note which stated that "the Government of Ceylon will in future deny entry into Ceylon's airports, seaports and territorial waters of naval vessels or air craft which carry nuclear weapons or which are equipped for warfare". The underlying policy was spelt out by the Prime Minister later at the Cairo Non-Aligned Summit of 1964.

The period of the first administration of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was certainly an eventful one when it had to face security threats and was obliged to adopt positions as regards its security. Its overall policy was an adherence to Non-Alignment but developments in the region obliged it to formulate security concepts appropriate to them.³³ This Non-Aligned approach was partly effective over the Sino-Indian border conflict but the repercussions of the latter Asia called for other measures. One of them was the prohibition by the Government of nuclear weapon carrying transports from entering the island. In general terms Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs defined the defence policy of the Government in the following terms during a debate in Parliament "our first line of defence is ultimately diplomacy, friendliness with all nations and a determination to secure ourselves not by means of pacts and alliances of the non-aggression sort or of positive military aid pacts against possible threats".³⁴ Basically the Government relied on diplomacy hopeful that countries would respect its Non-Aligned credentials. With the defeat of the Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike in the 1965 election, Mr. Dudley Senanayake took office as Prime Minister for the third time. His terms of office were not conspicuous for initiatives in foreign policy or national security because his focus was on agricultural development reflecting the influence of his father Mr. D. S. Senanayake who was called the "farmer Prime Minister" Yet his first term in 1952 saw the conclusion of the Rice-Rubber pact between China and Sri Lanka which was a seeming departure in the foreign policy of the latter which until then had ostensibly eschewed dealings with Communist countries. This can be explained as a step in economic diplomacy where the vital material needs of the nation overrode purely political considerations. It also revealed the inherent flexibility of Sri Lankan diplomacy and the absence of so called hard lines. This bold step was not without adverse repercussions as it earned for Sri Lanka the displeasure of the USA. Although this displeasure did not extend beyond suspension of aid it was a warning that the search for economic security could endanger national security. The danger in this case was economic retaliation which could be damaging. His third term as Prime Minister from 1965 to 1970 was comparatively negative in foreign affairs because Non-Alignment which he too upheld was in hibernation as the next Summit meeting was not held until 1970. The focus at this time was on the Vietnam war and the Sino-Soviet border clashes in the Ussuri river. There was one development however which was unusual although it did not constitute a serious security issue. This was some displeasure with the People's Republic of China which ostensibly cantered round admission of certain items such as Mao badges for the local Chinese Embassy. Actually these incidents reflected China's somewhat belligerent mood at that time because of its Cultural revolution. there was also some politically inspired attempt to discredit China on the grounds that the Maritime Agreement which it signed with Sri Lanka in 1964 had a secret clause which allowed China the use of Trincomalee as a naval base. This was really an

³³ Reference Chapter V - Global Security.

³⁴ Hansard , H of R, August 1963, Statement of Mr. Felix Bandaranaike.

attempt to discredit the previous Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike because of its cordial relations with China. These developments did not have any serious security implications. It was reported however at that time that the Prime Minister was considering the possibility of gaining membership in ASEAN and that he discussed the subject with the Malaysian Government during an official visit to that country. That report further stated that Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake was unable to proceed with this idea because of a warning from China that it would revoke the Rubber Rice Agreement in the event of such a step. If this was true and there is no documentary corroboration of this, it would imply an element of coercion. The writer is personally aware from statements made in his presence that the prime minister attached the utmost importance to this pact which he regarded as the sheet anchor of his economic policy. He would therefore not have risked any danger to it. His thrust as stated earlier was on agricultural development and to this end he invited the private sector to invest in agricultural production as a Capital enterprise. He also opted for unrestricted foreign investment and anticipated the later UNP Government in declaring for an open economy. He regained the confidence of Western Governments which had been deterred in matters of investment and aid by the Socialistic policies of the previous regime. There was even a hint of a pro-American element in his foreign relations because one of the events during this tenure was the much publicized visit to Sri Lanka of the two American Astronauts as State Guests. Thus the administration of Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake did not undertake any initiatives in the field of security but its economic policies did have security implications demonstrating very clearly the linkage between economic policies and national security.

The second term of office of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike saw an intensification of the policy of Non-Alignment when her foreign policy assumed an exclusively global dimension. This was also the high tide of the Non-Aligned movement and the holding of its Summit in Colombo in August 1976 was a diplomatic triumph for Sri Lanka which enhanced its prestige internationally. This period was relatively free of security threats or perceptions of it from any quarter and to that extent it seemed as if the policy of Non-Alignment had paid off as an answer to the security problems of Sri Lanka. When this administration ended with its defeat in the 1977 election, the security prospects for the country looked bright.

However not long after a security threat arose which became the most serious and tangible that the island had faced since its independence and took it back to the period from the 10th to the 13th centuries when it was a continuous target of invasion by South Indian kingdoms. This threat perception related to its great neighbour India and it assumed crisis proportions in the eighties culminating in virtually a token invasion of the island by India and the stationing of an Indian occupation force in a part of the island. How this happened is a long and complicated sequence of events which are outside the scope of this study which will only concentrate on the purely security issues involving the two countries. The threat perception was really a realization of an old fear which had always existed subconsciously or otherwise in the minds of Sri Lankans since independence. This was based on an apprehension because of the juxtaposition of a giant with a pygmy and also the experience of the past. These fears were further fanned by statements by Indian politicians and historians which seemed to betray certain designs on the island and the notion that it should be linked federally to India for strategic reasons relevant to the latter's security. However these statements particularly those by politicians seemed to be more of an idealistic and romantic sort based on visions of Asian unity and cannot be regarded as serious imperialistic ambitions.

These sentiments received fulsome expression on occasions like the Purana Qila conference of New Delhi in 1947 where the keynote was a vision of Asian brotherhood and Asia for the Asians.³⁵ Even the Sri Lanka representative referred to the feasibility of some wider federation. No serious attention was therefore paid to these statements as portending some imminent security threat but they gave room for speculation on the motives behind Sri Lanka's decisions on security. One of them was the suggestion that the Sri Lanka - UK defence pact was directed against India. This was never officially stated but tacitly assumed in many circles. Some credence was given to this view because of the prevailing Indo-Ceylon problem concerning the future of plantation Indians which was a contentious issue between the two countries. Yet it can hardly be said that there was any ill will between the two countries and if at all the opposite was true because there was a long tradition of respect and admiration for India and its leaders especially for their struggle against the British Raj. This reflected a fellow feeling among Ceylonese for Indians as heirs to a common cultural heritage. Whatever inner fears on both sides these were certainly not in evidence in their post independence relations. Indian leaders were welcomed as heroes in the island and the charismatic Nehru was accorded a tumultuous reception on his visits to Sri Lanka. In the post independence period the two countries developed a political and diplomatic partnership where they cooperated in international initiatives. A classic instance was the Colombo Powers initiative of Sir John Kotelawela which was the first attempt of its kind in regionalism, which was strongly supported by India. This diplomatic association was further intensified with the espousal by both India and Sri Lanka of Non-Alignment as their foreign policy. Their adherence to a common philosophy seemed to be an answer to Sri Lanka's Security problems with India as Non-Alignment was ostensibly a commitment to peace, disarmament and cooperation. The highlight of this link was Sri Lanka's initiative over the border conflict between China and India. Some bad blood was also created over the issue of Statelessness in the Indo-Ceylon problem but there was never any disruption of relations or feelings of hostility. It is significant that although Sri Lanka had close relations with China which were intensified in the 60's and 70's this did not cause displeasure between India and Sri Lanka despite the strained feelings between India and China. The close relationship weathered changes in the administration on both sides and it seemed to be an unalterable feature. Sri Lanka worked very closely with India at the United Nations, one notable instance being the support of Sri Lanka for India's action in Goa when the Sri Lanka Permanent Representative made a strong statement to justify it for which the Indian Prime Minister sent a message of appreciation.³⁶

Such being the background of consistent friendship and fellow feeling one has to explain how and why there was a deterioration in the eighties. A contributory factor was certainly feelings of hurt by Mrs. Gandhi over unchivalrous references made to her by Sri Lanka politicians in the course of the election campaign in Sri Lanka in 1977 deposed Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike.³⁷ These misunderstandings widened with the close relations which the Government of Mr. J. R. Jayawardene developed with the short lived administration of Mr. Morarji Desai. These prejudices lingered on with the return to office of Mrs. Gandhi. Perhaps these misunderstandings and lack of rapport compared unfavourably with the warm

³⁵ Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March 1947.

³⁶ Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, Statement to Security Council in December 1961 defending Indian occupation of Goa.

³⁷ See Ratnatunga, *Politics of Terrorism*, p. 128, possibility of Mrs. Gandhi being hurt over President's exhortations to India to rise to her moral grandeur of the past.

personal and official relations which existed between Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Mrs. Gandhi. While this was a case of friendship and understanding at a personal level, yet it gave dividends a notable case being the session of the disputed island of Kachativu by India to Sri Lanka. This was a generous gesture if ever there was one which showed the prevailing spirit of trust. In a political analysis one tends to discount this factor of personal chemistry in relations between States in the belief that these are shaped by objective forces. However history has shown that this factor could be decisive like Maria Therese's detestation of Frederick the Great which caused a diplomatic revolution in 18th century Europe or the dislike of Kaiser Wilhelm by the British royal family which was the setting of the First World War. It is conceivable that some emotional upset occurred in the mind of Mrs. Gandhi in the early eighties which colored her attitude to the Government of President Jayawardene.³⁸

At the same time one should enquire whether there were any features in the attitude and foreign policy of President Jayawardene which were a source of misunderstanding. Ostensibly both subscribed to the same policy of Non-Alignment. President Jayawardene attended the Havana Summit in 1979 as outgoing Chairman and the Summit held in New Delhi in 1981 and was unequivocal in his espousal of Non-Alignment. He proposed that Prime Minister Gandhi should lead a delegation of developing Countries representatives to meet and confer with Heads of developed countries about the plight of the Third world and the need for prompt relief. Yet his adherence to Non-Alignment was called into question over his support at United Nations of Britain's action against Argentina over the Falkland Isles. His justification that this was an act of loyalty to a good friend which had stood by Sri Lanka did not impress the Non-Aligned community. The open economy policy which was announced by his administration of a Free Trade zone, incentives to foreign investment, removal of controls, liberalizing of imports gave an impression of tilting towards the Western world particularly to the USA and seemed to bear out his pro-American reputation for which he had been nicknamed as "Yankee Dick". The actual record does not prove any partiality to the West and if he wished to strengthen his relations with the West it was for the practical reason that they were financing his development program particularly the Mahaveli Diversion scheme which was the sheet anchor of the Governments agricultural policy. It was frankly a Capitalist oriented private sector policy aimed at stimulating an entrepreneurial spirit which the Socialistic inclination of the previous regime had tended to stifle.

In the first few years of the government this policy paid returns as reflected in the rise of the GDR and the signs of unprecedented economic activity and growth in the economy. The deterioration which occurred later was not due to the failure of this policy but the unsupportable burden of defence expenditure it was called upon to bear. Sri Lanka's economic breakthrough in contrast to the earlier record of limited growth and relative stagnation may have been a source of envy. The pro American reputation of the President was not borne out because in 1987 he complained that Sri Lanka had no friends. The personality of the president could have given rise to misunderstandings about his motivations and mentality. He had a masterful character and was tenacious in his views and inclined to rely on his personal judgements. He was erudite and learned and his public statements and speeches were marked by allusions to history and philosophical expositions which gave an impression of intellectual

³⁸ See Surjit Mansingh, "India's Search for Power". Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1984, pp. 18 to 27 for analysis of personality of Mrs. Gandhi and her emphasis on pragmatism.

aloofness and detachment.³⁹ It is conceivable that his eulogistic references to Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi and the old Congress party as well as his professed espousal of Gandhian philosophy was misunderstood by Mrs. Gandhi as unfavourable comparisons with her. He was legalistic in his approach reflecting the legal traditions of his family and one instance of this was his insistence on the validity of the Defence Pact with the UK on the grounds that it had not been formally abrogated. Yet there is no question that he was one of the outstanding political leaders and statesmen of Sri Lanka who had been in the forefront of political life from even before independence and who in the course of his career had excelled particularly in the international sphere as a co-author of the Colombo Plan and in his contribution at the San Francisco Peace Conference of 1951. When elected to office in 1977 he was hailed as the elder statesman of the Commonwealth. His approach to foreign affairs showed elements of fidelity to the foreign policy of his mentor Mr. D. S. Senanayake on which he had written an article. These were his faith in the Commonwealth, a respect for the Indian leaders of the freedom movement and his belief in the rule of law and democratic institutions. He was not explicit in his ideas on security but he seemed to assume that the good international image of his government and the approbation for his outgoing economic policies in Commonwealth and Western circles would serve as a safeguard in an emergency. His disenchantment when this did not materialize and when the so called big powers took the position that the ethnic conflict and India's involvement in it was a matter which Sri Lanka should settle locally, showed both the extent of his misjudgment and occasioned his exclamation that Sri Lanka was left without a friend. At a global level President Jayawardene took a special interest in Disarmament and he made a proposal at a Commonwealth Conference to establish a World Disarmament Authority which would function under the United Nations and coordinate all activities and initiatives in this sphere. The President was equally a fervent advocate of the cause of developing countries being himself a pioneer in this field as a founder of the Colombo Plan. His approach to the subject was that the objective should be trade instead of aid. If one compares President Jayawardene with his predecessors in respect of his approach to national security, the conclusion would be that while he was not committed to any specific position, he was sure that his liberal economic policies which broke new ground and promoted good rapport with the West would create a climate conducive to peace and security. As it happened these expectations were realized in the first five years but his government ran aground over the Northern problem.

Apart from the influences of personal factors on relations between India and Sri Lanka there are indications of a definite change in India's outlook and philosophy in relations with its neighbours from the early sixties. The turning point was probably Nehru's disenchantment over the Sino-Indian border which in the eyes of many amounted to a failure and indictment of his pancha sila policy. Others thought that China was reacting to manifestations of Indian hardline attitudes over the border issue. In fact it is suggested that even before the clash with China this hard line attitude had manifested itself in the Indian police action in Goa which took the world by surprise as it seemed to contradict Prime Minister Nehru's professed commitment to peace. The war with Pakistan which followed shortly after his death represented a further breakdown in the vision of peace in Asia and presumably intensified the growth of a self conscious, Realpolitik approach to the affairs of the region. This marked a

³⁹ See Biography of President J. R. Jayawardene by Dr. Kingsly Silva and Howard Wriggins for analysis of his character.

departure from the romantic, idealistic musings of Asian brotherhood heard at Purana Qila. The new India was personified in Mrs. Gandhi whose stewardship lasted from 1966 to 1984 except for the relatively short lived administration of Morarji Desai. As Prime Minister she was conscious of the humanistic values of her father and of the heritage of India but she could be tough and ruthless in her action. The new order was marked by the creation of Bangladesh through Indian intervention and the victorious war with Pakistan and the Friendship Treaty with the Soviet Union which buttressed India internationally. Both these events occurred in 1971 and portended the embattled atmosphere of that decade when internally the Congress party was under heavy pressure having lost key states, there was a revolt in the Punjab and the government came to grief though for a short period after which it emerged more determined than ever to take command of the situation. This seemed to be one of a disintegrating India which outside rivals could exploit at the expense of India's regional image. Inevitably Mrs. Gandhi reacted by a combative approach of closing her ranks and assertiveness to instil fear and respect. The alliance with the Soviet Union and the resultant military aid helped India at this juncture to play this role and acquire the image of superpower.⁴⁰

This assertive attitude was foreshadowed in development's India's relations with its border states of Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. Under British India were like princely states but independent subject to British sovereignty in some respects. With Indian independence they retained their character as independent kingdoms under princely administrations like the Chogyal in Sikkim or the King in Bhutan and in Nepal. However a trend set in where these kingdoms were progressively brought within the Indian orbit or dispossessed. In Sikkim the princely ruler called the Chogyal was deposed through ostensibly a popular movement and the kingdom was incorporated within the Indian Union. In Bhutan, India had control over its foreign policy. Relations with Nepal has undergone several vicissitudes where power was transferred from the hereditary feudal class called the Ranas to the King who already had divine attributes as an incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu and this addition of political power gave him an exalted status. However as a land locked country Nepal is vulnerable to pressure from India which has thus enjoyed a favourable position in that country. This is the background to the recent trade dispute between Nepal and India which became a political rift the upshot of which has been popular demonstrations within Nepal where a major political change is in sight with the ruling king becoming a constitutional monarch in a democratic government. It will be seen that these states have undergone internal changes whether inspired or not by India which have given the latter a dominant position in them. The justification for Indian policy is the strategic importance of these border states in respect of the security of India because of their location on the frontiers between the latter and its neighbours like China. It would seem as if this policy of the paramountcy of India's interests over that of its neighbours is being extended to other directions as well.

It is noteworthy that despite this Realpolitik trend in India's policy towards neighbours, Sri Lanka's attitude towards India remained as cordial as ever and was marked by further initiatives in joint cooperation. A notable case was India's support for Sri Lanka's proposal for a Peace Zonen the Indian Ocean and another was India's enthusiastic cooperation with Sri Lanka when the latter was the venue of the Non-Aligned Summit of 1976 which Mrs. Gandhi

⁴⁰ See article by K. Subramaniam on Indo-Soviet Pact and also 39 above for outlook of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. For the new order in South Asia envisaged by India vide Paranjpe-India and South Asia referred to elsewhere, p. 86.

attended. There were no indication whatsoever on Sri Lanka's side of apprehensions over Indian intentions towards it or security threat perceptions let alone expressions of concern. It should be said that the Friendship Agreement with the Soviet Union came as a surprise because of its implications for Non-Alignment as much as the intervention in Bangladesh which amounted to connivance in the partition of a neighbour. Sri Lanka did not choose to see them as portents for its own security partly because relations between the two countries were exceptionally friendly. This climate which was associated primarily with Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike and Mrs. Gandhi changed naturally with their fall from power and a new phase was ushered in under Prime Ministers Morarji Desai and J.R. Jayawardene when these cordial relations continued. This situation changed as is inevitable in the vicissitudes of democratic governments with the defeat of Mr. Morarji Desai and the return to power of Mrs. Gandhi. She re-entered a troubled political scene where divisive forces were threatening India in areas as wide apart as Punjab, Assam, Manipur and Tamil Nadu and communal violence was spreading. Such was the situation in India and the mood and psychology of the Government of Mrs. Indira Gandhi following her return to power from the early eighties when a series of interlocking events occurred which led to a precipitous deterioration in relationship which till then had been exemplary. This breakdown is attributed primarily to the following factors namely a perception by India that Sri Lanka was becoming a security threat to her, the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and pressure of Tamil Nadu for the Government of India to intervene in this conflict.⁴¹

The idea that Sri Lanka was a security threat to the mainland was a revival of the old colonial notion that the island in foreign hands would be such a threat to the mainland power. Accordingly the British after gaining mastery in India followed up with the occupation of the island in 1796, and later full annexation. It was this idea which was re echoed in the oft quoted thesis of Ceylon being integral to the defence of India. This perception by India of Sri Lanka as a security threat was based on a subjective interpretation of current developments in the island. These included the engagement of members of the Israeli intelligence and of foreign mercenaries by the Sri Lanka government in combatting Tamil terrorism; the interest shown by US firms in the proposed oil tank farm project in Trincomalee; the training of Sri Lankan military officers in Pakistan and China; the renewal of the agreement between the USA and Sri Lanka for VOA facilities in the island. In general these amounted to an allegation that Sri Lanka was coming within the military orbit of the USA and engaging in activities which were a threat to Indian security if not directed wilfully against it. It was further suggested that these were part of a US plan to utilise Trincomalee as part of a chain of their bases to police the Indian Ocean. While it is difficult to find objective evidence to corroborate these conclusions it should be mentioned that some of these developments were not new. The VOA had enjoyed facilities in the island for several years and Trincomalee had been a UK base until 1956. In 1964 there was a stir over an allegation that China had entered into a secret pact to use Trincomalee as a naval base. The ostensible basis for this report was the Maritime Agreement between Sri Lanka and China which allowed commercial facilities to the latter in Trincomalee. Further in 1954, the Kotelawela government was suspected of entertaining ideas of joining SEATO. Also in 1962 India was not pleased that Sri Lanka did not express open sympathy for her on China's invasion of India. These were thus instances

⁴¹ For background to breakdown in Indo-Sri Lanka relations at this time see Ratnatungs, *Politics of Terrorism*, pp. 126-144 & Mansingh, *India's Search for Power*, p. 32 which analyses Mrs. Gandhi's political outlook and p. 294.

where Sri Lanka's actions and attitudes could have aroused the suspicions and hostility of India but there was no indication of such reactions. This was an index of its adherence to pancha sila at that stage which meant a respect for the sovereign rights of the island in its choice of a foreign policy. It is difficult therefore to understand why similar actions of Sri Lanka in the eighties should have produced a hostile reaction. The conclusion is inescapable that there was a change of attitude and an inclination to be subjective and personal in reactions to Sri Lanka to the point of assuming hostile intent as a justification for its actions towards Sri Lanka. This suspicion of Sri Lanka's motives assumed a highly exaggerated form in the Indian press and other circles which made out that the actions against Tamil terrorists was really a pretext and cover for foreign inspired efforts to gain control of Trincomalee for use as a naval base. Such a view may have suited Chauvinistic elements to justify punitive action against the island but there was no concrete evidence to corroborate it. To a large extent this was hostile propaganda of elements hostile to Sri Lanka with a view to goading and provoking India into action. The latter for certain reasons was unable to ignore it. This was the real dilemma and crisis in Indo-Sri Lanka relations rather than that Sri Lanka had overnight become a security threat to India. On the fact of it such a perception did not make sense. What really happened was that there were other forces that pushed India into taking certain actions against Sri Lanka. These were primarily the ethnic conflict and its repercussions on Tamil Nadu which became a haven and a champion of Tamil militants.

The relationship between the two communities which are the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils and which is referred to as the ethnic question is a separate chapter in its own right in the post independence history of Sri Lanka. It concerns the aspirations of the Tamil community and the reactions to them by the Sinhalese. After independence, despite an undercurrent of uncertainty there was communal harmony which was marked by the inclusion of prominent Tamil leaders in the Cabinets of successive Prime Ministers but this was shattered in 1956 with the announcement by the SLFP government of that year of a language policy for the adoption of Sinhala as the official language almost overnight. This had a traumatic effect and created an atmosphere of mistrust which poisoned communal relations and manifested itself in a cycle of ethnic violence and disturbances the first of which occurred in 1958. Such outbursts of violence occurred intermittently and Tamil people and their property were targets of attack. At the same time successive governments endeavoured to meet their demands and remove grievances but usually it was a case of too little too late. The protracted delay in resolving the problem resulted in the leadership of the movement as inevitably happens shifting from the moderate, veteran leaders to the militant youth and a change of direction in its tactics and objectives. This transformation occurred in the 70s and was possibly influenced by the Che Guevara uprising in the south of 1971. Its earliest manifestations were series of robberies and sporadic attacks against rival politicians and government property. However early in the eighties it became a well directed campaign of murder and assassination of law officers and a spate of robberies and destruction of property. This marked the emergence of a regular terrorist modelled on such movements of which there was no lack in other parts of the world. A number of groups emerged led by expert guerilla type leaders who were able to operate almost at will because of the ready sanctuary they had in Tamil Nadu and intimidation of the public who withheld information. The movement gained fast in momentum and the turning point in the reign of terror was July 1983 when about 29 incidents of terrorist violence occurred including ambush of army patrols, destruction of property and transport, indiscriminate slaughter, robberies culminating in the blowing up in an ambush on 23 July of an officer and 12 soldiers. This last event coming on top of months

of violence and provocation was a kind of last straw and sparked off the worst outbreak of communal violence. However unlike previous occasions such occurrences which passed off leaving bitterness, this became a step to an ethnic war as the militant were ready to capitalise on it. They had a tried organisation, expert fighters and high morale because of the patronage and positive help by the Government and public of Madras.⁴² The latter was already the headquarters of several militant organisations whose members moved about freely and efforts of the Sri Lanka government to secure their extradition had been rebuffed. In fact the Madras authorities who previously had been cooperative in checking illicit immigration and reporting on fugitive criminals suddenly became unhelpful. The July 1983 riots was for propaganda, a windfall to the militants as it seemed to justify their case and they were now assured of international sympathy and support. The ranks of the militants were further augmented by refugees coming to Madras after the riots many of whom were victims and therefore willing reinforcements to the terrorists. The results were seen in 1984 when the movement switched operations from sporadic violence to organised combat on a footing of war. That year was notable for 3 major incidents which were a measure of the change. These were the Sinhala New Year ambush of an army convoy, the blowing up of an Air Lanka plane at Madras airport in August and the culminating assault on Chavakachcheri police station in November which was an outstanding success and exacted the highest casualties until then from the government side.

The government could not be under illusions about the brutal reality of the situation, a serious war on their hands against a formidable and highly trained enemy who seemed to be vanguard of a much greater enemy which were the millions of Tamil Nadu. They were the supportive audience which watched and applauded their exploits with a kind of patriotic enthusiasm. The government thus had a two front war to wage in which as one will see they were gravely handicapped. This was not only because the militants were experts in guerilla warfare fighting like the Boers against the British or the Vietnamese against the Americans but that they had unlimited supplies coming across the Palk Straits and the haven of safe lines of retreat in Tamil Nadu for recuperation and regrouping. Besides there were the training camps and centres for the militants in Tamil Nadu financed by the host country over which there was a conspiracy of silence. The Sri Lankan forces were at a grave psychological disadvantage because they were made out to be Sinhala Fascists rather than law enforcement authorities and their military operations which inevitably caused civilian casualties exercises in genocide. The militants in contrast whatever villainous acts they committed, be it murder of innocent villages were absolved and hailed as freedom fighters and liberators. The Sri Lankan government found itself faced no longer with the quelling of a local uprising but with an organised war which was a serious almost lethal threat to its security particularly because of the Tamil Nadu link. It seemed to recall the situation in the 13th century when the kingdoms of the South had to fight for its life against puppet kingdoms manipulated by South India or the expanding kingdom of Jaffna in the 14th century. The Tamil terrorist movement had thus assumed the dimensions of the gravest challenge to the security and sovereignty of the islands since independence. It amounted really to a threat to its sovereignty by a foreign power because whatever the justification of fellow feeling the open support given to the militants by a foreign ostensibly friendly government was nothing less than interference in terms of either the pancha sila or the Charter of the United Nations. A notable feature of the

⁴² See Ratnatunga *Ibid.*, pp. 225-233 & pp. 75-78 for details of militant movement.

terrorist movement was the initial proliferation of groups. At first there were about 35 groups of splinter parties and well organised cadres, the best known of which from the outset was the LTTE which predictably took over the leadership having knocked out rivals like TELO and PLOT which were also pioneers. This multiplicity of groups led to factional fights and shoot outs within Madras which perturbed the authorities and caused a law and order problem to them.⁴³

The terrorist movement in Jaffna was essentially a local uprising which would not have assumed the proportions which it did but for the ready support and patronage of the Tamil Nadu authorities and people. The latter was the key to the situation and the explanation for this lies in the contemporary political situation in Tamil Nadu and the political philosophy of its people. Ideologically they felt emotionally involved with the problem of the Sri Lankan Tamils but while this is not unusual for large cultural groups over conscious of their heritage in this case they were in a position to intervene actively in support of their brethren because of the close geographical proximity. The emotional links were fostered for some time through an intellectual movement which glorified the heritage of the Dravidian people and emphasised their cultural unity. The apotheosis of this movement which transformed it from a cultural to a political one was the victory of the DAK party under Annadurai in the 1967 election in Tamil Nadu. This was a turning point in the Indian political scene because it brought the DMK into the forefront of Tamil Nadu politics and also constituted a serious challenge to the hold of the Congress Party in the south. Within Tamil Nadu it led to a bitter party struggle between the popular DMK and its rival, the Congress supported AIADMK of the film idol M.G. Ramachandran and it gave the Central government a vital stake in the politics of Tamil Nadu. This situation coincided with the terrorist movement in Jaffna which soon became a major issue between the rival parties which vied with each other in their championship of the militants in order to cash in on the popular support for the Tamil militants in Tamil Nadu. This placed the Central government in the dilemma that whatever their inner feelings, they were obliged to play up to their allies in the south and the latter did not hesitate to exploit the situation exerting continuous pressure on the Centre. As far as Sri Lanka was concerned the impact of this situation was that the merits of its case and its rights as a sovereign state went by default and the militant problem became a pawn, a plaything in the hands of Tamil Nadu and Congressional party politics where the success of the AIADMK seemed to depend on the support of the militant and of the Congress on underwriting the AIADMK. In this circumstances it seemed as if the fate of the island was sealed as a pawn on the wider Indian political chessboard, which obliged it to act not in accordance with its won interests as befits a sovereign state but the interests of others who would not hesitate to dictate terms.

Political support of the militants in the way of giving them hospitality and upholding their cause was only one aspect because far more lethal was the military and logistical assistance rendered to them. According to figures quoted by the subsequent Chief Minister Mr. Karunanidhi, there had been 36 armed camps in the state and these belonged mainly to the TELO, EROS, EPRLF and PLOT. The LIFE did not apparently have camps in the state but received four crores as financial aid from the Tamil Nadu government in 1987. It is also suggested that this logistical and training side was the work of the Research and Analysis wing of Indian intelligence known as RAW as part of a policy of destabilisation of the island through the Tamil militants. RAW was seen as the master mind behind the whole militant

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 249-259 for details of Tamil political groups.

operation which implied that it was a Central Government initiative rather than a local one. However there is no official information available to corroborate these beliefs except for informal disclosures and scoop articles in the Indian and foreign press.⁴⁴ The Government of India has denied these allegations despite incriminating evidence and in case they were true it would have been guilty of armed intervention in the affairs of a neighbouring and sovereign state. These allegations were in any case of no avail at that time the climate of opinion being such even internationally that they were ignored and focus was on the supposedly liberation struggle being waged by the militants against an oppressive regime bent on a military solution.

The political objectives of the militants gave rise to difficulties. To a man all groups though divided were for Eelam meaning an independent state and for this they had the blessings of the Tamil Nadu authorities for their own reasons. This is that the realization of Eelam would have been the stepping stone to the attainment of an independent Tamil Nadu. On this issue the Central Government diverged being fearful of the consequences for India and their aim was to foster the militant movement with a view to gaining local autonomy for them. In fact it argued that Central Government involvement was ultimately in Sri Lanka's interest its purpose being to head off the independence movement and in the process check the Tamil Nadu government itself in its heady course to use Eelam as a cover for their own ambitions. This view is tenable up to a point because clearly it would not have been in India's interest in the context of its own centrifugal problems, to effect a Bangladesh in Sri Lanka as this would have been spitting in its own face. Its dilemma however was that of dismounting from the Tiger of its own creation and this led to a policy of ambivalence and blowing hot and cold. It became ultimately the rock on which this policy foundered when the Government of India found itself the target of attacks by the LTTE.⁴⁵ This was an admission of a failure to control its own creation, the triumph of Frankenstein over its maker.

Needless to say the problem of the militants in Jaffna ultimately came to rest on the shoulders of India and became to the latter a major problem. It is necessary to be clear about the reasons for India's involvement and the underlying perceptions of India. Several can be suggested. Was it a matter of the political survival of the Congress Government of Mrs. Gandhi because of its dependence on the AIDMK in Tamil Nadu which obliged it to underwrite the latter? Was it a purely security perception that the Tamil insurrection would render the island vulnerable to foreign infiltration? Was it a circumlocutory move to block the movement for independence of the DMK? Was it a means of destabilizing Sri Lanka so as to defuse it as a threat to Indian or even as an economic competitor? Was it a device to keep the island divided so as to enable India to play a dominant role in its affairs and dictate terms? Was it also a policy to make Sri Lanka a satellite State under the patronage of India? Could it equally have been a genuine desire to give a helping hand to Sri Lanka in resolving this problem using its influence in the South. Was it part of a process of India becoming a super star in the region through its massive military build up and potential where the latter would become a sphere of influence of India? Several views are thus possible and plausible but in the last analysis one should decide according to the actual actions and record.

Since the late seventies, there had been expressions of Indian concern over the policy of the Sri Lanka Government to the Tamils. In early 1981, official representations were made

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 383-385 for details of RAW & Mansingh, p. 291.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 383-385 regarding dilemma of India in its policy towards Sri Lanka.

over the disturbances of that year. The first real attempt at intervention was in July when India officially expressed concern over the procedure for the disposal of bodies resulting from the conflict in the island. Sri Lanka took exception to this as an act of interference and the Sri Lanka papers had headlines of "Hands off Sri Lanka". This was a prelude to the real explosion of the July 1983 ethnic riots when Mrs. Gandhi had to face a barrage in the Lok Sabha reflecting the agitation in Tamil Nadu. Mrs. Gandhi having telephoned President Jayawardene information and had his assurance that steps were being taken, forwarded that to the Lok Sabha. She also sent Narasimha Rao, the External Affairs Minister to Sri Lanka for a brief visit and the Sri Lanka Foreign Minister also came to New Delhi to attend the SAARC Foreign Minister's Conference where he took the opportunity to explain the situation. Subsequently Mr. H. W. Jayawardene saw Mrs. Gandhi who offered her good offices to mediate between the Tamil parties and the Government.⁴⁶ She followed up by sending the first of several personal envoys to advise and mediate, namely Mr. Parthasarathi. At the Commonwealth Conference of New Delhi in November 1983 the two leaders had an opportunity to meet but in June/July 1984 there was a genuine Summit meeting between them in New Delhi when they had discussions on 3 separate occasions, apart from lengthy discussions between the accompanying delegations. They seemed to have understood each others' positions but there was no indication that the Tamil groups were satisfied, or that Mrs. Gandhi would have her way with them. Meanwhile she herself was under grave pressure from the Punjab where she ordered the fateful attack on the Golden Temple in April 1984, the upshot of which was her assassination in November 1984. The impact of this event on the Sri Lankan situation cannot be assessed. Her statements and attitude towards President Jayawardene was conciliatory and friendly and she disavowed any desire to invade Sri Lanka. Yet it is reported that during the ethnic riots of July 1983, the Southern Command of the Indian army at Secunderabad was placed on the alert and a plan for an air borne invasion by the 50th Independent Para Brigade which was at Agra had been considered in the presence of Mrs. Gandhi.⁴⁷ These may have been contingency measures perhaps even to help in the restoration of order having in mind that in 1971 the Sri Lankan government at its request had logistical help from India. These reports of preparations however cannot be held against her as evidence of deliberate designs to invade the island or otherwise violate its sovereignty.

Under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi the seeming goodwill and readiness to help continued despite upsets like the row over the activities of Sri Lanka. It seemed as if there was some schizophrenia between sweet reasonableness and sudden outburst on India's part indicating that there was a hidden hand or some compelling force eager to rock the boat. Prime Minister Gandhi's hand was strengthened with his victory in Tamil Nadu and he took the opportunity to announce a new policy which included appointment of the un-South bloc type careerist Romesh Bhandari who came of genteel stock as Foreign Secretary. His cultured and friendly approach had a reassuring effect and even Prime Minister Gandhi struck an idealistic note about co existence or perish at a ceremony in New Delhi in January 1985 to commemorate his distinguished mother. At this point the thrust of Indian policy was its devolution package on which it was insistent as an alternative to partition through Elam. Pressure was applied on President Jayawardene to expedite this course as an alternative to

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 153 regarding Mr. H. W. Jayawardene who was brother of President Jayawardene and an eminent lawyer. He served as the special emissary of the President on several important missions.

⁴⁷ See Ratnatunga, *Politics of Terrorism*, pp. 107 for details of contingency plan for invasion of Sri Lanka by Indian forces.

military action to defuse the terrorists. This approach might have worked if it was accompanied by similar advice to the militants to stay their activities and to the Tamil parties concerned to cooperate with the Sri Lanka Government in its endeavour to find a solution through devolution. It called for a further vital and key pre condition which was the cessation of Indian military assistance to the militants and some lessening in the propaganda incitement to them afforded by the Tamil Nadu public. Without such steps there was no incitement for either militants or their political counterparts to cooperate. Unfortunately it did not seem as if India was either willing or able to control its side of the situation and this was clearly the dilemma of Indian policy. There could have been either a logistical inability to control the terrorist activities or an unwillingness to press for this out of fear of upsetting the sensibilities of the Tamil Nadu regime and rocking the boat of their ally MGR.⁴⁸ This was the fatal flaw which vitiated its policy. It amounted in practice to a form of blackmail of wanting things to be done at gunpoint where the Sri Lanka government was being asked to abandon its right of self defence and enforcement of authority in the face of mounting violence and accept a political solution which could be explosive in national terms. The onus of this approach was therefore on the Sri Lanka government to expedite a devolution package but this had to be accomplished under stress and conditions which were hardly conducive to a realization of a just and reasonable settlement for all parties concerned rather than a sell out to a particular group. The task was complicated by the open pressure applied by the Government of India and expressions of impatience like the comments of Prime Minister Gandhi at the Harare Commonwealth conference about Sri Lanka not having the guts to proceed with devolution.⁴⁹

The focus therefore at this juncture was on devolution and it is necessary to glance at the steps taken towards it as it was the key to a solution. This is the endeavour which was undertaken by a solemn conclave known as the All Party Conference to which all the major political parties were invited together with a motley array of non-governmental, cultural and religious bodies which met first on 10 January 1984 and continued to have meetings intermittently during 1984. Its object was to arrive at a settlement acceptable to all elements in country based on the concept of devolution of power. This concept was intended primarily to meet the separatist demands of the Tamil parties though administratively it was not without merit as a balanced approach. As a working paper the conference had a document of unknown authorship the controversial part of which was the Annex C which had provisions pertaining to land settlement and combination of provinces to which there were strong objections. The conference soon became a confrontation between representatives of the two communities on issues of a cultural, religious nature and the issue of a unitary state as a sacrosanct entity with nationalist overtones. The issues were finally boiled down to a consensus which were presented as the basic issues at a meeting held on the 14th of December. The key proposal was the setting up of Provincial Councils and the question of their merger. However the publication of these proposals created a storm among the Sinhalese sections and Cabinet Ministers like Mr. Cyril Matthew came out openly against them. The TULF for its part also

⁴⁸ Refer following extract from speech delivered by former Indian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Mr. Dixit to United Services Institute of India, enunciating so called Indira Doctrine; "It is an external projection of our influence to tell our neighbours that if, because of your compulsions or your aberrations, you pose a threat to us, we are capable or we have a political will to project ourselves within your jurisdiction for the limited purpose of bringing you back. Sounds slightly arrogant! It is not arrogant. It is Realpolitik and it brings you back to the path of detachment and Non Alignment when you don't endanger security".

⁴⁹ See Ratnatungs, *Politics of Terrorism*, pp. 144 for comments of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi at Press Conference at Harare.

decided to withdraw and the APC terminated with its last meeting being held on the 21st of December 1984. There seemed to be no regrets on all sides and a mammoth exercise involving 96 meetings, had ended without any results except intensification of communal feelings. This failure seemed to mark the end of efforts to arrive at a peaceful settlement and the future reverted to a dependence on the verdict of the battlefields. From 1985 the conflict escalated with increased Indian support for the militants and international sympathy for them and charges by India of Sri Lanka opting for a military option of genocide. Sri Lanka became isolated internationally thanks to the poor calibre of its representation and the inability of the government to put its case across. From all quarters there was indifference eliciting a comment from the President to the effect that Sri Lanka had no friends and even the big powers who could have used their good offices took the view that this was a local matter which Sri Lanka would do well to settle with India. The Sri Lanka government for its part was irritated by the seeming double standards where the Indians were combatting the Akali Dal in the Punjab but at the same time arming the Tamil militants.

During 1985 and 86 the situation went steadily out of control. There was a flurry of diplomatic and political activity accompanied in a parallel stream by intensified guerilla and army operations. This juxtaposition questioned the credibility of the peace efforts because it seemed as if the object of the militants was to provoke the army as proof of Sri Lankan government insincerity and pursuit of the military options. The political initiative included even secret talks between Government representatives and the militants but they produced nothing. The two governments then fell back on official talks between a series of Indian delegations and the President. The talks centred round the question on merger of the North and East and its effect on ethnic minorities such as the Sinhalese and the Muslims. These talks were all inconclusive and they had no impact on terrorist activity which as far as the Sri Lankan government was concerned was the obstacle and impediment. Some highlights of their activity in 1986 was their massacre of their rivals the TELO, the blowing up of the Tristar of Ari Lanka at Katunayake airport and the defeat of the Operation Short Shrift launched by the army which was a prestige blow to it. The militants were emboldened and seemed confident of victory because they fixed January 1 as the date for the proclamation of an Unilateral Declaration of Independence. The army retaliated with a fuel embargo and another offensive, both of which occasioned an ultimatum from New Delhi requesting lifting of embargo and calling off the offensive. It was now clear from the trend and tempo of events that they were all moving towards a major confrontation. The Indian government had shifted from good offices to threats, the militants were over confident and the army thwarted and frustrated determined to fight back. The last straw was presumably the brutal massacre of 127 Sinhalese men, women and children who were passengers in 3 buses by the militants at a time when a cease fire had been declared. This was followed by the bomb explosion in the Colombo bus terminal in which 107 were killed and the attack on the army camp at Kankesanthurai when 18 soldiers were killed and the death of another 18 in a mine explosion.

This blood stained situation was the context of the great military offensive launched by the army in mid May in the strategic area of Vadamaratchchi which included the notorious smuggler's paradise of Velvitturai, which overran it after 3 days of fighting in a noteworthy feat of arms. The way was now open to Jaffna and President Jayawardene was determined to get there but India got there first in the series of dramatic steps which it took amounting to a token military invasion. These were the aid flotilla of 20 fishing boats sent on 3 June 1987 to deliver supplies to Jaffna followed by the air drop of 4 June of 25 tons of food and medicine by Indian transport planes in a violation of Sri Lankan air space and sovereignty.

From there it was a short journey to the acceptance of proposals embodied in the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord which was signed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayawardene on 29 July 1987. The main provisions were that India accepted responsibility for disarming of the militants meaning primarily ⁵⁰the LTTE and the pacification of the North and East in return for Sri Lanka proceeding with the devolution package which involved provisional merger of the North and East. Apart from the Accord itself which was greeted by riots throughout the country on a scale of a national uprising, what raised eyebrows was the Exchange of Letters which gave India a supervisory role in certain aspects of Sri Lanka's foreign affairs such as the use of Trincomalee and employment of foreign personnel. They amounted to a limitation of its freedom of action. From a security standpoint which is the focus of this study there is no doubt that the Accord and the events leading up to it had serious implications. They implied that India at least for that time accepted responsibility for the external security of the island inasmuch as the Accord provided for the stationing of an Indian army of occupation for the pacification of the North and East and the overseeing of Sri Lanka's foreign relations in certain key respects by India. It was intended presumably to be a temporary arrangement pending a future settlement but as matters stood at that juncture India seemed to have gained a foothold in the security of the island. In the minds of many this was the materialization of a long standing fear but this does not mean that there was any secret long term plan by India for this specific objective.⁵¹ It is rather that the course of events rooted mainly in the ethnic problem in the island led to this sequel inexorably, because of the omissions of Sri Lankan leaders and their inability to resolve this problem in time. Experience of history would have shown that this proximity to South India and the presence of a community of South Indian origin was an Achilles heel which merited the best efforts to resolve it. However there was an attitude of drift until the situation could no longer be controlled.

In December 1988 Sri Lanka elected a new Head of State in President Premadasa, who succeeded President Jayawardene in that capacity. President Premadasa was a senior politician who had held the office of Minister in the administration of Mr. Dudley Senanayake. In the course of his career he distinguished himself for his commitment to the cause of housing and shelter and his efforts gained international recognition at the United Nations. In the UNP Government of President Jayawardene which adopted a Gaullist type constitution he was appointed Prime Minister in 1977. In that capacity too apart from other activities he continued to concentrate on his housing programmes which were broadened into his so called village reawakening programme aimed at the creation of townships in rural areas and the resuscitation of rural life. He did not actively associate himself in foreign relations or security matters as these were handled personally by the President but he represented Sri Lanka at international conferences such as the Commonwealth meeting in Harare. He gave the impression that he was not in accord with the policies of the Government over the ethnic conflict. On election as President he entered a tense and embattled situation caught between the Scylla of the Indian occupation army and the Charybdis of a dangerous local insurrection. His immediate move was to deal with the problem of the occupation which he felt was also fuelling the insurrection. To this end he entered into negotiations with the Government of India seeking an early withdrawal. He later adopted a categorical position in requesting the

⁵⁰ Text of Accords, see Sri Lanka Sunday Observer of 16.8.1987 and also appendix to *Ibid*.

⁵¹ See Mansingh, *India's Search for Power*, p. 265 para. 2 for analysis of India's policy towards its neighbours.

withdrawal by a given deadline which was early in 1990. Acceding to this request the withdrawal was effected in March 1990. This was a notable diplomatic and political achievement but he thereby incurred the responsibility of arriving at a settlement with the LTTE which had defied the Indian army of occupation and dominated the political scene in the North. With this in view he held several talks with the LTTE leaders but apparently they failed because in early June 1990 the LTTE launched attacks against the security forces obliging the latter to retaliate in force.

President Premadasa's approach showed that his first choice was peaceful negotiation to arrive at a settlement. He has throughout affirmed his belief in conciliation and consultation in resolving not only the ethnic problem but also the insurrection. Regrettably in both cases it failed giving no alternative to a resort to armed action by the security forces. The pressure of these events has not given much room for the President to express his thoughts on national security because the immediate problem was to suppress the insurrection and the conflict in the North both of which were primarily internal problems. It is yet clear from his handling of the problem of the Indian occupation army that he favours friendly relations with India and peaceful settlement of problems between them. The election to power of the V.P. Singh administration in India which has affirmed a desire to improve relations with neighbours augurs well for the future.

The thrust of the administration of President Premadasa has been mainly in the social and economic sphere where he has announced a programme of poverty alleviation as his priority. He has invited foreign aid towards this end. This is both a form of economic diplomacy and of security because it is aimed at strengthening the home front through removal of disparities of wealth and position thereby helping to create harmony within. It should in that sense be regarded as a security measure. The efforts of Sri Lankan administrations in the past had been directed to large scale developmental activity of an infra structural character financed by foreign aid and under State sponsorship accompanied by wide ranging social welfare measures but they have not necessarily touched all sections of the population and left a large percentage disadvantaged and underprivileged. The measures of President Premadasa were among the first to grapple with these problems directly. Whether the methods adopted are the best suited is a different matter but the objectives are praiseworthy and from the standpoint of national security should be welcomed as measures which could eliminate the vulnerability of the country to domestic insurrection. President Premadasa's experience since assuming office has obliged him to lean a great deal on the security forces and this should prompt him to address his mind to their future role and the related concept of national security.

The other great ordeal of President Premadasa was the JVP insurrection which wrecked the country from 1987 to 1989. It was triggered off by the Indo-Sri Lanka pact but had its roots in other factors, such as the disaffection of youth with the policies of the Government and its leadership in areas such as education, employment, development policies, standards of conduct and overall perspectives. The first manifestation was in 1971 but it went underground and took the opportunity of the crisis in Indo-Sri Lankan relations to surface seemingly as a nationalist movement but it was really a social upheaval with revolutionary objectives. It virtually took over from the conflict in the North and became like the latter a determined effort to overthrow the government. Unlike the Northern conflict it was not an armed confrontation but a classic terrorist movement, operating through murders and assassinations of political rivals, raids on police stations and army camps to collect arms, robbing of banks and cooperative stores for funds, escalating to a reign of terror and

blackmail where they intimidated the populace and the administration and almost brought it to a standstill. However they over reached themselves in their campaigns of indiscriminate murders and wanton destruction, forfeiting thereby whatever sympathy there was for them and were brought under control by the security authorities, a turning point being the elimination of their leadership by the end of 1989.

The JVP uprising was not in fact a serious security threat to the Government that it seemed to be in the middle of 1989, because it disintegrated before forceful action by the armed forces. Besides, although there were reports of a foreign hand, no evidence has been found but it is possible that they had expert advice from outside volunteers. It probably had some help and instigation from the Northern militants but by and large the JVP was on its own and one cannot help but admire the remarkable organization which they perfected through which they were able to terrorize the government and the community. They made a lasting impact however in that they brought home to the nation and the government the gravity of their sufferings and sense of alienation for which they paid with their lives. They left a clear message that unless timely action was taken for the rectification of their grievances and disabilities through new policies and perspectives and a change of heart in the outlook of the administration, the youth problem could recur as a grave internal security threat to the country.

The experience of the ethnic conflict culminating in the intervention by India and of the JVP insurrection called for a re-examination of the prevailing security concepts of Sri Lanka. Since 1956 there was a rejection of the defence pact option in favour of neutralism which was broadened into Non-Alignment and globalism where Sri Lanka pinned its faith for its security on the Non-Aligned community and the United Nations. This was an act of faith and of innocent belief in the goodwill and sympathy of the world community to a small country committed to a path of peace and non-violence and the capacity of the United Nations to protect small countries. Unfortunately when it was faced with an insurrection within and foreign intervention from outside, it received no help or sympathy except advice to sort out its affairs as best as possible. This was also the message of the super powers despite the prevailing belief that Sri Lanka was being punished because of a partiality shown to the USA. Isolated internationally without a friend on whom to lean, Sri Lanka was helpless to combat the violations of its sovereignty and this seemed to be an indictment of its foreign policy and security. The President even spoke of invoking help under the UK pact and was reminded that it was defunct. In the circumstances Sri Lanka had no choice but to accept the Indo-Sri Lanka pact some of the terms of which recalled the subsidiary treaties of the British Raj with princely states.

Apart from political and diplomatic measures to safeguard national security an area of equal importance is that of economic security. As a developing country this is a vulnerable area for Sri Lanka no less than its strategic location and some of the factors which expose it to danger have been considered under factors relevant to national security. By economic security, is meant the strengthening of the socio-economic foundations of a country and creating conditions of contentment, prosperity among its people, removal of disparities and grievances which divide society promoting internal solidarity and rendering it less prone to inroads from within and without. The experience of developing countries has shown that internal division is a sure invitation to exploitation by hostile forces. The best efforts of developing countries are therefore being directed to cope with these challenges through programmes of accelerated economic development and social reconstruction. This has been the consistent endeavour of successive administrations in Sri Lanka. The measures required

have been of two kinds namely strict domestic policies and action at a political and diplomatic level. The latter are needed because of the peculiar features of Sri Lanka's economy where as an exporter of primary commodities it has been dependent on external market forces. A serious disruption in the latter could cause severe repercussions both for its developmental programmes and for the people. To that extent it can be said that economic considerations have been a decisive factor in its security policy and concepts.

As has been indicated elsewhere this was a paramount consideration in Sri Lanka's acceptance of a Defence Pact with the UK in 1948, in view of the economic subordination of Sri Lanka to the UK at that time. Thus whatever the ideological beliefs to which Sri Lanka subscribed, economic necessity could override them. A clear demonstration of this was the decision of Sri Lanka in 1952 under the administration of Mr. Dudley Senanayake to conclude the Rice-Rubber pact with China in the teeth of US displeasure and as a departure from the anti-Communist posture of the UNP government. This is a clear case of pragmatic considerations prevailing over ideology. At the same time there were instances where ideology came into conflict with economic policies. During the administration of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the Government pursued socialistic policies as being compatible with its foreign policy of Non-Alignment and the middle path. This amounted in practice in a policy of State control in commerce and industrial undertakings, barter agreements with East European countries and the expropriation of a number of foreign interests in the island. These foreign interests included US and British oil companies and Foreign Insurance. It culminated, in the second administration of Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, in the takeover of the British owned plantations. This policy of takeover of foreign interests even through with the payment of compensation caused displeasure between Sri Lanka and the countries concerned and some disruption in relations which involved a suspension of aid by the US to Sri Lanka. In general there was a slowing down of aid from the West which was clearly unhappy over the economic policies of Sri Lanka. These feelings were aggravated in 1970 with the decision of the government following its election victory in 1970 to extend recognition to the German Democratic Republic, to North Korea and to North Vietnam and further suspend diplomatic relations with Israel. These moves certainly indicated the pressure of the leftist and Communist elements in the Government who held three Cabinet portfolios. While these policies did not imply any leftward tendency in the government or hostility to the West there is no doubt that it was viewed by the latter as unfriendly acts and the resultant slowing down of aid certainly affected economic conditions in the country. The 1971 uprising could be attributed to the failure of the government to honour its election promises of a new deal for the youth and new economic policies. The restricted aid flows reduced the scope for the government to implement these Socialistic policies which would have been very costly to the government. The defeat of the government in the middle of 1977 despite a surge of prestige over its success in the 1976 Non-Aligned summit was due to a deterioration in economic conditions marked by an acute shortage of goods, long queues, unemployment, high cost of living and all the signs of economic stagnation. The success of the UNP Government that succeeded was due primarily to its reversal of these restrictive Socialistic policies in favour of an open economy and support for the private sector. At least for the first few years this resulted in an economic boom and unprecedented growth and a climate of prosperity. A feature of this policy on the external side was a gravitation to the West as the source of capital aid. Thus the decision of the government to shorten the period of the Mahaveli Ganga scheme which was its master development package from 30 to 6 years called for massive increase in World Bank financing. It is now seen on hindsight that the prosperity of those

early years was rather deceptive and cost the country the collapse of its rural industries and accentuation of income disparities as the wealth only enriched the affluent class and did not trickle down as expected. In foreign affairs one effect of this was some uneasiness in various circles that diplomatically Sri Lanka was gravitating heavily to the West. Credence was given to this by Sri Lankan support to Britain in its action over the Falkland Islands, the justification being that it was in recognition for British help to build the Victoria Dam which was a part of the Mahaveli Scheme. It would seem as if India too came to this conclusion and the estrangement which occurred has been attributed to this. If this is true it will contradict earlier attitudes of India where it did not penalize Sri Lanka for its very close friendship with China which was intensified during the second administration of Mrs. Bandaranaike who enjoyed the most cordial relations with India.

It is clear from the foregoing that the economic security factor has been a key consideration in foreign-policy which dictated a course of action that was at odds with its traditional attitudes and had repercussions on security. Thus the displeasure of the West definitely undermined the country in an economic sense but conversely the patronage by the West had local regional repercussions. This was essentially a clash between Non-Aligned perspectives which called for a middle line and economic interests which called for dependence on Western investment and Capital. To reconcile the two remains one of the key economic and security problems.

Chapter 4

Regional Security

The concept of regional security has several connotations and facets which should be examined in a consideration of this subject. These include security threats to the region as a whole from outside it, threats to member states originating within the region, threats from internal factors within states and threats to the region arising from collusion between member states and outside powers using the latter for their aims. These several currents act either simultaneously or alternately and also interact in a manner which complicates the situation. First of all it is necessary to be clear about the limits of the region under consideration. It falls within the continent of Asia and is a segment of it, within which countries have interacted closely in the course of their history. For practical purposes it can be described as the combination of the Indian Ocean area and its constituent states extending eastward across the Bay of Bengal to the South China Seas embracing what is known as South-East Asia. In effect therefore this region from the standpoint of Sri Lanka is the combination of South Asia and South-East Asia and represents the area which in post independence times has been a focus of its political and diplomatic activity. This was also true of its early history except that in the latter half of the first millennium AD there were close cultural links between Sri Lanka and China. Unquestionably today too China plays an important role *vis-à-vis* Sri Lanka, but geographically it is peripheral.

The questions to consider are the perceptions of Sri Lanka as regards security threats to her from the region. On the eve of Sri Lanka's independence there seemed to be a division between the two outstanding leaders of the United National Party in their conceptions and approaches to national security namely Mr. D. S. Senanayake the Prime Minister to be and Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. Mr. Bandaranaike attended the Asian Relations conference held in New Delhi from the 23 March to 2 April 1947 as leader of the Sri Lanka delegation. This conference which was organised under the auspices of the Indian Council of World Affairs was an undoubted brain child of Pandit Nehru and served as a forum for him and other Asian leaders of the time representing 23 countries in indulge in idealistic visions of Asian brotherhood. Mr. Bandaranaike associated himself enthusiastically with these sentiments describing the conference as one of the most momentous events in the history of modern times. He went further in proposing that it could be a harbinger of something much greater which was a federation of free and equal Asiatic countries.¹ At the same time there were dissident voices from the small countries which were uneasy about the impact of India on the region in the context of its scattered overseas minorities and an undercurrent of rivalry with China.² These reservations were lost in the feast of oratory and fraternal emotions that marked the occasion. Many felt that the conference was untimely because weeks later India was caught up in the holocaust of the partition, but it was a gallant effort on the part of Nehru to give international expression to his cherished beliefs in Asian unity.

One can infer from Mr. Bandaranaike's remarks that his approach to Sri Lanka's security was in terms of Asian unity expressed in some appropriate form. This was

¹ See Report of the proceedings of the first Asian Relations Conference p. 91 refer bibliography.

² *Ibid.* and also article by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike on this conference in the UNP Journal, 1947.

contradictory to the views of Mr. D. S. Senanayake, who in the course of a Parliamentary debate admitted that as far back as 1945 he had decided the surest security for Sri Lanka was in a defence agreement with the UK "provided that we were given control on our own country". This Agreement he stated would assure Great Britain of naval and air bases through which it could exercise strategic control in the Indian Ocean.³ In fact in 1945 Mr. D. S. Senanayake had taken the draft of such an agreement to the UK. As we have seen later in the debate on the Independence Bill, Mr. D. S. Senanayake was quite unequivocal about his inability to accept the responsibility for the defence of Sri Lanka without an appropriate security arrangement for which he proposed that the pact with the UK placing Sri Lanka under its defence shield and membership of the Commonwealth, were the solutions.

This would have occurred to many as an unusual view because it meant a degree of dependence on the erstwhile colonial master and inviting him back to the fold. It was pointed out that Sri Lanka was unique in having a defence pact as a concomitant of independence. The reasons for his decisions were his faith in Britain as a trustworthy ally and the Commonwealth as a bastion of democracy. It was the old school tie idea. As a realist what appealed to him specially was that this pact was most timely and acceptable to Britain at that juncture. It was a case of mutual advantage to the hilt. It was necessary to probe further and enquire as to what particular fears he entertained for which he reckoned that Britain would be the right ally. Many have assumed that this was a fear of India. This was primarily because of the Indian plantation labour problem and loose statements made by Indian politicians. This fear at that time had no objective basis because India had entered into a blood feud with Pakistan over Kashmir which would absorb its energies. In any case the horrors of the partition massacres left it in no mood to covet Sri Lanka. This fear was just an expression of Sri Lanka's paranoid complex about an aggressive and covetous India. The real fear if one examines was concern over the safety of the region and its impact on the stability of his government. At that time he saw two main threats to the region. The first was its possible destabilization as a result of the decolonization movement which had unhinged part of Asia. The continent was in turmoil in the aftermath of the Japanese war and the wave of insurrections, freedom movements which followed creating a veritable upheaval in many countries. Burma was wrecked by the Karen uprising, which in 1949 were at the gates of Rangoon. Philippines was facing a peasant jacquerie. Indonesia was in the throes of the police action and of course the subcontinent, rent apart by the partition amidst oceans of blood. Malays had one of the earliest manifestations of terrorism with one time anti-Japanese freedom fighters turned Communist guerilla. Amidst this turmoil sweeping South and South-East Asia, Sri Lanka was the only oasis and the Prime Minister understandably feared the contagion, which fear was fully shared by his patron Britain because it endangered its wide ranging commercial interests in Asia. To the Prime Minister the immediate fear was a local one on infiltration through the well organised and articulate leftist parties in the country who were his main political opponents.

Over and above these internal threats to peace and stability in the region, the area as a whole seemed vulnerable to a number of outside threats and it is conceivable that Prime Minister Senanayake saw it in that light. The overshadowing fear in the world at that time was the incipient Cold War representing an ideological and political rivalry between the USA and the Soviet Union which was reaching out octopus like into the non-Western world and

³ D. S. Senanayake, House of Representatives, Hansard, December 1947.

threatened to engulf the Asian region because of its strategic rating in an international conflict. Sri Lanka was allied with the West meaning the UK and this meant that she was to some extent drawn into this super power rivalry, where Sri Lanka could become a target of the Soviet Union. In the context of the ideological conflict this meant the threat of Communism and it is significant that the Prime Minister in his statements seemed obsessed with this fear or prospect of Russian penetration into the island. In winding up the debate on the Independence Bill he categorically stated that, "it is they (Britain) who are helping us again to become a free nation and it is they who can keep us free even from the intrusion of the Russian menace. I will do all I can to prevent the leftist from having an alliance with Russia".⁴ This was a clear and explicit admission of his fear of the USSR and its tie up with the security of Sri Lanka through a link with the leftist parties. He saw the Defence Pact with the UK as a bulwark against this. The other fear was of a colonialist counter attack which could destabilise the area by giving openings for outsiders to intervene. Two such colonialist actions were in the offing in Indonesia and Indo-China. Another threat to the region was the possibility of Communist expansion instigated or inspired by China following the triumphant installation of the Peoples Republic representing the victory of Communism in that country. This meant an automatic confrontation between the Communist regime and the USA which became a second front in the latter's crusade against Communist expansion and the Eastern branch of the Cold War. The confrontation began with artillery battles which were really the prelude to actual hostilities and combat in what began as a low intensity war in Korea and escalated into a shadow fight between the USA and China. Sri Lanka was not a party to that war not being a member of the United Nations but still its pact with the UK identified it with the Western camp. The war however was good business for its rubber sales which soon placed it in a dilemma when Sri Lanka entered into a rubber-rice agreement with China and invited the hostile attention of the USA which suspended aid as a punitive measure and Sri Lanka was publicly accused of abetting murder in Korea. This showed how the war which was an extra regional affair still impinged on the island. As a solution for all these problems and a way a way of meeting these several threats Prime Minister pinned his faith on the UK as a protective shield acting through the pact and the wider community of the Commonwealth.

A landmark in this regard which testified to his faith and confidence in the capacity of Britain to cope with these problems was the convening of the Commonwealth Foreign Minister's Conference in Colombo in January 1950 under the auspices of Sri Lanka. This meeting is unique in post war history of the Commonwealth as the only one of its kind ever held. For Sri Lanka it was a sensation, as an occasion when the Commonwealth stars of the time assembled in the island with prime Minister Nehru as a popular hero who stole the show. The conference disclosed in its communique that its aim was a discussion of foreign affairs in Asia inasmuch as "Asia is at the moment the main focus of interest and the area of special urgency".⁵ Accordingly the conference undertook a wide ranging survey of the prevailing situation in Asia including events in Indo-China, Burma, Malaysia, the recognition of the Peoples' Republic of China and future relations of Commonwealth countries with it, the Peace settlement with Japan and the general situation in Western Europe in relation to Britain. There were also discussions regarding future economic prospects for Commonwealth countries. The timing of the conference and the great interest taken in it by the Sri Lanka Prime Minister

⁴ See J. R. Jayawardene, D. S. Senanayake - A Study of his Foreign Policy, Vol. 5, CHJ Colombo.

⁵ See Communique of Colombo Foreign Ministers of Commonwealth Conference, January 1950.

leaves no doubt that it was an effort on the part of UK with the support of Sri Lanka to explore possibilities of the Commonwealth playing a role in the region at that critical time. This was a logical idea because three important members of the region - India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka were in the Commonwealth, as well as Australia and the UK which had vital roles in the safeguarding of their interest in the region. It was a region thus where the interests of those within it converged with those outside powers like Australia and the UK. The question before them was whether it would be possible for them to act together and have a common stand on the affairs of the region. It would seem that although there was a comprehensive discussion no signs emerged of common ground. On the subject of China for instance Nehru predictably had taken an idealistic stand welcoming it as a historic momentous event but one is not sure whether the Western powers felt this enthusiasm. This can be judged by the fact that a few years later Australia promoted the ANZUS, which was intended to be a military alliance to cover developments in the Pacific. Obviously there were divergences on the precise approaches and practical steps to be taken because of different reactions and perceptions. While the Asian members were most probably for welcoming China other had reservations being coloured by the context of East-West rivalry where China as an ally of the Soviet Union would have been viewed with suspicion. Thus the hope that the conference could find common ground for a Commonwealth stand on the issues facing Asia did not materialize partly because of the failure to reach a consensus or unanimity on political questions and more because it recognised as stated in the communique that "progress depends mainly on the improvement of economic conditions". The communique further admitted that it "was impressed by the magnitude of the contribution which the success of the progressive policies in this area could make to the peace and prosperity of the world".⁶ Thus politically the result of the conference was negative and this may explain why it was never attempted again in respect of Asia but in the economic sphere it proposed the Colombo Plan which has lasted till now and is a useful input towards the development process. If therefore the object of this conference was to create a Commonwealth security umbrella, it failed because the Asian members certainly India did not subscribe to that view of security for the region. In contrast Prime Minister Senanayake presumably promoted the idea as an extension of his defence pact to cover the region. To some extent the idea was too big for a modest forum of Commonwealth Foreign Ministers to handle and required the initial blessing of a super power in this case the USA, but the latter was hatching its own plans for regional security. The Commonwealth Foreign Ministers' Conference had an important sequel in the Peace Conference on Japan which was held in San Francisco in August 1951 part of the groundwork of which was laid at this conference. It was politically significant for Asia and Sri Lanka in that India declined to participate in it. For Sri Lanka it was an international achievement which enhanced its reputation because of the decisive contribution made by the Sri Lankan representative the then Finance Minister and later President of Sri Lanka President J.R. Jayawardene. Diplomatically it marked a divergence between India and Sri Lanka.

In 1953 there was a notable change in Sri Lanka's outlook in its foreign relations and security with the accession of Sir John Kotelawala as Prime Minister. The change reflected his robust, ebullient personality and interest in foreign affairs and marked a departure from the traditions of Mr. D. S. Senanayake. Under the latter Sri Lanka's foreign policy seemed to his critics as a one track faith in the UK through the defence pact and in the

⁶ *Ibid.*

Commonwealth for security and acceptance of its leadership and guidance. This led in practice to a relative neglect of affairs in the region. While several of the neighbouring and regional states were in turmoil Sri Lanka did not show any concern for them. It was the contrary with Prime Minister Nehru who took the lead in this regard a notable instance being the Conference on Indonesia which was convened by him in 1949 and which was attended by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike as the Sri Lanka delegate. This was a clear step by him to play a leadership role in the affairs of the region in accordance with his concept of Asian brotherhood and unity. Prime Minister Senanayake did not quite fall in with this idea not because of antagonism but that his sights were elsewhere. Sufficient credit has not been given to him for his vision. He probably felt that as a small country identification with India could have stultifying narrowing effect on its initiatives and perceptions. His desire was for Sri Lanka to join the world community and play an international role initially perhaps under the tutelage of Britain. He viewed membership in the Commonwealth as a means of gaining admission to the United Nations. Above all he saw his association with the UK as an access to knowledge and experience in the handling of world affairs which would enable Sri Lanka to develop its own profile in the world scene. This is the explanation for his gravitation to the West rather than any fears of India or some inferiority complex. When Sir John took office this tutelage phase was over and Sri Lanka was ready to launch put on its own. Already it had shown a spirit of independence in its foreign policy in its bold pragmatic decision to conclude a Rice-Rubber Pact with China in the teeth of objections from the USA. This showed that the anti Communist stand was not a pathological ideological obsession but a kind of keep-a-distance attitude which did not preclude commercial relations. This was a Shylock like attitude of "I will buy with you, sell with you but I will not eat with you, drink with you".

Sir John's somewhat momentous contribution which marked a new direction in Sri Lanka's foreign policy and security perceptions was his convening of the Colombo Powers meeting in Colombo in April/May 1954 consisting of India, Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Some writers have given the credit for inspiring the idea to C. C. Desai, the then Indian High Commissioner but it was Sir John who carried it through, with characteristic drive and energy and realised it and was really its creator. The suggestion that he was manipulated by India because at that stage Nehru did not wish to come to the limelight for fear of resistance and wanted to play a back stage role is unacceptable and alien to the natures of both Sir John and Nehru. Sir John viewed it as a natural and logical step for the countries concerned being what they were as newly independent countries within the region and with communities and problems. The time too was ripe for it. It seemed as if the Commonwealth umbrella concept had failed and the new administration of Winston Churchill was not Asia minded. Also Asia was in the midst of a crisis which was about to erupt in Indo-China with the fall of Dien Bien Phu marking the end of the French colonial chapter and the rise of Vietnam. This was a blow to the West which took the initiative to explore means of arriving at some face saving settlement and it seemed ironic that Asia seemed unable to respond despite the direct security implications of the events for the region. Sir John's initiative was therefore timely and lent prestige to the Colombo Powers because the Geneva Conference which met simultaneously was in touch through Anthony Eden with the deliberations of the Colombo powers on the subject. It is significant that Geneva adopted some of its recommendations. India in particular gained prestige as it was invited to assume responsibility for supervision of the cease fire arrangements. The Colombo powers by their very nature purported to be an expansion of solidarity among these countries, of fellow feeling and

concern for each other. This concept was embodied in proposals for economic aid and mutual cooperation. This was however not the thrust of the conference as its main preoccupation was the international scene and its problems which included nuclear tests, the plight of Arab refugees, admission of the People's Republic of China to the UN, Colonialism, on all of which their views were unanimous. It is significant that special importance was attached to the subject of international Communism on which there was a divergence of views. It seemed that this was an effort to make the conference a kind of anti-Communist lobby but India, Pakistan and Burma did not favour this approach. The contribution of the conference to regional security was as a forum where problems of mutual interest could be discussed. An important decision of the conference pursuant to a request of Indonesia was the holding of a conference of Afro-Asian states. A preparatory conference for the purpose where the membership and the guidelines for the proposed Afro-Asian meeting were discussed was held in Bogor in Indonesia in December 1954.

The year 1954 was a crucial one for Asia not only because of the Colombo and Bogor conferences of the Colombo Powers but that significant developments were afoot which would introduce a new dimension to the question of regional security. One was the rising image of China as an apostle of peace, goodwill and understanding in relations between states. This posture was announced in his conduct and demeanour at the Geneva Conference which contrasted with the ungracious manner of Dulles who like the Biblical Saul was sulking in his tent. Chou En Lai on the other hand preached a message of Asian unity and brotherhood which would have appealed to Asian countries. The next rung in his ladder to prestige in Asia was the signing of the Accord between India and Tibet which proclaimed the principles of Pancha Sila as the basis of relations between them. This became to both Nehru and Chou En Lai an international charter which they recommended for adoption by all. It looked as if the two biggest powers in Asia had discovered a formula for regional security which was in accord with their ideals of peace and harmony and aspirations. Sri Lanka was now faced with the choice of accepting this formula. This rise in China's prestige coincided with another trend which was its anti thesis and rival. This was the signing of the pact forming SEATO by USA and the three Asian countries namely the Philippines, Pakistan and Thailand. There was a drive by the USA to draw Asian countries as members but the invitation was refused by India, Burma and Indonesia. Sri Lanka hesitated and would not give a firm reply creating the impression that it was in favour. There was now a competition and a kind of collision course on the subject of regional security. This was between the formula of pancha sila for Asian unity and subordination of the region to a military organisation imposed from outside. This was a confrontation between the movement harking back to the Commonwealth ambitions of a security umbrella over the region for the manipulation of regional security from outside. The latest in this was SEATO. This was now pitted against a movement for regional security originating from within the region representing ostensibly a framework for Asian unity. At a personal level the Asian unity scheme was a joint initiative of Nehru and Chou En Lai and the only obstacle in their way was the position of Sri Lanka which with its foot already in the Western camp through the UK Defence Pact seemed to be wavering.

This confrontation was the setting of the Bandung conference which was held in Indonesia in April 1955. Ostensibly its purpose was to declare Afro-Asian solidarity and undertake to promote it in every possible way. It was at pains to affirm its common stand on the major international issues of the day. Among themselves they pledged their support to a programme to the fullest cooperation in economic, cultural and political cooperation. These included promoting economic development in the Afro Asian region, fostering of cultural ties

through renewal of old cultural contacts and developing new ones, giving full support of the fundamental principles of human rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and nations, declaring support for the freedom of independence of peoples under colonial rule, calling for the admission to the UN of all states which are qualified for membership. In a section of its communique under the title "Promotion of world peace and cooperation", the conference expressed concern and fear over the arms race and availability of thermonuclear weapons and invited states to undertake measures for disarmament and prohibition of nuclear weapons under effective international control as a means of ensuring world peace and cooperation.⁷

A feature of the proceedings was the conciliatory attitude of sweet reasonableness of Chou En Lai aimed at allaying any apprehension about the intentions of China which created a favourable impression. A discordant note was struck when Sir John raised the subject of international communism as he had previously hinted at in the Colombo conference by posing the question of "Should it not be our duty openly to declare our opposition to Soviet colonialism as such as Western imperialism".⁸ Sir John had given due warning of his concern with this subject at Bogor when he said "we cannot shut our eyes to the international nature of Communist doctrines". In these statements he was really giving expressions to fears which had plagued UNP policy throughout and coloured its foreign policy. It was because of these fears that D. S. Senanayake had opted for the Defence Pact with the UK on his own admission. Thus Bandung became a forum for a confrontation between these fears and assurances of peaceful intentions on the part of China. This intervention introduced a discordant note in a conference which in the hands of Nehru had endeavoured to be a demonstration of peace, harmony and solidarity. It is an exaggeration to say that it disrupted the conference but it revealed a divergence between Sri Lanka and the Bandung approach to regional security which was based on an acceptance of a common code of conduct. This was embodied in the communique as 10 principles namely; Respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the UN; Respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; Recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations big and small; Abstention from interference or intervention in the internal affairs of another country; Respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively in conformity with the Charter of the UN; Abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers; Abstention by any country from exerting pressures on other countries; Refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country; Settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means such as negotiations, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties' own choice in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations; Promotion of mutual interest and cooperation; Respect for justice and international obligations. It will be noted that while these principles embody the 5 tenets of pancha sila this term is nowhere used presumably because of its specific religious connotation.

There have been divergent estimates of the Bandung conference which range from fulsome praise to disenchantment. The praise is for its assertion of Afro-Asian nationalism and unity as an international force which would have a decisive effect on the movement for

⁷ See Communique of Afro-Asian conference, Bandung 1955.

⁸ See Sir John Kotelawala, *An Asian Prime Minister's Story*, p. 18.

decolonization and rapid liberation of countries under colonial subjection. The disappointment was over the undercurrent of tension and disruption particularly over the issue of international Communism which seemed to crack the thin facade of unity. A balanced assessment is that it proclaimed the essential fraternal unity between the peoples of Asia and Africa as a basis for constructive cooperation between them for their own betterment and the general peace and security of the world, as well as of the region. Chou En Lai was foremost in preaching a message of peace and goodwill which coming from the power which had been a source of apprehension to the region was thankfully welcomed. At the same time there was an unmistakable undercurrent of rivalry and competition between the two super stars who were at the centre of the stage namely China and India for leadership of the movement. Besides that the imagined rivalry between Sir John and the Indian Prime Minister which was good copy at that time was a sideshow. It was a clash muted in fact between two Titans both resurgent and advocating a new philosophy of co existence as the solution for Asian security which hung like a cloud over the facade of close friendship between the two leaders. It was to break sooner than expected when China would chart its own course for a second Bandung under its auspices. Thus the message of unity as a basis for regional security which was proclaimed at Bandung proved to be short lived and left the region in disarray. It was obliged to fall back on the Colombo powers in the meeting which was convened in New Delhi by Prime Minister Nehru over the Suez Crisis but that too was discredited with Pakistan's non-participation because of its membership of SEATO. In 1956 there was a further transformation in the regional situation where Bandung seemed to be a light that failed, the torch of the Colombo Powers was flickering, Britain by its folly over the Suez had forfeited whatever respect it had earned in the post war world and Sri Lanka had a new leadership in S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike who would cut himself away from the moorings of the past in a bid to conceive of a new dimension for peace and security for Sri Lanka and the world. He was no stranger to the scene as he had already made his mark at New Delhi in 1947 and again in 1949 as a supporter of the Nehru vision for the future of Asia and world peace and as leader of the opposition he had been persistently critical of the defence oriented security approaches of the UNP government and its attachment to the UK. In fact he had stood out strongly for an independent Asia even proposing an Asian UNO and a loose federation.⁹ He was firmly opposed to the defence pact and the underlying policy and expressed concern about the consequent involvement of Sri Lanka in Cold War rivalries. He was particularly fearful of the possibility that Sri Lanka would be drawn into SEATO and he therefore welcomed the Bandung Conference as an effective counteracting force which upheld the independence of these states. He was openly supportive of Prime Minister Nehru's policies which he held out as an example to an extent that he was referred to as a disciple of Nehru. This suggestion did him scant justice because he was an avid student of international affairs with a flair and instinct for it as well as a gifted speaker. For his expositions on foreign affairs he had few equals. It happened that he agreed wholeheartedly with Nehru's approach to world affairs but if the latter had an equal and a rival it was Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike.

His entry into the scene marked not only a radical political change but also a break with the past in foreign policy. This was effected by his repudiation of the defence policy of the UNP government and his request to the UK government to return the two bases of

⁹ See I above.

Trincomalee and Katunayake which they occupied under the Defence pact. This withdrawal from the bases took place in 1957 amicably under a separate agreement with the UK. The other dramatic break with the past was the decision to exchange diplomatic missions with the USSR and China ending a freeze between Sri Lanka and these countries since independence. These measures signified a new philosophy in Sri Lanka's foreign policy and security perceptions where it moved from the concept of national and regional security to global security through a policy of universality. The impact of this new policy was somewhat dramatic and caused surprise and dismay in various circles. It was ill received in certain sections of the Commonwealth which viewed the return of the bases as a strategic setback and proposed that pressure should be applied to take them into the custody of the Commonwealth.¹⁰ This was similar to proposals heard later about the Suez Canal following President Nasser's nationalization of it. However the British government lived up to its reputation for mature statesmanship and resolved the matter amicably and expeditiously. Within the region Prime Minister Bandaranaike probably took the wind off the sails of Prime Minister Nehru by his prompt measures and dynamic approach. The time also seemed ripe for some innovative policies because it seemed as if Asia after its burst of activity was losing momentum. As stated before the movement for Asian unity and regional security had run out of steam and Prime Minister Nehru who appeared to have taken the reins of leadership seemed to sense competition. Also 1956 saw the end of the myth of the British lake in Asia with the fiasco of Suez. The region seemed to need a new focus, a rallying point. This was offered by Prime Minister Bandaranaike with his proclamation of the policy of neutralism and universality for Sri Lanka. This has been discussed elsewhere and suffice it to say that it was the same idea of Non-Alignment which was first announced by Nehru in his Columbia University address of October 1949 in the following terms; "The pursuit of peace not through alignment with any major power or group of powers, but through an independent approach to each controversial or disputed issue".¹¹ There is some uncertainty as to what he meant but it is probably that he was announcing an intention to abandon past patterns of Western diplomacy and adherence to their treaty systems and chart an independent course according to his own perception of what was felt to be the best for the country. It was not escapist non-involvement in that sense. Prime Minister Bandaranaike announced a similar policy of non-involvement and neutrality but clarified that this was not sitting on the fence, but a rational way of settling disputes by judging issues on their merits rather than through aggressive postures.¹² This philosophy was really projected on an international canvas and was a means of settling disputes and contributing to a relaxation of tensions. It was not directed specifically to problems of the region. It was not a formula for regional security in that sense but one through which global tensions could be reduced and hence regional security would fall into place. As far as Sri Lanka was concerned the key word was neutralism and goodwill to all in a spirit of universality which would make of Sri Lanka an Asian Switzerland. This was the policy underlying the establishment of diplomatic relations with the USSR and China which signified an attitude of non-discrimination in Sri Lanka's foreign relations and invested the Government with an image of goodwill and opened to all states. It was a policy of being the friend of everyone in general and no one in particular and this could have its limitations.

¹⁰ Lucy Jacob, *Sri Lanka - From Dominion to Republic*, p. 69.

¹¹ Geoffrey Tyson, *Nehru*, refer bibliography, p. 69.

¹² S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Address to UNGA, 22.11.1956.

The thrust of Prime Minister Bandaranaike's foreign policy was in the international scene where he was very active over the two major crises of the time Suez and Hungary. Over Suez his intervention where he worked very closely with India had results at the United Nations which paved the way even after the appalling blunder of the Anglo-French military action at Suez for the problem to be resolved. Over Hungary he was less successful and Sri Lanka's initiatives caused embarrassment. Prime Minister Bandaranaike proclaimed his philosophy of dynamic neutralism and universality in his address to the UNGA in 1956 as an approach to international peace and security where the neutralist countries would act in concert in international disputes such as endangered peace to hold the prospective combatants apart and use their good offices towards finding a peaceful settlement.¹³ It was in the first instance a device to buy time and arrest the plunge to war which in the circumstances of nuclear warfare could mean universal annihilation. This philosophy to some extent sacrificed the part for the whole, the region for globe, the belief being that if the latter was in order the region could look after itself. This meant a lower priority, a subordination of local affairs to global issues.

Prime Minister Bandaranaike's thinking on the affairs of the region and the importance he ascribed to it were somewhat vague and have not been clearly identified. Everyone expected him to be a leader of a nationalist upsurge in Asia same as he was in Sri Lanka who would pursue his visions of Asian brotherhood and a closely knit Asia envisaged by him at the New Delhi conference of 1947. The press speculated that with him the centre of gravity of Sri Lankan diplomacy would shift from the West to Asia. It is true that he cut his security links with the West but he did not replace them by a local substitute. It would seem that on the region he was full of ideas and plans but was unable to realise them in his lifetime. We are therefore left with some vague thoughts and musings on the subject of regional security and some tentative steps towards economic cooperation in the region. On security he had mentioned in New Delhi in 1947 about an Asian UNO and later in 1956 at a press conference in London he referred to the possibility of a regional defence scheme in Asia involving the Colombo Powers, the thrust of which would be economic rather than military and which also would be more integrated than the Colombo Powers with the capacity to act in bilateral matters. These disjointed comments suggested that he had not thought out his ideas and concepts clearly as regards objectives, the nature of the organization proposed, the differentiation between political, economic and military roles. What he had in mind seemed to be a blend between the Colombo Powers, the Colombo Plan but with political teeth closer to the later day SAARC. He also referred to Non-Aggression pacts as a means of promoting collaboration. It is possible that he changed his ideas about a politically oriented combination after his experience of the Colombo Powers meeting in New Delhi the effectiveness of which was reduced by the absence of Pakistan. To this was probably added disenchantment over the fiasco of the second Bandung which was proposed at the first Bandung and which was being pushed eagerly by China. India was lukewarm sensing rivalry with China and the proposed second Bandung which was scheduled for Cairo in March 1956 did not materialise. At New Delhi in 1956 he had proposed the establishment of an Economic Consultative Committee which was accepted and this became the thrust of his alter regional endeavour. The first meeting of the Committee was held in Colombo in 1959 and on that occasion he proposed

¹³ *Ibid.*

an Economic Bandung.¹⁴ This was a clear hint of his ideas on the region. Whatever other future he planned for the region remained unrealized with his untimely death and it thus happened that Sri Lanka's first ideologue on Asian unity failed to leave a lasting monument.

At the time of his death in 1959 the concept of regional unity as a basis for regional security which the Colombo powers had initiated and was carried afield by Bandung was falling apart. The prospect seemed to be a return to the earlier period when outside forces meaning the Commonwealth and SEATO were seeking to impose their security systems on the region. This was blocked by the Colombo Powers and Bandung which under Asian leaders attempted to uphold the principle of Asian leadership and unity. The death of Bandaranaike which would be followed 5 years later by that of Nehru ended that chapter and ushered in another marked by a similar struggle between external and regional forces for dominance in the region and the latter's efforts to assert its identity. The region now entered a rather tragic phase in its history when certain latent forces came to the forefront with disruptive effects which opened the door to outside intrusions.

Underneath the facade of Asian unity which statesmen of the region attempted to uphold and proclaim there were still ugly realities of disunity and conflict. The earliest of them which became chronic was the conflict between India and Pakistan in 1947 over Kashmir which was a crack in the facade of unity and questioned its credibility. The Colombo Powers papered over it but the membership by Pakistan in SEATO widened the breach which became an avenue for penetration by outside forces. Bandung had attempted to stabilise the situation but was too shortlived itself. It was such a situation clouded by uncertainties and imminent disintegrative forces which faced the region when Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike widow of the late Prime Minister was elected to that office. As Prime Minister she pledged herself to follow the policies of the late Prime Minister especially in foreign affairs where he had made his mark. However in this regard she inherited something of a void as far as Sri Lanka was concerned in that while there was no lack of imagination and ideas in the late Prime minister none of them had assumed concrete shape. Hence Sri Lanka found itself in an uneasy situation as regards her security. It was a neither here nor there predicament in that she had rejected the defense option but put nothing in its place apart from a role of dynamic neutralism which required a kind of hyperactive plunge into world affairs as an international fire brigade. This was certainly not a role which a single country could discharge and hence a combination of like minded colleagues was needed. It would have been a difficult one for Mrs. Bandaranaike being so new to the scene. A decision however was virutally taken off her hands at this juncture when the focus in the international scene shifted to Berlin where a dangerous brinkmanship was on over the future of Berlin and relations between the occupation powers. A conflagration seemed imminent such being the menacing postures of the Soviet Union and the USA. This dangerous situation at the crucial moment gave birth to the Non-Aligned movement which was the creation intitially of the three leaders of India, Yugoslavia and Egypt who after a series of consultations conceived of this bold step of forming a group to intervence in the situation and use their good offices in finding a peaceful settlement or a way out of the deadly impasse, to defuse it. The result of these consultations was the formal establishment of the Non-Aligned movement after a series of elaborate preparations at a preparatory conference held in Cairo in early 1961,¹⁵ where the basic

¹⁴ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Address to Afro-Asia Economic Conference, Colombo, 25.05.59.

¹⁵ Preparatory Meeting for Non-Aligned Summit, Cairo, June 5-12, 1961.

operative principles of the movement meaning its criteria were defined and its initial membership decided upon. This movement belongs to the realm of Sri Lanka's global initiatives and will be considered in that category. Its immediate importance is that it shifted the focus of Sri Lanka from the region to global problems and the crisis of the Cold War in the West. The justification is that it spelt destruction for the world as a whole and hence made it a moral obligation for Sri Lanka and other states to associate themselves with the Non-Aligned endeavour. The limitation is that while attempting to reach far out to the global plane to save the world from annihilation the home ground of Asia was far from secure and was in fact on the verge of an explosion. Forces which had been overlooked or ignored and were boiling underneath would soon explode which would put the spotlight on the security of the region on a much more serious scale than before. These developments were of particular significance to Sri Lanka which found itself caught in a crossfire as it were and posed a serious challenge to it. It is to the credit of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike that she rose to the occasion and faced up to the challenge in a manner which had a decisive impact on the situation. This subject has already been considered under national security and hence a brief comment on its implications for regional security will suffice.

For Asia the Sino-Indian border conflict¹⁶ which burst on it so brutally in 1962 was a catastrophe with almost irreparable consequences. It shattered the facade of Asian unity which India had attempted to build up so zealously with China. This fracture became an avenue for the intrusion into the area of a balance of power system based on power politics which it had been the endeavour of Asian statesmen like Bandaranaike to prevent. As a result the political psychology and atmosphere of the region would change thereafter. It placed Sri Lanka in a diplomatic and security dilemma of fear on the one hand of being caught in the crossfire and of embarrassment on the other because of a conflict of loyalties both being very good friends of Sri Lanka. Above all it was the regional consequences of the event that was a cause of concern because apart from dividing Asia it would open the latter to exploitation by outside forces. Prime Minister Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike felt strongly that it was both a challenge to the security of the region as well as to world peace and it was hence incumbent on the international community and the regional states in particular to intervene. The outcome of her initiative was the Colombo Non-Aligned Summit on the Sino-Soviet Border conflict¹⁷ which met in Colombo on 10 December 1962 and was attended by six Afro-Asian Non-Aligned countries namely Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia and the UAR. The conference proposed a formula which would both consolidate the cease fire and provide a basis for negotiations for a settlement and this was transmitted to the two parties. Although India accepted it and China reserved its position the efforts of the conference were not in vain because since then there has been no recurrence and the way is open to an ultimate settlement. This border conflict exposed the serious security void in the region and the lack of means to ensure peace and understanding between its member states. An appropriate instrument would have been the Colombo Powers or Bandung but the first was defunct and the second had become controversial over the efforts of China to have a second Bandung. The countries concerned were not enamoured of the idea but a preparatory conference was held in Djakarta in April 1964 which fixed the venue of the meeting for Algeria. However India with the support of Sri Lanka, Japan, and Thailand wanted a deferment. Ultimately it was

¹⁶ See V. L. B. Mendis, "Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka", refer bibliography, p. 457.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

abandoned following the political change in Algeria on the eve of the proposed date. In the circumstances she had to invoke the aid of the Non-Aligned Community which was not necessarily the most appropriate for a regional problem but to the extent that India was a founder member and that it concerned international security the initiative was justified. As indicated it was not without effect. However what was needed was a more lasting result in the direction of some stable arrangement for regional security. Unfortunately no initiative towards this end were forthcoming and the situation began to go out of hand. The conflict in fact had curious side effects one of them being a proposal from President Ayub Khan of Pakistan for a joint defence pact with India against China but the conditions were unacceptable to India. Instead India fell back on military support from the US and the question arose as to whether a request would be made for the use of Trincomalee to send supplies to India. The USSR also at this stage offered its help to India. The superpower interest in helping India opened the way for the extension of their activities into the region. One such event occurred in December 1963 when the US 7th Fleet entered the Indian Ocean for the first time in the course of participating in CENTO exercises. Military help which poured into India from all quarters enabled it strengthen itself militarily an index being the increase of the size of its army from 11 divisions in 1962 to 20 in 1965. It has been said that it was this sudden increase of military strength that prompted India to engage in hostilities with Pakistan in 1965. Pakistan for its part being rebuffed by India and unhappy over the US military aid to India looked in the direction of China. It concluded a border agreement with China in 1964 as a veiled hint to India and gravitated to a policy of close friendship with China which would soon become an axis. The Indo-Pakistan war opened the way to yet another momentous and unprecedented development and unprecedented development when the Soviet Union acted as the mediator in bringing about the end of hostilities and the conclusion of the Tashkent Peace Agreement. By 1965 therefore the South Asian region in particular had become an arena of super power activity in both a militaristic and political capacity capitalizing on inner division in the region and widening them. It was a realization of the worst fears of Nehru and Bandaranaike in the 50s.

Faced with the fast deteriorating situation in the region of political polarization, super power penetration and militarization there is no doubt that Sri Lanka keenly felt a sense of vulnerability to her security. There were 3 major fears which exercised it. These were the dissolution of Asian or regional unity which at least theoretically had served as an umbrella, the overall militarization of the region with prospects of the admission of lethal weapons and Sri Lanka's own possible involvement in these developments in view of its strategic importance as borne out by history. As in 1953 it was Sri Lanka who took the lead at this juncture of crisis and challenge with courageous and imaginative initiatives. This was the concept which was expounded by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike at the Non-Aligned Summit in Cairo of October 1964 for the establishment of Denuclearized zones and embodied in its communique. In Belgrade the Prime Minister had already alerted the world about the dangers to making of nuclear warfare and the conference incorporated these ideas in the communique as part of a programme for general and complete disarmament.¹⁸ The focus of the Belgrade conference was on the Berlin crisis and its main contribution was to nominate delegations to mediate with the Soviet Union and the USA. At the time of the Cairo Conference the regional and international scene had further deteriorated with the proliferation

¹⁸ See Communique of Non-Aligned Summit Conference, Belgrade, Sept. 1-6, 1961.

of Cold War tensions well beyond the Western theatre to Asia and Africa as well as a further polarization of the global policy with the addition of Sino-Soviet rivalry. The Non-Aligned movement could no longer confine itself to the Cold War in the west but had to follow its ramifications into the heartland of the Non-Aligned world itself. The Cairo Conference met amidst these trying circumstances which even included a revolt in the ranks in the movement spearheaded by Indonesia designated New Emerging Forces which attempted to nullify Non-Alignment by its rejection of co existence and threat to withdraw from the UN as a repudiation of the entire UN concept and structure.¹⁹ It took all the persuasion of President Nasser to restrain them. Amidst this disarray by far the most timely and appropriate contribution was made by Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike in her proposal for a denuclearised zone in Africa. This was to be a first step in a chain of such zones which as she described "the concept must be extended to other areas and zones particularly those that have hitherto been free of nuclear weapons. It should be extended to oceans and the ultimate aim should be to make the whole world free of nuclear weapons. The concept of nuclear free zones is capable of adoption for the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic Ocean."²⁰ She made two further connected proposals namely the closure by all states of their sea or air ports to vessels and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons and a request to super powers to liquidate existing bases in Non-Aligned countries and refrain from opening new ones. These were all adopted by the conference and embodied as follows in the final communique:²¹

The conference considers that the declaration by African states regarding the denuclearization of Africa, the aspirations of the Latin American countries to denuclearize their continent and the various proposals pertaining to the denuclearisation of Africa, the aspirations of the Latin American countries to denuclearise their continent and the various proposals pertaining to the denuclearization of areas in Europe and Asia are steps in the right direction because they assist in consolidating international peace and security and lessening international tension.

The conference recommends the establishment of denuclearised zones covering these and other areas and the oceans of the world, particularly those which have been hitherto free from nuclear weapons. The conference also requests the nuclear powers to respect these denuclearized zones. The heads of State and Government declare their own readiness not to produce, acquire or test any nuclear weapons and call on all countries to prevent their territories, ports and airfields from being used by nuclear powers for the deployment and disposition of nuclear weapons.

The conference declares its full support to the countries which are seeking to secure the evacuation of foreign bases on their territory and calls upon all states maintaining troops and bases in other countries to remove them forthwith.

In the course of her statement at the conference the Prime Minister announced a pioneer initiative on her part in respect of nuclear weapons. This was the note addressed by the Ministry of External Affairs of Sri Lanka to diplomatic missions in the island prohibiting the entry into Sri Lanka's seaports, airports and territorial water of naval vessels or aircraft which carried nuclear weapons. This step was a sequel to a number of developments which occurred in 1963 over which the government was particularly concerned. One was the entry in December 1963 of the US 7th Fleet into the Indian Ocean. This event occurred in the background of reports of British and American plans to establish naval and air bases in Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago lying at a distance of over a 1000 miles to the South West

¹⁹ See D. M. Prasad, *Ceylon's Foreign Policy under Bandaranaike*.

²⁰ Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, *Address at Non-Aligned Summit, Cairo, October, 5-10, 1964*.

²¹ *Communique of Cairo Non-Aligned Summit vide 20 above*.

of Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister's action tied up with the signing by Sri Lanka of the Treaty for partial nuclear Test Ban and indeed the latter also was the inspiration for the proposal for the establishment of denuclearized zones. This concept of a denuclearized zone of the Prime Minister along with the embargo on aircraft and vessels seemed to some extent an isolationist policy of withdrawal into one's shell which was in contrast to the gospel of universality and an Asian Switzerland preached by her husband. It was in the first instance a protection for Sri Lanka in theory however difficult it was in practice to implement the embargo. However at Cairo she attempted to popularize the concept and induce other countries to subscribe to it thus forming a widening net which could in turn encompass oceans. It was thus a first step intended as a personal example but the Prime Minister was under no illusions about the necessity to extend it for its linkup with contiguous areas. In that sense it was really a prelude to her later Indian Ocean Peace zone proposal. It is significant in this connection to note that the Cairo communique included a section which was of special relevance to Sri Lanka in the context of its problems. This was that, "the conference condemns the expressed intention of imperialist powers to establish bases in the Indian Ocean as a calculated attempt to intimidate the emerging powers of Africa and Asia and an unwarranted extension of the policy of neocolonialism and imperialism".

In 1965 the Government of Mrs. Bandaranaike was defeated in the election held in March that year and it was succeeded by the UNP Government of Mr. Dudley Senanayake as Premier for the fourth time, which lasted from 1965 to 1970. During this period the slide in the region continued and matters went from bad to worse. Sri Lanka felt the repercussions of some of these developments which however were not direct threats to her security. What was alarming was the breakdown of any semblance of unity or solidarity in the region with the result that it became almost a hunting ground for outside forces. One of these developments was a series of incidents in relations between China and Sri Lanka which caused bad blood. They were attributable to the anti-Chinese election campaign of the UNP and also on the Chinese side to the hysterical Cultural Revolution mood. The incidents themselves were trivial and concerned mainly customs seizure of some literature and Mao badges from China but the latter reacted strongly and made wild accusations against the Sri Lanka government which acted with restraint. A more serious aspect to the attitude of China was whether it was linked with renewal of the Rice-Rubber pact. There is a report for which firm evidence is lacking that in the course of the global tour of the Prime Minister he had visited Malaysia and discussed with its Prime Minister the possibility of Sri Lanka joining that body. It would appear that the Prime Minister did not pursue this initiative because of a fear or actual warning from China of non-renewal of the agreement in the event of Sri Lanka joining ASEAN. The major crisis in the region at his time was the war in Vietnam and America's deepening involvement in it and the resultant moral crisis over the expansion of its bombing operations to targets in major cities. Sri Lanka's concern was over the Buddhist population some of whom had been victims of persecution. Sri Lanka raised the matter at the UN and sent a fact finding mission. Another critical event in the region was the vicious and bloody encounter between China and the Soviet Union on the Ussuri river which brought the two countries almost to the brink of war. The practical impact of this clash was to intensify the polarization between China and the USSR and the division of the region into rival camps of India and the Soviet Union on the one hand and China and Pakistan on the other. These were developments fraught with great danger for the security of the region which boded ill for its future. The most distressing feature in the situation was the apparent helplessness of the region and inability to help itself. The Non-Aligned movement was reeling under the

blows which Egypt and the Arab states had suffered in the six day war of 1967 and it was further unstrung by the events in Czechoslovakia of 1968 both of which seemed to recall the fateful year of 1956. Presumably because of these setbacks the movement failed to call a Summit for the whole of that period. When it next met it was at Lusaka in September 1970 by which time Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike had returned to power as Prime Minister of an SLFP administration for the second time. Her appearance on the scene was marked by a renewed pursuit of her initiatives for denuclearized zones. These bore fruit in the incorporation in the communique of a section on this subject as follows:

The Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace. Adoption of a Declaration calling upon all states to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great power rivalries and competition as well as bases conceived in the context of such rivalries and competition, either army, navy or air force bases are excluded. The area should also be free of nuclear weapons.

The year 1971 was a fateful year which saw the culmination of the earlier trends to create an explosive situation in the region where the onset of outside forces assumed alarming proportions and the region reacted in different ways. They resulted in cross currents, confrontations and the unleashing of new factors which would shape and bring about the situation which exists at the present time. The return of office of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike was marked by a number of non-aligned flourishes which recalled the universalist gestures of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. This was the simultaneous recognition by her of a number of hitherto unrecognised regimes. These were the German Democratic Republic, North Korea, North Vietnam and the Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam. Diplomatic relations with Israel were suspended as part of this policy. The exact reasons why the P.M. went to these lengths of even recognising an as yet unrealized Revolutionary regime was not clear and was presumably because of the pressure of the left wing members who were appointed to the Cabinet despite the Prime Minister's overwhelming majority in Parliament. The GDR and North Korea at least had already established consular missions to justify their elevation. Whatever the reasons for this step that was discriminatory to the extent that South Korea was excluded, it caused displeasure in the West and prejudiced their attitude to the new administration. This had adverse repercussions in the matter of getting foreign aid let alone foreign investment for the implementation of the ambitious nationalization plans announced by the Government. However less than an year after the government took office, the country and the government was rocked by an insurrection, the causes of which need to be examined as the first such manifestation since independence. That it should have happened to a popular regime professing socialist objectives and aspirations which theoretically should have appealed to the masses is the mystery. The most plausible explanation is that it was due to disenchantment among some frustrated sections of society over the inability of the government to deliver the goods in time and live up to expectations. Since 1969 as police records revealed there had been a rebellious mood in parts of the country and a series of ominous incidents had occurred. Clearly some mischief was afoot in the country where groups were organizing themselves and planning attacks against the administration. It was plain that these were part of a concerted plan of disruption in the country possibly with a view to overthrow the government. All the available evidence left no doubt that there was an outside hand behind this which masterminded it. Rather than that this was some popular uprising considering that it was only 10 months before that the government was voted to office in a

popular upsurge. The identity of the outside hand has been a mystery. Investigations revealed that classes were conducted where the so called Che Guevarist political philosophy of agrarian revolt and guerilla techniques were taught to bands of youth and literature on the subject was distributed. There was no evidence however like in the later 1985 insurrection of substantial arms supplies from outside or military assistance. It would appear as if the plan was for these scattered groups to be in readiness in expectation of some given intervention when they would converge. Of course as it happened there was no such outside intervention and the local groups exhausted themselves in scattered sallies against the security forces until they were finally eliminated. At the time of its outbreak the country was rife with reports of foreign machinations and suspicion was directed to a series of lengthy articles published by the North Korean mission in the local papers purporting to be about the North Korean leader Kim Il Sung containing material which could have an inflammatory effect. The Government took a serious view of them and took the step of requesting its staff to leave the country. There was also the cloak and dagger episode of a Chinese ship with a cargo of arms for delivery it was said to an African destination which called over at Colombo harbour at the height of the crisis when Colombo was under attack. The Government of China when contacted was apologetic about the episode and disavowed any links with the insurrection. On the face of it intervention by a Communist state made no sense in view of the socialist outlook of the government and its very friendly disposition to wards Communist states which it had taken the step of recognising. If at all intervention could have been planned by a non-Communist power as a preemptive step but there was no evidence at all of such links. The only plausible explanation is that it was some adventurist attempt on the lines of a political cum military coup by some interested party to install a Communist type regime in the country using a fifth column of trained cadres and exploiting the Socialist orientation of the country. It was an object lesson to the government in the perils of involvement in international crosscurrents and the basic vulnerability of the country's security. The Government was saved at that juncture by ready help and rallying from several quarters including India, Pakistan, Britain which the government claimed as a victory for Non-Alignment. The experience brought the issue of individual security into focus and emphasized the need for government to address its mind to the subject and find a solution. In fact it brought a new element into the security picture of Sri Lanka in its susceptibility to internal subversion and the need to guard against it. The question was not of how to deal with a purely local insurrection but of its tie up with an outside agency or its incitement by the latter. The question of destabilization of a country by outside forces in order to intimidate it now became an issue which was relevant to Sri Lanka.

The transformation in the region ushered in from 1971 was marked by a series of momentous developments which represented a major change of direction and alteration of course in the political and diplomatic perspectives of the region. These landmarks were the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971, the third Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 and the creation of Bangladesh, the intensification of super naval rivalry and presence in the Indian Ocean and the proposal of Sri Lanka for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean. The Indo-Soviet Treaty certainly took the region by surprise though it had been under negotiation for two years, because it seemed to contradict India's traditional stand in international relations and its moral stance let alone its image as a founder father of Non-Alignment. This surprise was heightened by the character of the treaty which was not some cultural agreement but amounted almost to a Defence cum military pact. Article 9 is the evidence for this as it specifies that the two parties will consult each other if either party is attacked to "take appropriate effective measures to ensure peace and security of their countries." Both agreed also not to assist any

country which engages in armed conflict with the other. As events revealed this Treaty became the stepping stone on which India began to assert itself in the region. Whether this was the original objective of India is not known but the reasons for this apparent volte face in its political perspectives merit examination. The ostensible reason was the deteriorating situation in East Bengal where India rightly foresaw a confrontation with West Pakistan which India probably welcomed and fomented. Why India should have resorted to defence cover by the Soviet Union in anticipation is a mystery. It is a question of its perceptions of the situation and intentions. It could have been a warning to China to refrain from helping Pakistan in the forthcoming conflict and further in the event of intervention by India. The first objective has justification and would have enabled localization of the conflict and India to play some conciliatory role in the interests of regional peace and harmony. This role would have been what others expected it to do and in keeping with its image. The other which is really what happened suggests a deliberate plan for intervention with the resultant outcome under the protective cover of the Treaty with the Soviet Union. This Treaty has also been related to the Sino-Soviet rift and regarded as a product of the latter. Its context was presumably the brutal incidents on the Ussuri River and the outburst of indignation which it caused in the Soviet Union. Yet that did not necessarily justify a Defence Treaty with India as a warning to China because the latter would have known of the likelihood of Soviet intervention in the event of its resorting to armed action in support of Pakistan which at that time did not enjoy favourable relations with the Soviet Union. It would therefore seem as if the Treaty was concluded to further some preconceived plan rather as a pure security safeguard. The precise impact of the Sino-Soviet rift on the security of the region cannot be easily measured. It brought them in a competitive role in political questions like those of Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia. It could also have contributed to the naval presence of the Soviet Union in the Indian Ocean though this was primarily directed against the USA. This rift dates back to 1960 and there is no good reason to think it was more serious in the seventies to justify the Soviet Treaty. It is more likely that the latter afforded a good opportunity for it to obtain a foothold in the affairs of the region which it had never possessed before.

The course and outcome of the third Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 is well known.²² Unlike in the two previous wars Pakistan suffered a humiliating defeat and the loss of East Pakistan which became the new state of Bangladesh. The latter was a very serious development with alarming implications as it amounted to the dismemberment of a sovereign state through hostile action. It was a signal victory for India in its historic feud with Pakistan. Many have pondered over the impact of this feud on regional security and concluded that it was an Achilles heel which ever since jeopardized it. The main charge against it is that it disrupted regional solidarity and became a permanent gateway for outside powers to create and exploit local divisions. In the last analysis the blame for this lies with the two parties concerned in respect of their respective perceptions of each other. The notion that their tragic beginnings was a permanent shadow has been discounted as a factor and instead the problem seems to have been an obsessive fear and suspicion of each other. It is a sad commentary that bodies like the Commonwealth was no help in this regard and that the Colombo Powers did not last long enough. The answer could certainly have been found in some regional

²² For full details of this war which saw the birth of Bangladesh, see Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession - Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1990.

arrangement which could have brought the two parties together and enabled other member states to use their good offices. The one hopeful result of the Simla Agreement of 1972 was that it paved the way for a fresh start and perhaps a change of heart in the principal provision that "the two countries put an end to the conflict and confrontation that have hitherto marred their relations and work for the promotion of a friendly and harmonious relationship and the establishment of durable peace in the subcontinent, so that both countries may henceforth devote their resources and energies to the pressing task of advancing the welfare of their people".²³ As significant was the provision that problems between them would in future be resolved on a bilateral basis without recourse to outside parties. The event in Bangladesh had profound repercussions on the region, the most dramatic being the entry of the US ship the SS Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal. Sri Lanka came close to involvement as it accorded transit facilities to Pakistan flights proceeding to Dacca. It was alleged that these were troop carriers masquerading as civilian craft and Sri Lanka was conniving at them. Sri Lanka however followed a policy of strict non-aligned neutrality which was appreciated by the parties concerned. Yet the events, the outcome and the risks were a chastening experience with portents for the future.

The appearance of the US aircraft-carrier Enterprise in the Bay of Bengal which caused a stir and was presumably a warning to India and notice of the advent of a new factor into the region, was the culmination of a process of growing US interest which started much earlier. It was the sequel to the British decision of a withdrawal from East of Suez which was announced by the British Prime Minister in 1968. This was the final act in a process of soul searching about Britain's role in the region in relation to its capacity and resources which was prompted by the Suez fiasco. The idea of a British role became increasingly unpopular and was the subject of several reports and White papers. While there was a lingering desire to cling on to a role of policing and fire brigade actions in troubled situations, the funds and logistical resources available did not seem equal to it. Strategic concepts too were changing in the light of the Suez experience and the loss of Trincomalee and at first they experimented with Carrier operations but these too were prohibitively expensive and involved coordination of different services. This was the context of the concept of a staging post which was pursued in the early 60s. The object was to find a chain of islands where the required facilities and installations to serve as staging posts and bases to fleets operating in the area could be provided. The group of islands in the Chagos archipelago off the African coast were considered suitable by a joint US-British team in 1964 and the islands of Diego Garcia and Aldabra were selected for the purpose. However it was an unequal partnership where Britain was heavily dependent on the US and it really foreshadowed US naval dominance in the area. This was signified by the entry of a US Carrier task force into the region in 1964. From then dates the replacement of British by US naval power in the Indian Ocean. The incident of the Enterprise flowed from that. The Indian Ocean and the adjacent region had now become an embattled arena of conflicts between member states and heightened activities within it of super powers which would soon make it a foreign lake.

It will be seen that this acceleration happened during the decade after 1970 and this circumstance needs an explanation. A popular one is the vacuum theory that it was a scramble between rival powers to fill a vacuum left by the withdrawal of the British and the end of the era of the British lake. The British began their withdrawal around 1963 but it took another

²³ See Surjit Mansingh, *India's Search For Power*, pp. 226-232.

5 years of political bickering and vacillation and appraisals of defence policy before they took the final decision in 1968 with an announcement in Parliament of a withdrawal from East of Suez. During the sixties there were two major crises in the region in the Sino-Indian border conflict and the second Indo-Pakistan war but the British presence was scarcely felt on these occasions. In fact the Indo-Pakistani hostilities ended as a result of Soviet intervention and one wonders what the Commonwealth was doing at that time.. These disruptions were due to the failure of the successive initiatives by regional states to establish a system of collective security based on co-existence, peaceful cooperation and pancha sila in accordance with their ideals. This was an admission of failure by the regional states to organise their own affairs which outside powers were quick to exploit either from a desire to expand their interests in this key strategic area or from a genuine fear their own security would be affected by disruption in the region. It was not therefore the filling of a vacuum but exploitation of weakness.

A survey of naval, military and political activities of outside powers in the Indian Ocean at the start of the decade does not show a high presence of Super Powers.²⁴ In the mid sixties, steps were inaugurated to develop Diego Garcia which was a British colony in the Chagos Archipelago as a naval base and staging post under a joint US-UK Agreement for which purpose the US Congress had committed a sum of 19 million dollars. This would have been a link in a vast communication network known as "Skynet" covering the region, other points of which were Gan in the Maldives, the US tracking station in the Seychelles, Vacoas in Mauritius, the North West Cape base in Ethiopia and Simonstown in South Africa. It would seem that apart from being a major communication centre Diego Garcia was connected with US plans for the deployment of the ULMS (Underwater Longrange Missile Systems) which has a 6000 to 8000 miles range, as the Indian Ocean was regarded as the ideal base from which it could be launched against the Soviet Union. In that sense it would serve to counteract the threat of the Soviet FOBS or Fractional Orbital Bombardment System which could go 3/4 round the globe to targets in the US. Thus US plans at this stage were in a preparatory state of formulation and contingency arrangements in the background of a progressive take over of regional responsibilities from the outgoing British. It was not as yet an organised build up. The notion of a Soviet build up in the Indian Ocean was based on frequent goodwill visits paid by Soviet naval vessels and squadrons to a number of ports in the region particularly in the North West such as Madras, Bombay, Colombo, Karachi, Basra, Aden, Hodeida, Barbera, Port-Louis; fishing operations of Soviet trawlers off the African coast, in the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal originating mainly from Vladivostok; scientific and oceanographic missions by Soviet research vessels some of which visited many ports or stayed permanently in the region. Soviet scientists visited Singapore in June 1971 en route to a scientific mission in Oceania. The Soviet Academy of Sciences announced in 1971 that an average of 15 Soviet scientific vessels were operating in the oceans of the world engaged on a variety of hydrographic, oceanographic, anthropological and similar scientific pursuits. There were varying estimates of the Soviet presence at a given time, a British estimate at the end of 1970 being 21 ships but NATO assessment gave it as 8 ships. A general estimate was that this presence was in 3 departments namely a fishing fleet, a space support and scientific fleet and a potential combat fleet but all not more than 20. The conclusion was this was hardly a real presence and most important was the lack of an

²⁴ See India Quarterly, Oct/Dec 1971, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi.

operational base. For this there is the evidence of statements made by the Indian Foreign Minister Swaran Singh categorically denying reported Soviet military or naval bases at ports such as Socotra, Vishakhapatnam, Mauritius and the Andamans. A balanced view of this so called presence is that it was in the form of sporadic visits by squadrons in a kind of naval diplomacy of goodwill and showing the flag and regular scientific operations all of which reflected the expanding economic ties between the USSR and countries of this region. There was no evidence of plans to establish a naval presence through acquisition of regional bases. At the same time the fact that the proposal for an Indo-Soviet Treaty had been under discussion since 1969, gives credence to the possibility that these activities limited though they were had in view a regular presence for the purpose of balancing US activities and covering its Treaty partner. The most vociferous exponents of the view of a massive Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean and the potential danger were British Conservative governments but their charges were derisively dismissed by Labour leaders like Harold Wilson and Denis Healey and even Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. The background to this Conservative stand was their desire to retain the Simonstown base in South Africa which was believed to be a watchdog on the Indian Ocean and the pressure of the South African regime and Ian Smith's Rhodesia which were anxious to divert attention from the skeletons in their cupboard of Apartheid and UDI. Even NATO took up the cry in a reported statement that the expansion of Russia in the Indian Ocean threatened to cut off the West and South Africa from its lifeline and would force NATO to act against this threat. Even more popular as a bugbear was China about whose expansionist intentions so called there was intensive propaganda from many quarters with hardly a shred of evidence of serious naval installations or activities. These views were all based on China's intensified activities in the region in the sixties when it became a major aid donor to states in the region and actively participated in projects in these countries like the construction of the Tanzania railway and dockyard, building of roads in Zambia and Somalia, military assistance to Pakistan, increasing influence in the Arab world, and close economic relations with Sri Lanka. These activities and exaggerated accounts should be viewed in the context of Sino-Soviet rivalry where the two view each other with suspicion and are engaged in competition particularly in the Indian Ocean region which has a vital significance for China. As regards China's military plans and capabilities despite reports at that time of nuclear submarines and Polaris type missiles the estimate was that it would take 15 years to realize such a programme. So by and large the agitation over China was a reaction against its expanding regional role rather than a fear of its military or naval capacity. This the situation in the Indian Ocean region in 1970 was an emergent foreign presence and rivalry which given timely measures could have been nipped in the bud.

This was the context for the Sri Lanka proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean which was a personal contribution of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike and historically can be regarded as the boldest and most imaginative Non-Aligned initiative towards international peace and security in the history of the movement. For Sri Lanka it was a peak in its foreign policy and concepts on national security which had shown a consistently high level of statesmanship and maturity. As a concept it belonged to the family of peace zones, nuclear free zones, demilitarized zones which were a feature of the post war world. The Indian Ocean is unique among them for being focused on a major oceanic expanse and for its detailed conceptualization and action plan. Whatever its subsequent outcome that should not prejudice recognition of it as one of the outstanding diplomatic initiatives of our time. The first formal presentation of it was at the third Non-Aligned Summit in Lusaka where it was adopted and incorporated in the Communique in the following terms; calling for adoption of

a Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great power rivalries, bases and their armed forces as well as nuclear weapons are excluded.²⁵

The timing suggests that its object was to preempt imminent great power entry into the region the ominous and tangible signs of which were the development of Diego Garcia and reported plans for a US build up. Yet the real motivation of Sri Lanka went deeper and reflected its own fear in the light of historical experience that the entry of big powers in a context of military rivalry would be detrimental to the interests of the regional states and endanger peace in the region. It militated against Sri Lanka's own cherished objective of making the island an Asian Switzerland, a haven of peace and the Non-Aligned ideal of eliminating Cold War rivalry. The overriding fear was that the admission of such rivalry would be the herald for the introduction of the nuclear arms race into the region exposing it as a side effect to danger of nuclear contamination through circulation of nuclear cargoes and the attendant risks of accidents. The Prime Minister took the opportunity to present it to the Commonwealth Heads of Governments conference of January 1971 in Singapore but the response was unenthusiastic as the main preoccupation of that conference was the Simonstown Agreement relating to bases in South Africa. The conference only produced a non-committal acknowledgement in the communique that the subject was discussed and that the Heads agreed on the desirability of ensuring that the Indian Ocean remaining an area of peace and stability.²⁶

At the climax of these initiatives Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike formally submitted the proposal to the General Assembly of the United Nations in October 1971 with a presentation which highlighted its main features. The essence of the proposal was to declare the Indian Ocean area as a Peace Zone from which super power rivalries, their naval and military activities in a context of competition, their military bases and nuclear weapons would be excluded in a way which would allow the littoral and hinterland States of that region to live in an atmosphere of peace where they could cooperate constructively and in cooperation for their mutual development. It was intended primarily as a protection for the states of the region to live free from fear of outside intrusions but it would also constitute a contribution to the furtherance of international peace and security by removing a vital strategic area from the arena of super power rivalry. The presentation pointed out both the timeliness and viability of the proposal inasmuch as at that time there was no nuclear power or any major nation among the littoral states and that the level of the great power military and naval forces "have not yet assumed significant proportions". There were 3 cardinal principles in the proposal, namely, that it was slanted against great powers, that it called for elimination of their competitive naval and military postures including elimination of bases and nuclear weapons and that it expected the regional states to employ the respite to foster harmony and cooperation between them. After the presentation the subject was adopted as an agenda item for the 26th session of the General Assembly where after discussion in the First Committee, a formal Resolution tabled which was adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 1971 with 61 in favour and 55 abstentions. It was a hollow victory which showed a deep division between a substantial who favoured it and an equally large number not restricted to Great powers alone which were indifferent to it. The cardinal features referred to above are embodied in the resolution in the following terms;²⁷

²⁵ Communique of Lusaka Non-Aligned Summit, September 8-10, 1970.

²⁶ Communique of Heads of State/Government of Singapore 1970.

²⁷ UNGA Resolution 2832 on Declaration of Indian Ocean as Peace zone, 16.12.1971.

1. Calls upon the great powers in conformity with the Declaration to enter into immediate consultations with the littoral states of the Indian Ocean with a view to:
 - Halting the further escalation and expansion of their military presence in the Indian Ocean.
 - Eliminating from the Indian Ocean all bases, military installations, logistical supply facilities, the disposition of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and any manifestation of Great Power military presence in the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of Great Power rivalry.
2. Calls upon the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean, the Permanent members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean in pursuit of the objectives of establishing a system of universal collective security without military alliances and strengthening international security through regional and other cooperation to enter into consultations with a view to the implementation of this Declaration.

The principle of the Peace Zone and the resolution for its implementation has been the target of criticism from both sides. Among the Great Powers, the main charge is that it interfered with freedom of navigation in the oceans as provided under international law. This was not true because nowhere did the resolution impede freedom of movement and the restriction only applied to passage in particular postures. The truth is that big powers had been so accustomed to treat the Indian Ocean as their property that any efforts on the part of the region to uphold their interests were looked upon as infringement. The real reason is that the big powers did not want their wishes to move as they please, subject to trammels. In a sense the peace zone was in their wider interests because elimination of rivalry in this region would certainly have contributed to international peace and security. They did not see it in this light in their narrow concern with their individual interests. The Resolution had an inward built in weakness in that it failed to strike a balance between the external and the domestic implementation. It seemed to assume that with control of the external factor the regional situation would fall into place and take care of itself. It did not spell out any measures or action which would be taken by the regional powers to synchronize with or in unison with steps taken by the outside powers in accordance with the resolution. There was of course truth in the belief that the elimination of outside pressures would enable the regional powers to address themselves to cooperation and harmony between them or at least create the right atmosphere for the purpose. Yet for practical purposes it would have been better if specific steps were laid down for action by the regional powers. Besides even the objectives specified in the resolution for the littoral states were for a system of universal collective security without military alliances. This was certainly the ultimate objective but as far as the Peace Zone concept was concerned its immediate target was security for the region which would to be sure be a stepping stone to the ultimate haven of universal security. This distinction is not sharply focused in the resolution. The specific steps for the implementation of the resolution in the operative part have not been spelt out except a broad general invitation for all concerned to enter into consultations. A more practical approach would have been to provide for the littoral states to constitute themselves into a negotiating party which could pursue the subject with the others concerned. Predictably the resolution had much difficulty getting off the ground as there were no volunteers to bell the cat. Requests by the Secretary-General for reports to be submitted

on progress to the 27th session went unheeded and it was found that consultations had not taken place as directed. This was a measure of the ineffectiveness of the resolution in its failure to apportion or identify responsibility for its implementation.

The 27th session then took a decisive step which would mark a turning point in the history of the Peace Zone proposal in its appointment of an ad hoc committee of 15 members. The terms of reference of which was to study the practical measures for its implementation having due regard to the security interests of the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean. The implication was that the proposal should now be studied in relation to the impact of it on the security of the regional states. This introduced a new dimension in that it placed the onus on the littoral states to sort out their own security problems preparatory to resolving the problem of relations with the great powers. This meant a shift of focus from the outside to which it was directed initially to the arena of the regional states. This would seem to amount to a change in the thrust of the proposal. From now on it became enmeshed not only in the politics of the super powers but its own intra regional problems. The super powers used the opportunity to press ahead with their expansion into the region. Their contention was that for big powers to consider the exercise of restraint on their part it was necessary for the regional states to establish some system for peace and cooperation between them as a prerequisite. Another oversight in the resolution was that it took for granted that the littoral states would automatically accept non-militarization of themselves or restriction in this regard as an obligation in implementation of the peace zone concept but as the proceedings of the ad hoc committee would show they were no less tenacious of security rights than the big powers.

However before the proposal fell into the hands of the ad hoc committee it seemed foredoomed to failure in the light of a number of momentous events which changed the political and security complexion of the region. These were the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty, the Indo-Pakistan war and creation of Bangladesh and the entry of the high powered US ship, the Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal in December 1971. They portended that the time was past for the Peace Zone to be a feasible proposition. From there on the level of penetration increased to an extent which undermined its prospects while the difference among littoral states as reflected in the ad hoc committee added to the difficulties. In 1974 occurred another shattering event which was the detonation by India of a plutonium device which brought India into the category of nuclear weapon capability countries. This nullified one of the basic premises of the Peace Zone proposal, that the Indian Ocean area should not have nuclear powers. By then the other premise which concerned the initial low level great power penetration had too been shattered. By this time foreign vessels particularly of the US were streaming in, in the wake of the oil crisis which threatened the West with an embargo. The crisis in US - Iran relations and the declaration by the US of the Persian Gulf as an area of special security interest to it. What this intensified super power activity meant, was that they were becoming rapidly less amenable to a consideration of the idea. Thus the responsibility was falling more than over on the littoral and hinterland states to assume the burden of its implementation. From thereon the ad hoc committee became the centre of the stage through which action for the implementation of the Peace Zone was coordinated. This action was in 3 main directions, namely, the inauguration of a dialogue between the two superpowers regarding their military presence in the Indian Ocean, the preparation by the ad hoc committee to convene a general conference for the implementation of the Peace Zone Declaration and the arrangement of a meeting of the littoral and hinterland states as a step towards the convening of the General Conference. All these objectives were specified in a Resolution

entitled "Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace" which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1978, the relevant and corresponding sections of which were as follows:

1. Urges that the talks between the USSR and the USA regarding their military presence in the Indian Ocean be resumed without delay.
2. Renew its invitation to the great powers and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean to enter with least possible delay into consultations with the Committee regarding the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.
3. Decides to convene a meeting of the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean in New York as the next step towards convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

These steps were in accordance with the objectives and concept as embodied in the original UN Resolution of December 1971 with the difference that it was an action plan unlike the terms of the resolution which were really general exhortations and as it happened were not implemented. It is the appointment of the ad hoc committee which changed the situation and it marks the significant difference between the two Resolutions. The Ad Hoc committee now had the task of persuading the super powers to undertake a dialogue, the maritime users to enter into consultations regarding their own particular problems whereas the original resolution was vague on these matters and confined itself to calling upon the various groups namely littoral states, users and Great Powers to enter into consultations. The most important development in the 1978 resolution was the decision to hold a meeting of littoral and hinterland states as a step to a general conference. This meeting which was held in New York in July 1979 was a landmark in the action taken for the implementation of the Declaration. It adopted a Final Document which set out parameters and principles some of which were a departure from the past for the future implementation of the Declaration. In its review of previous developments it affirmed the context for this meeting in the following terms:

Since the adoption of its resolution 2832 of 16 December 1971, the General Assembly has repeatedly expressed its deep concern at developments that portend the extension of the arms race into the Indian Ocean and at the competitive escalation of the military presence of the great powers in the Indian Ocean, thereby increasing tension in the area and posing a serious threat to the maintenance of peace and security in the region.²⁸

This point is reiterated elsewhere as follows:

there has been a deterioration of peace and security in the Indian Ocean area. The escalation of the great power military presence as well as other military preparations continues to threaten the peace and stability of the area.

The main contribution of the Conference is that in the Final Document which was adopted by the majority of participants it laid down the parameters and principles for implementation under the title "Principles of Agreement for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace". These may be classified as follows:

²⁸ See article on Indian Ocean as Peace Zone in issue of Disarmament UN Autumn 1989 and Rasul B Rais, *The Indian Ocean and the Super Powers*, Barnes and Noble Books, New Jersey, 1987, pp. 172-178.

1. Limits of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.
2. Halting the further escalation and expansion and eliminating the military presence of the great powers in the Indian Ocean, conceived in the context of great power rivalry.
3. Elimination of military bases and other military installations of the great powers from the Indian Ocean conceived in the context of great power rivalry.
4. Denuclearization of the Indian Ocean in the context of the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.
5. Non use of force and peaceful settlement of disputes.
6. Strengthening of international security through regional and other cooperation.
7. Free and unimpeded use of the Indian Ocean Zone of Peace by the vessels of all nations in accordance with the principles of international law and custom.

It will be seen from the enunciation of principles that the concept had come a long way from the original Declaration of 1971. Not only was it a more orderly and organised programme where the areas of responsibility and objectives are carefully defined but it steps into new areas which give a new complexion to the concept. Items 1,2 and 3 above are an affirmation of objectives envisaged in the original Declaration but 4,5 and 6 enter new areas and explore other avenues. The latter constitute a new dimension which has decisively changed the orientation of the original concept. The difference in short is that whereas earlier the stress was on elimination of great power, rivalry and their bases, there is now equal emphasis on similar action by the littoral states. Some will go so far as to say that the ball is in the other court and that for progress to be made it is up to the littoral states to take the initiative in terms of 4,5 and 6 and the great powers for their part will wait until then. Earlier the great powers were expected to take the first step towards elimination of rivalry thus creating the right climate for the regional states to engage in constructive cooperation. However in terms of the principles in the Final Document it is now the other way round.

The provision under 4,5 and 6 have imposed a number of obligations on the littoral states as a prerequisite as well as to balance the duties incurred on the other side. These need some examination as they are new concepts. Thus in 4 (b) and (c) oblige littoral and hinterland states not to acquire nuclear weapons and also to uphold the objective of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.²⁹ Section 5 goes much further in requiring renunciation by these states of the threat or use of force and also settlement of disputes by peaceful means. This section is really a reiteration of obligation accepted by 11 states under the Charter and their insertion here is not clear unless it is to reinforce the idea of counter obligations by the littoral and hinterland states. Section 6 stresses this point of the conduct enjoined on the littoral and hinterland states stating that they should undertake "to consider negotiating measures for promoting or enhancing the stability of the Indian Ocean area at a lower military level based on the principle of undiminished security of the states concerned and taking into account the need of all states to safeguard their security". It is noteworthy that Japan proposed

²⁹ See text of 4 which is as follows: (a) The nuclear weapon states are called upon to undertake not to establish nuclear bases in the Indian Ocean and to refrain from conducting nuclear test activities in the Indian Ocean. (b) Similarly the littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean should agree not to acquire or introduce nuclear weapons in the Indian Ocean themselves nor to allow their introduction by an external power. (c) The littoral and hinterland states of the Indian Ocean uphold the fundamental objective of the non proliferation of nuclear weapons by all states and their conviction that the production, acquisition and stock piling of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction are detrimental to the maintenance of peace and security in the world, and call upon nuclear weapons states to undertake concrete measures of nuclear disarmament leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

the following amendment to be added to section 5 viz "The establishment of a Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean presupposes the recognition of the primary role if not the exclusive role of the countries of the region in the maintenance of peace and security in the Indian Ocean. This is a measure of the shift of bias from the outside powers to the regional states, the gravitation of responsibility on the latter entirely contrary to the original Declaration which was directed almost exclusively against the big powers.

This shift of the emphasis was really a recognition of the turbulent unsettled state of affairs in the region at that time. The Indo-Pakistan war and the creation of Bangladesh, the Indo-Soviet Treaty, followed not long after by the Iran-Iraq War and the war in Afghanistan, had created a grave security situation in the region which could be a threat to the world and hence it invited increased involvement in its affairs of outside powers. The concept of a zone of peace however dearly the region wanted it seemed quite remote and difficult of realization at that stage. The next move was up to the General Conference for which this meeting of littoral states was intended to be a step and the Ad Hoc Committee was directed to be the preparatory committee for this purpose. It was decided that this General Conference should meet in 1981 in Colombo, Sri Lanka but later there were requests for deferment by many countries on various grounds. The main deterrent to many was the wars in Afghanistan and between Iran and Iraq which in their view rendered such a venture inopportune. In the circumstances it was postponed almost indefinitely.

The delays and difficulties in the way of the implementation of the Peace Zone concept and the obvious feet dragging of countries cast grave doubts on the possibility of its realization. This situation portended a great danger to the region because in the meantime it seemed to be heading for tragedy. Indeed an entirely new threat was in the offing which was the prospects of conflict from within the region. The need for action under Section 5 where the countries themselves took the initiative to promote peace and harmony between them was never more urgent. In this context a new initiative came into being which was the formation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) by the 7 countries of Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, and the Maldives in accordance with a Charter which they adopted setting out its objectives, principles and institutional arrangements. SAARC could be regarded as a lineal heir to earlier initiatives such as the Colombo Powers and Bandung which were essentially regional in character and inspiration. With SAARC therefore the problems of regional security were once again assumed by the countries of the region though in a more restricted scope. The origins and career of SAARC will be considered under a later chapter.

It would be pertinent before concluding to consider the reasons for the inability of the Peace Zone initiative to live up to expectations. It was indeed the most courageous and original attempt to realise regional security in the Indian Ocean area in accordance with the principles of Non-Alignment and the UN Charter. Some attribute the failure to limitations in the Resolution which while being good in its presentation and conceptualization was still weak in measures for implementation. It was not until the appointment of the Ad Hoc committee that it got off the ground. At the same time there is no doubt that it was hardly welcome to the big powers and probably many others. Yet it is noteworthy that in 1964 coinciding with the Cairo Non-Aligned Summit Declarations the Soviet Foreign Minister submitted a memorandum to the United Nations entitled "Memorandum on measures for further easing international tension and restricting the arms race" where he proposed dismantling of bases in the Indian Ocean and establishment of nuclear free zones. The Western powers were never really enamoured of it as seen in the indifferent reaction at the

Singapore Commonwealth conference of 1971. They saw it as an infringement of their classic interests in Asia and when the British withdrew it was inherited by the USA. The irony is that at the very moment when the proposal was under discussion at the UN the forces were taking shape in the Indo Pakistan war and the entry of US fleets on which it would founder.

Chapter 5

Global Security

Global security is a new dimension in the concepts of National Security of a State and represents the impact of membership in the international community and the global situation on the security of a State. In the past, as history has shown the security of a State was concerned primarily with threats which were of national scope, meaning those from within, from the neighbourhood, and originating in the region. With the establishment of the international community as represented by the United Nations, problems have overflowed national dimensions. The interaction and interdependence of States within the community have rendered problems indivisible so that it is no longer possible to differentiate between what is purely local and what is not. Apart from subjects which are strictly local and peculiar to states, there are areas which hitherto were the domestic concerns of countries, like health, education, science and technology and which have now become the collective concern of the world community. This is part of the converging process where with the rapid growth of the world community acting through the United Nations and many other international avenues, subjects are becoming increasingly internationalized where states are obliged to assume burdens and share responsibility. A simple example is the development of nuclear energy where however remote such a venture might be from the mind of a country, particularly for a Third World country, yet the subject is of vital importance to it because of its broader implications involving nothing less than the possible annihilation of mankind. Hence it behaves urgent concern and action by all states irrespective of their size and capacity.

Nowhere has this impact of the global scene on the individual state been so marked as in the realm of its security. The world in fact has evolved to a point where global security has become indistinguishable from that of the State. This is the outcome of a number of virtually dramatic developments in the postwar world. At the heart of it is the prospect of annihilation facing the world from its accumulated arsenal of nuclear weapons, which is estimated to be the equivalent of 15,000 megatons of TNT and capable of destroying half the world's population within minutes. This nuclear arsenal thus has a levelling and equalizing effect in that it has made the world one in its susceptibility to destruction without any discrimination between nuclear and non nuclear states. Both sides therefore have a vested interest in averting such a doom. At the same time there is the opposite and almost contradictory situation where the United Nations has been set up and organized to represent and safeguard the interests of member states as well as the collective well being of mankind, and therefore nations can invoke its assistance in matters of its own security as well as work through it in questions of global security. The United Nations has therefore assumed an awesome role as the lifeline of humanity and its only hope in saving mankind from the scourge of war which is tantamount to annihilation. At the same time it has a special role as the protector of the small states in the context of the big power rivalry and arms race between them which have gravely endangered their position and security. The United Nations in that sense is to them not only an avenue through which to obtain economic aid for their accelerated development but is a refuge and a champion in safeguarding their security. This is the background to the concept of Global security in so far as it concerns the national security of a State in that it refers to the initiatives of the latter to invoke and enlist the multi

faceted machinery of the world body in ensuring its own security in the context of international peace and security.

The concept of global security operates in two principal ways in the initiatives of a State. Firstly, there are the initiatives which are directed to strengthen and support global security itself from the holocaust of nuclear annihilation. This means in effect, efforts towards the peaceful settlement of international conflicts lest they result in the use of nuclear weapons, and endeavour in the broad field of disarmament itself. The latter includes decisions on priorities, objectives and targets, choice of various avenues and approaches as well as machinery, participation in laborious studies of technical issues, association in a wide range of complex and technical yet momentous issues on which human survival depends. This is not a mandatory requirement of nations and some may choose for lack of staff or resources to be uninvolved but this is a self evident obligation of a member state, the stakes being what they are. It is thus a solemn duty of every state to give of their utmost along with other states in facing up to the awesome challenges of disarmament and resolving them as best as they could. Secondly the initiatives relating to safeguarding the security of the individual state, protecting its sovereignty in the face of threats and attempted violations in the tense and volatile international environ of today. This may seem a paradox in a world which is ostensibly committed to uphold the UN Charter but the latter notwithstanding, the old order continues of big power posturing, intimidation, and dominance of power politics which bear heavily on small states which cannot afford the dubious luxury of deterrent measures. It is therefore the responsibility of the UN to protect them and equally it is up to these countries to utilise the machinery and avenues of the UN system to safeguard their position. This amounts to almost a full time task for a State of exploring all such available avenues and identifying itself fully with these activities. It is necessary to appreciate that one cannot draw a clear distinction between the different issues on grounds of immediacy or relevancy. On the contrary issues are so interlocked and interlinked as to be multiple facets of the same basic question which envelops the whole international community. It is figuratively as if they are all inside a cloud from which they must individually and collectively extricate themselves. This explains why countries big and small, nuclear and non-nuclear, irrespective of the levels of their scientific technology are expected to, and have in fact identified themselves with complex questions and made useful contributions. Every gain and step forward is a link in a chain which will pull the world back from the brink of destruction.

Apart from these general considerations of an absolute character, Sri Lanka's interest in global security is based on a number of special circumstances particular to it. As a small state it shares the anxiety and sense of insecurity of all such states placed as it were in a Lilliputian position in a world dominated by Gullivers. In its own geo-political environ it is in the unenviable position of being juxtaposed next to one such giant in India and also to occupy a crucial strategic location in that region. Invariably Sri Lanka has been at the centre of affairs in the region and played a decisive part in the power struggles of countries and the patterns of history of the Indian Ocean region. For this reason it is extra sensitive about its security. It has on the one hand a history of good relations with its neighbours but also of being coveted for its strategic location on the other. Sri Lanka has not been wanting in efforts to safeguard her security through measures at a national level. From 1948 to 1956 this was attempted through its defence pact with the UK and close identification with the Commonwealth. This policy was rejected by the SLFP regimes which radically changed the direction of its security concepts by opting for neutralism and universality. This meant a non-offensive approach of trusting and confidence and relying on the UN to ensure the security

of Sri Lanka as part of its responsibilities under the Charter and also its own efforts in concert with like minded countries to strive for international peace and security. This opened the way to the choice of Non-Alignment as its basic position and philosophy as regards security. The underlying principle was that the Non-Aligned community represented a group of states which numerically comprised almost two thirds of the world community and was committed to the peaceful settlement of disputes. It was their expectation that their own bona fides and credentials and their intervention, mediation and good offices in international affairs would have a restraining influence on the big powers and usher in an era of international peace and security for all. While the initiatives of the Non-Aligned nations were certainly a landmark in international history, they did not produce the desired effect and the international scene continued to be fraught with tension and threats of conflict which in the prevailing climate of nuclear weaponry had the potential to end in conflagration. Yet despite these limitations and falling short of expectations, Non-Alignment was a dimension which the world community simply could not ignore and indeed had to reckon with. Given greater solidarity it could have made a decisive impact. Still it served as a great moral force and as a forum through which its member states, the bulk of whom were Third World countries, could make themselves known and heard and participate in the affairs of the international community. Precisely because of the vital importance of international peace and security to the very survival of mankind, a considerable part of their initiatives were focused on this subject. Sri Lanka as a founder member of the movement was in the forefront of these activities and make original contributions in the field of disarmament through the medium of Non-Alignment.

Sri Lanka's choice of Non-Alignment as her stand on international affairs and security was not only because of the lack of other options as a small country. A positive reason is that it reflected its own cultural and moral inclinations which had their roots in its historical and spiritual heritage. It is not often realized that there was a dimensional difference in the attitudes of many Asian countries and those of the Western world. In the era of post independence in Asia this standpoint was expressed forcefully by leaders such as Nehru of India, Aung San of Burma and Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka who proclaimed concepts such as Asian brotherhood, dynamic neutralism, Asian Potsdam, an Asian UN and later Pancha Sila which was adopted by both India and China as the basis of their Treaty over Tibet. The philosophy of non-violence also accorded with Sri Lanka's spiritual heritage which was Buddhistic and believed in non-violence and fraternal understanding between peoples on a basis of peace and compassion. This thought was conveyed by President Premadasa in his address as Prime Minister to the 40th anniversary session of the UN in the following words.¹ "By design accident or coincidence the UN Charter enshrines seven conditions of communal stability and prosperity promulgated by Lord Buddha over 2500 years ago. These seven conditions are known as Saptā Aparihariya Dhamma, the seven noble principles to prevent deterioration and decline. It advocated harmonious assembly, peaceful consultation, negotiated compromise, recognition of values and traditions, adherence to moral and spiritual principles, upholding the wisdom of elders and free movement of peoples between realms". President J. R. Jayawardene in his address to the Havana Non-Aligned Summit in 1979 expressed a similar Buddhistic concept in the words. "It is not by violence nor by hatred nor by the use

¹ President Premadasa, address to the UN General Assembly, 40th Session in 1986.

of brute force that the world can advance. The problems of war and peace call for nothing less than a bold concerted effort of peaceful global cooperation".²

Sri Lanka's adoption of Non-Alignment as an instrument of its global policy was the culmination of earlier initiatives aimed at contributing its share in dealing with regional and international problems. The first such attempt was through the Colombo Powers of 1953. This opened the way to the Bandung Afro-Asian Conference of 1955 which affirmed the same objectives. The policy of dynamic neutralism was a continuation of this attitude where Sri Lanka proposed to participate actively in deciding on questions of international peace and security. This position was explained at some length by Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in the following statement:

Some of the most valuable contributions that have been made are not by the representatives of big powers but of comparatively smaller and less important powers. It is the smaller nations owing to the fact that they have done no special pleading for one side or another who are really in position to make valuable contributions. That is the position we should occupy and in occupying that position we can make a valuable contribution to international affairs.³

Pursuant to this policy of peaceful involvement, Sri Lanka during his Premiership participated actively in UN initiatives. These fell short of expectations but they demonstrated the policy of dynamic neutralism at a global level. Their limitation was that they lacked a continuing foundation and were ad hoc in character with the inherent danger of being isolated. This gap was filled by the Non-Aligned movement in that it was a Community of nations pledged to objectives who would act in unison. Thus Non-Alignment represented the realization of a goal and it provided the appropriate platform from which to launch global initiatives.

Another important international gathering which served as a medium for global initiatives was the Commonwealth. It met biennially at a plenary and regional basis. It was essentially a forum for the expression of ideas and views rather than as an action theatre, this being the nature of the Commonwealth. It was more a multi-racial society than a political community capable of acting together except on specific matters such as Apartheid or international trade. In the field of security and disarmament there were no concerted Commonwealth initiatives except for statements of positions on which they agreed issued as communiques of the conferences. The sections on security and disarmament reflect the viewpoints of member states. There were besides other international forums where the subjects of security and disarmament were discussed in relation to the substantive mandates of these bodies when they impinged on the latter. The basic link in such cases was the relationship between disarmament and development and the role of education and culture in eradicating the ideas of wars and armaments from the mind of man where according to the dictum of UNESCO they originate.

For an understanding of Sri Lanka's concepts of global security, it is necessary therefore to examine three categories of evidence and material. These are the stated positions in communiques and working papers of Commonwealth and Non-Aligned conferences and the resolutions supported by Sri Lanka its initiatives and statements at the United Nations on the subject of security and disarmament. Together they afford a comprehensive and graphic picture of Sri Lanka's stand on the numerous and complex issues that arose in these fields.

² President J. R. Jayawardene, opening address as outgoing Chairman to Non-Aligned Summit in Havana in 1979.

³ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, *Towards a new era*, Sri Lanka Information Dept. 1961, p. 811.

In general it can be said that Sri Lanka's position was based on a few basic principles which governed its specific attitudes on the multiple questions in this field and the range of approaches and proposals of member states on them. These were briefly the acceptance of complete and general disarmament as the goal of endeavour; pending its attainment urgent action is to be taken on the steps leading up to it; the primary responsibility for such action to be on the United Nations; the need to summon a World Disarmament Conference at the earliest opportunity; cessation immediately of nuclear test and conclusion of Comprehensive Test Ban accompanied by concurrent cessation of production of such weapons and destruction of stockpiles; total prohibition of chemical, bacteriological and other lethal weapons of mass destruction; measures for the progressive reduction of conventional weapons and armies of all kinds to a level compatible with security needs; prohibition of the introduction of nuclear weapons or lethal missiles into Outer Space and the moon which would be reserved as an area exclusively for peaceful scientific investigation; funds released through disarmament to be diverted to economic development of nations; programmes for development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes may be conducted subject to accepted safeguards; pending a comprehensive test ban and prohibition of nuclear weapons, proliferation of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear states is prohibited and the latter should be guaranteed against attacks by nuclear states; maximization of participation of international community particularly of Third World countries in disarmament initiatives through establishment of appropriate structures and increased membership in bodies such as Committee on Disarmament, Commission on Disarmament and also world publicity through such means as adoption of Disarmament Decades, convening of Special sessions of UN General Assembly on Disarmament. In practice in the course of deliberations, these main problems were divided into sub issues representing different facets on which States indicated their positions.

The Commonwealth which at present consists of 47 members is unique as an international body for the universality of its representation. Unlike regional bodies such as OAU or ASEAN which are representative of the states of that area, the Commonwealth is representative of virtually all the regions of the world. To that extent it is a good forum whose views serve as an index of international opinion. Also being a smaller body issues are in sharper focus and it allows freer and intimate discussion between representatives in an informal atmosphere. Their conclusions are conveyed in joint communiques which are concise, orderly and succinctly expressed. They provide a continuing picture of the evolving attitudes of the Commonwealth over a period of time. one of its most comprehensive statements on Disarmament which sets out the guidelines to which Sri Lanka subscribed is to be found in the communique to the 1961 meeting in London, and is as follows:⁴

The Ministers recalled the resolution on general and complete disarmament adopted at the 14th session of the UN General Assembly and agreed that every effort should be made to implement this by agreement between the major powers.

They declared their aims to be:

1. Complete abolition of the means of waging war of any kind and an agreement for this purpose based on the following principles:

⁴ Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, 13-17 March, 1961, Final Communique.

- All national armed forces and armaments to be reduced to the agreed levels needed for internal security,
 - the process of disarmament to be continued until completion subject to verification at each stage,
 - elimination of nuclear and conventional armaments must be so phased as to deny a country military advantage,
 - for each phase effective machinery of inspection should come into operation,
 - that disarmament should be carried out as rapidly as possible within specified periods,
 - armed military force should be established at appropriate time to enforce observation of disarmament agreement,
 - creation of international authority in association with UN control this force so that it would not be used for purposes not consistent with the charter.
2. Principal military powers to resume direct negotiations in close contact with UN and that other nations should be associated through appropriate means.
 3. Alongside political negotiations experts should work out details of inspection system applicable to measures of disarmament.
 4. Rapid agreement should be secured for permanent banning of nuclear tests by all nations and for verification.
 5. This agreement should lessen danger on nuclear proliferation and be psychological impetus to reach agreement of all aspects of disarmament.
 6. They hoped that negotiations for cessation of nuclear weapons tests due to begin would lead to early conclusion of an agreement.

This statement should be commended for its far sighted and advanced ideas at so early a stage in the debate on disarmament. Subsequent conferences spelt out various features of this programme or added new ones. It contained features to which Sri Lanka attached special importance like the goal of general and complete disarmament, the primary responsibility of the UN under the Charter, the association of other states in the negotiations, the permanent banning of nuclear tests and the creation of an International authority which anticipated Sri Lanka's proposal later for establishment of a World Disarmament Authority. The 1964 conference held in London welcomed the conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty and the subsequent agreement between the UK, the USSR and the USA not to place nuclear weapons in outer space. The 1965 London Conference was a further landmark in the development of Commonwealth ideas on Disarmament.⁵ They included as embodied in the Communique an affirmation of the need to achieve total and world wide disarmament, a recognition of the role and contribution of non-aligned countries, the need for the 18 nation Geneva Disarmament Committee to undertake negotiations so as to reach agreement on proposals which could be submitted to a World Disarmament Conference, the hope that declarations by African and Latin American regarding the establishment of nuclear free zones would be respected, the need to associate China with disarmament initiatives in view of the explosion by China of two nuclear devices, their determination to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons in view of the risk of escalation and tension and to this end to join other countries in signing an agreement

⁵ *Ibid.*, London meeting in July, 1965, section on Disarmament in Final Communique.

to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their hope that the Test Ban Treaty could be extended to underground tests as well. Of particular interest to Sri Lanka, in that they accorded with its objectives, were the call for a World Disarmament Conference, the positive attitude on nuclear free zones, the desire to conclude an agreement to halt nuclear proliferation and for extension of the test ban to underground tests. The stress on General and complete disarmament and the invitation to non-aligned states to participate are significant admissions of Sri Lanka's positions.

The 1966 conference in London focused on two aspects of nuclear weapons. They deplored the lack of progress in the 18 nation Disarmament Committee in agreeing on measures towards general and complete disarmament as a follow up to the conclusion of the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, and the two tests in the atmosphere which had been conducted. They hoped that in the light of this deterioration steps would be taken to realize a universally binding test ban. The other aspect related to nuclear proliferation, where they welcomed the UN resolution on the subject of November 1965 and urged all countries to agree on measures to prevent proliferation. They further looked forward to certain initiatives taken by non-nuclear countries towards resolving differences over detection and identification between nuclear countries bearing fruit, and resulting in the extension of the Test Ban to underground explosions. This emphasis on the need for a non-proliferation Treaty foreshadowed the conclusion of such a Treaty in 1968. The 1969 conference in London pursued these themes of the previous conference and urged the need for a comprehensive test ban treaty and also agreeing on a cut off for production of fissionable material and recommended both these measures for action by the 18 member Disarmament Committee. They also supported a proposal of the conference of non-nuclear weapon states for the USA and Soviet Union to initiate bilateral discussions on limitation of nuclear weapon delivery systems and defence against ballistic missiles. They welcomed the treaty for a non-proliferation of nuclear weapons which had been opened for signature, while noting reservations of states as regards security guarantees for non-nuclear states and its falling short of being an effective measure of nuclear disarmament since member states under threat of attacks were entitled to protection under the Charter. The need for urgent action over the threat of chemical and biological weapons to which the conference drew attention was a new initiative by it in this field and it welcomed the British proposal to the 18 member Disarmament Committee on a convention to prohibit this warfare. This conference therefore was of special interest to Sri Lanka as its initiatives on chemical and biological warfare and its position on the Non-Proliferation Treaty accorded with Sri Lanka's attitude on these questions. The Ottawa Conference on 1973 was unique for the adoption of a joint statement to mark the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, which appealed to the nuclear powers in particular to "take up as an urgent task the negotiation of a new agreement to bring about the total cessation of nuclear weapons tests in all environments".⁶ Subsequent conferences such as of Kingston (1975) and London (1977) were confined in their communiqués to the Indian Ocean Peace Zone proposal as a Disarmament issue and the London communiqué dealt with it in some length.⁷ It was the first major statement in a Commonwealth communiqué on this subject and embodied the following significant submissions that it had a special interest to a number of Commonwealth countries and it was

⁶ *Ibid.*, Meeting in Ottawa in August 1973, Annexe to Final Communiqué.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Meeting in London in June 1977, Final Communiqué para. 31.

their wish and that of the international community to respect it as a zone of international peace and cooperation. Serious concern was expressed about level of great power activities and military installations in the region. All nations were invited to implement the UN resolution for the establishment of a peace zone and Great powers in particular were invited to eliminate rivalry between them in the Indian Ocean; it was hoped that all concerned would cooperate towards the convening of a conference on the Indian Ocean with a view to implementation of the UN Declaration. At Melbourne (1982), the main reference under disarmament was to the Peace Zone and was on the lines of the previous London communique while the New Delhi conference of 1983 adopted the Goa Declaration on International Security⁸, which merely reiterated accepted positions like restoration of political contacts between nuclear powers in the quest for international security, necessity to stop nuclear arms race, the ploughing back of funds from disarmament to development.

It will be seen from this survey of statements on Disarmament in Commonwealth communiques that they covered the fundamental issues on the subject and that the stated positions accorded closely with the stand of Sri Lanka. This is significant considering that the Commonwealth was a spectrum of states of diverse character and views and included big and small states, nuclear and non-nuclear powers. Its agreement on common positions which accorded with Sri Lanka's views spoke well for the latter's diplomacy and balanced approaches. They give a picture of Sri Lanka's position on the main issues in the field of disarmament. The outlook of the Commonwealth was somewhat conservative reflecting the reservations of the Western members on several issues. Some instances are its guarded position on the nuclear test ban, on cessation of production of weapons and elimination of stockpiles, the concept of nuclear free zones. There seems to be a stiffening of the position compared to the almost idealistic vision of 1961 which was commended in Non-Aligned circles. Even on the Indian Ocean Peace Zone it was initially lukewarm but later because of the interest of Australia and New Zealand and pressure of littoral states it was more positive.

The Non-Aligned movement unlike the Commonwealth was a body of like minded nations with unanimous views on many matters which reflected their common legacy of colonial rule, economic deprivation, poverty of their peoples, low living standards, retarded economic development, dearth of capital and resources, over dependence on export of primary commodities susceptible to price fluctuations, and technological backwardness. Understandably they had no room in their plans for war and conflict, their war if an all being an all out one directed towards the elimination of these disabilities which would enable their peoples to enjoy their due share of comfort and happiness. There was thus an unanimous desire among them for peace and also peace of mind to proceed with their urgent tasks which they were unable to do if the international scene was one of tension and threats and clouded by fears of nuclear annihilation. This could only be achieved in their view by programmes for denuclearization and disarmament by nations. A material reason for this desire for peace was the hope that the funds released by disarmament which were to the tune of 1000 billion US dollars per year could be diverted to development. The Non-Aligned movement was thus the most outstanding champion and spokesman for disarmament and world peace in the international community, which they pursued at every opportunity with unflagging zeal and momentum. Sri Lanka's concepts on global security thus reflected the non-aligned standpoint

⁸ *Ibid.*, Meeting in New Delhi in November 1983, Final communique, Goa Declaration on International Security.

and its initiatives were conducted by and large within the framework of the movement and its machinery.

The setting of these Non-Aligned initiatives in pursuit of disarmament and international security was the United Nations which under the Charter was primarily responsible for them. These initiatives were therefore designed and directed for consideration by the appropriate organs of the United Nations and for implementation. The Non-Aligned concepts itself originated in the deliberations of the movement at its various levels and machinery which included the coordinating Bureau, the Liaison committee at the UN, the Ministerial meetings and they received final shape and endorsement at its Summit meetings of Heads of States and Governments which were held triennially. These decisions in the form mainly of mandates and resolutions were canvassed and acted upon by its representatives at the meetings of the General Assembly and in special sessions which were convened from time to time. In the General Assembly it was the First Political committee which was responsible for issues of Disarmament in the first instance. The role and initiatives of Sri Lanka as a member of Non-Alignment was twofold. It was in the first instance to discuss these questions, bringing to bear its own point of view at the various Non-Aligned forums and arrive at agreed positions which were then pursued at the United Nations. In theory this did not preclude any independent initiative by Sri Lanka but for its success at the UN the support of a group was indispensable as the UN was no place for a back bencher or a private members motion. It is noteworthy that some of the original concepts of Sri Lanka like the Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean were readily accepted by the movement and owe whatever success they achieved to its support and sponsorship. Thus the Non-Aligned community was the essential framework within which Sri Lanka like other countries of the group acted in pursuing its initiatives, in proposing, co sponsoring or subscribing to resolutions, participation in various activities such as membership of bodies in the vast and variegated field of Disarmament.

Sri Lanka's interest in Disarmament pre dates its membership of the Non-Aligned movement. The first intimation of this concern was in the section relating to it in the Communique of the Colombo Powers of April 1954 which stated as follows:⁹

The Prime Minister viewed with grave concern the developments in regard to the hydrogen bomb and other weapons of mass destruction. They welcomed the efforts of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to bring about the elimination and prohibition of such weapons and hoped that the Commission would be able to reach an agreed solution to this problem urgently. The Prime Ministers were of the opinion that pending such agreement, no further explosions of hydrogen bombs should take place and that the United Nations and the powers principally concerned should publish authoritative information regarding the destructive capabilities.

The Bandung Communique of the Afro-Asian powers of April 1955 spelt out these fears in more detail and made positive recommendations for action. These were to the effect that prohibition of the production, experimentation and use of nuclear and thermo nuclear weapons of war are imperative to save mankind from wholesale destruction and that pending such prohibition all powers concerned should reach agreement to suspend experiments with such weapons. All states were invited to cooperate especially through the UN in bringing about the reduction of armaments and the elimination of nuclear weapons under effective international control.

⁹ Sir John Kotelawela, *An Asian Prime Minister's Story*, George Harrap & Co. Ltd London, 1956, p. 122.

It is noteworthy that Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike as Prime Minister had a different approach to the problem of disarmament and saw it in another light. While there was no question about his advocacy of Disarmament the proof of which was his rejection of the UK Defence pact and his opting for a policy of neutralism, he yet seemed to look beyond to the moral aspects of peace. His desire was for a positive rather than a negative solution based not on the elimination of weapons alone but on the assertion of the human will for peace expressed in a conception of human brotherhood. This was the recurring theme in many of his public statements. Addressing a Federation of Youth he state that- ¹⁰"Today peace is based on fear of atom bombs, hydrogen bombs sad but true. A solution is disarmament but there are things to do. It depends on the human spirit, the will to pace. The positive aspect of peace is that you have to create an atmosphere of peace in the minds of people, that they are all brothers of one family, that they must somehow live together or surely they will die. It must be peace for all, one and indivisible. The problem of the present era is harmonising differences and uniting above them. Speaking at the UN Association¹¹ he reiterated these sentiments saying,

We have to realise whether we like it or not that we have to live together or perish together. We have to live and let live today. We have to understand each other even if we cannot agree with each other. These principles of living together are set out in the Pancha Sila. Next to the Charter of the UN that is the most important human document that the world has produced in the last few years.

This reference is to the 10 principles enunciated in the Bandung communique.¹² His approach to peace gave priority to his vision of human brotherhood, living together from a knowledge of the consequences of division and even at a practical level he pinned his faith on the practice of dynamic neutralism which was the exercise of good offices to restrain nations and bring them to their senses so to say. His approach was thus a kind of alternative to disarmament which he felt got at the heart of the issue and without which disarmament by itself would be ephemeral. While commendable as a philosophy and an original approach its practical value was in doubt as borne out in the experience over Suez and Hungary, where nations acted in total disregard of principles enjoined by the Charter or of Pancha Sila. It seemed therefore that a more practical approach which would work within the existing scenario of international relations was needed. It was not one which would look over it but act through it.

The non-aligned positions on the issues of international peace and security and Disarmament to which Sri Lanka subscribed and in which in several cases it was a co sponsor were categorically expressed in the communiqués and Declarations issued after its many meetings which were held at Summit, Foreign ministerial and Coordinating Bureau level since its inception in 1962. Sri Lanka's own thoughts on some of these issues were expressed at these meetings and the keynote statements of its Heads of State/Government at Summit meetings are a useful guide to them. At Belgrade in 1961 Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike struck the right note by referring to herself as a mother in relation to the prospects of nuclear conflict.¹³ She commended the Commonwealth communique of 1961

¹⁰ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Address to Federation of Youth.

¹¹ S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, Address to UN Association.

¹² Asian-African Conference, Bandung, April 18-24, 1955, Final communique, para. 3.

¹³ Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Address to first Non-Aligned Summit, Belgrade, Aug. 1961.

and called for its circulation to all nations. She further called for addition of Non-Aligned members to the Disarmament Commission. It is significant that the thrust of that Summit was towards mediating in the Berlin issue which had reached dangerous proportions. At Cairo in 1964, Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike affirmed the importance of the concept of peaceful co-existence as exemplified in the Non-Aligned movement for relations between States.¹⁴ This is noteworthy as a continuation of her late husband's emphasis on the concept of human brotherhood. She welcomed the proposal for the declaration of Africa as a nuclear free zone and recommended its extension to other areas including the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans. She notified the meeting of the unilateral step which her Government had taken of closing its ports and airfields to vessels and aircraft carrying nuclear weapons.¹⁵ She therefore urged that "the conference should adopt a resolution to declare nuclear free zones not only in Africa but also Indian and South Atlantic oceans and that they should close their ports and airfields to carriers of nuclear weapons and prohibit overflights by foreign aircraft bearing such weapons". At Lusaka in 1970, she announced her proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean and urged all countries bordering the Indian Ocean to join in giving effect to the nuclear free zone proposal and in keeping the Indian Ocean as an area of peace.¹⁶ At Algiers in 1973, she again announced this proposal for the Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean, recommending it as ideally suited to peoples of the region which would guarantee freedom of navigation.¹⁷ At the Colombo Summit of 1976, the Prime Minister referred to several disarmament issues and expressed regret at the lack of progress and deterioration. These were the failure to extend the Test Ban to underground explosions, the pile up of nuclear weapons, the nuclear monopoly of the big powers and the grotesque paradox of mounting expenditure on armaments in the midst of starving millions. On the Indian Ocean Peace Zone she referred to its urgency in the face of the expansion of Diego Garcia as a base and the intensified military and naval presence in the Indian Ocean. She further called for a Special Session of the United Nations on Disarmament and the convening of a World Conference on Disarmament.¹⁸ At Havana in 1979, President J. R. Jayawardene proposed the establishment of a World Disarmament Authority within the family of the United Nations.¹⁹ At Harare in 1986, Prime Minister Premadasa deplored the colossal expenditure on armaments and called for a diversion of these funds to development pointing out that weaponry is not an insurance of security but a symbol of insecurity.

Sri Lanka's concepts on disarmament issues and its initiatives on them at the United Nations originated mainly in the deliberations of Non-Aligned meetings and their conclusions as set out in their communiqués. A survey of these conclusions will therefore afford an insight into Sri Lanka's thinking on these issues. The Belgrade Summit set the tone with the following demands:²⁰

¹⁴ Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Address to Non-Aligned Summit, Cairo, 5-10 Oct. 1964.

¹⁵ Vernon Mendis, *Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 1983, pp. 462. Also Kodikara, *Foreign Policy of Sri Lanka*, Delhi 1982, p. 105.

¹⁶ Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Keynote Address to Non-Aligned Summit at Lusaka, July 1970.

¹⁷ Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, Keynote Address to Non-Aligned Summit at Algiers, Sept. 1973.

¹⁸ Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, keynote Address as Chairman to Non-Aligned Summit, Colombo, 1976.

¹⁹ Vide 2 above.

²⁰ Declaration, Belgrade Non-Aligned Summit 1961, paras 15-20, 25 years of Non-Aligned Movement, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, 1986, p. 8.

- Signing by the great powers without delay of a Treaty for general and complete Disarmament which should cover elimination of armed forces, armaments, foreign bases, manufacture of arms and elimination of institutes for military training, except for internal security, total prohibition of the production, possession and utilization of nuclear and thermonuclear arms, bacteriological and chemical weapons and elimination of equipment for the delivery, placement and operational use of weapons of mass destruction on national territories.
- All States to undertake to use exploration in outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes.
- Non-Aligned nations to be represented at future world conferences on Disarmament, and all discussion on Disarmament should be under auspices of UN
- That the United Nations should convene either a special session on Disarmament or a World Disarmament conference under the auspices of UN.

The Cairo Summit of 1964 concentrated on the Partial Test Ban Treaty, nuclear proliferation, nuclear weapons in outer space, denuclearized zones and the convening of a world Disarmament conference.

- It called upon all states to accede to the Partial Test Ban Treaty and for its extension to cover underground tests.
- It requested nuclear powers to abstain from dissemination of these weapons while the Non-Aligned States pledged themselves not to acquire and to deny deployment of nuclear weapons in its territories. It proposed the convening of international conference to conclude agreement on non-proliferation.
- It welcomed agreement by nuclear powers not to orbit nuclear weapons in outer space and proposed international Treaty for its prohibition.
- It welcomed Declaration of Denuclearization of Africa and similar aspirations elsewhere in Latin America, Europe and Asia and recommends its extension to other areas and oceans.
- Reiterates the need for convening of World Disarmament conference and urges steps for this purpose to be taken.

The Lusaka Summit welcomed the declaration of a Disarmament decade²¹ and proposed the following priorities for its programme of implementation namely cut off of production of fissionable material, stoppage of nuclear weapons production, comprehensive Test Ban, and an agreement prohibiting stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological weapons. A new note on the subject of Disarmament was the recommendation to take confidence building measures such as a convention on non-use of nuclear weapons, demilitarization of the sea bed and the ocean floor and nuclear free zones. They noted the Treaty on the principles governing the activities of States in the exploration and use of Outer space including the moon and other celestial bodies, the rescue and return of Astronauts and of objects. The Colombo Summit of 1976 is notable inter alia for recommending the convening of a Special session of the UN on Disarmament not later than 1978 and for its exhaustive section of the Indian Ocean Peace Zone where it urged Non-Aligned states in concert with the littoral states to take action to convene a Conference on the Indian Ocean under the UN auspices.

In the communique of the Havana Summit which dealt at some length on the theme of Disarmament the section on machinery for Disarmament is significant.²² It stressed the

²¹ *Ibid.*, N-A Summit, Lusaka, pp. 56-57.

²² *Ibid.*, Non-Aligned Summit, Havana, p. 425 paras 216-226.

central role in this field of the UN and commended the role of Non-Aligned countries at the 10th session of the UN which was a special session on Disarmament. It attached importance to the contribution of the Disarmament Commission and also to the recently reconstituted Committee on Disarmament which was responsible for negotiation on Disarmament. It further welcomed the decision to hold a second special session on Disarmament and declare the 80s as the Second Disarmament decade. By far the most comprehensive and exhaustive section on the issues of Disarmament in a Non-Aligned communique was that of the Luanda meeting of Foreign Ministers.²³ Indeed it is a recapitulation of Non-Aligned positions on this subject as stated before and combines as exposition of philosophy as well as record of attitudes. It is noteworthy for the statement on the doctrine of deterrence which had been the guiding policy of the big powers on Disarmament and is therefore the anti-thesis of the Non-Aligned position. It is stated as follows:

The concept of the maintenance of world peace through the process of deterrence is the most dangerous fallacy that exists. Doctrines of nuclear deterrence far from being the cause of the maintenance of international peace and security lie at the root of the continuing escalation in quantitative and qualitative development of nuclear weapons and lead to great insecurity and instability in international relations. The Ministers therefore find it unacceptable that the security of all states should be held hostage to the security interests and state relations among a handful of nuclear weapon states. They rejected all theories and concepts pertaining to the possession of nuclear weapons and their use under any circumstances.

The Communique added some new areas which had not figured prominently in earlier communiqués. These were the ever more frequent use of force and military intervention against the sovereignty of non-aligned countries which has increased the threat to world security, the reaffirmation of the objectives of the World Disarmament campaign and approval of the UNCA resolution of 1984 to convene an international conference on the relationship between Disarmament and Development. They pointed out that the arms race and state of militarization of the world militated against UN objectives such as the creation of a new international economic order.

Events moved fast in the world of disarmament after 1978 despite the frustrations the unconcealed feet dragging, the stalling and the excuses. This activity was to a large extent the result of the relentless pressures exerted by the Non-Aligned group which lost no opportunity to press for urgent action. The landmark and turning point in this regard was the First Special session on Disarmament which was held in 1978, and the convening of which was proposed by the Non-Aligned Summit of Colombo in 1976. This was a signal achievement for Non-Alignment and the final Document of the conference was both a recapitulation of the prevailing position like a balance sheet of gains and deficits and a kind of charter which opened the way for action in the future. In a paper which was submitted by the Non-Aligned group to the Special Session they identified 5 basic ideas in their initiatives. These were that up to then negotiations on Disarmament whether at the UN or regional had not produced desired results; the contradiction between the urgent need to halt the arms race and the lack of progress; the escalating expenditure on weapons systems; the unabated continuation of the arms race; the necessity to strengthen the role of the UN and bring it more to the centre of operations.²⁴

²³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, Meeting of Non-Aligned Foreign Ministers at Luanda, Sept. 4-7, 1985, p. 169.

²⁴ Working paper of Non-Aligned Group to UN Special Session on Disarmament, 1978.

The draft declaration in the final document affords a convenient setting in which to view the later initiatives on disarmament and the role of Non-Aligned nations with special reference to Sri Lanka's concepts and approaches. The draft declaration affirmed that the ultimate goal was general and complete disarmament and progress towards that end called for specific measures which were outlawing of nuclear war and elimination of nuclear weapons followed by similar measures on all types of weapons of mass destruction and regulation of conventional weapons. These should be accompanied by confidence building measures and the diversion of released funds from disarmament to development. As basic principles for attainment of these objectives the following were identified:

1. Right of all States to participate in disarmament negotiations and that primary responsibility for halting of the arms race was on the nuclear states.
2. Primary responsibility of the UN for Disarmament.
3. Verification is indispensable.
4. Disarmament measures should be adopted in a balanced manner so as to deny advantage to one at the expense of the other.
5. Acceptance of balance of rights and obligations between nuclear and non-nuclear states.
6. Development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is allowed subject to appropriate safeguards.
7. Nuclear states should respect nuclear free zones and zones of peace.

The priorities in the implementation of the proposed programme should be on the following lines:

1. As regards nuclear weapons, the first step was the immediate cessation of the nuclear arms race to be followed by measures for gradual reduction.
2. These included renunciation of first use and prohibition of use against non-nuclear states.
3. Cessation of production of weapons and fissionable material.
4. Comprehensive ban on tests, freezing of existing delivery systems, cessation of research and development of new types of delivery.

The next category of priorities covered other weapons of mass destruction. These were as follows:

1. Complete prohibition of chemical weapons and their production and the destruction and prohibition of new weapons including incendiary weapons.
2. For conventional weapons the same phasing out procedure to be followed of balanced progress without giving an advantage and also prohibition of new weapons. These specific disarmament measures should in addition be accompanied by support steps such as confidence building measures in the way of prohibition of the establishment of foreign bases in foreign lands or of stationing of troops as well as reduction of military budgets.

An essential feature of these measures was the getting up of suitable machinery which would best assure their attainment. On this there was unanimity that the primary responsibility for the supervision and monitoring of measures should be vested in the UN. It would be assisted

by the Disarmament Commission which would be responsible for drawing up a programme for implementation of disarmament and would advise on particular aspects of it. It was essential that the UN should be in close touch with the Committee for Disarmament in Geneva which was responsible for the actual conduct of negotiations.

In the course of the special session, Sri Lanka among its many initiatives proposed the establishment of a World Disarmament Authority in line with a request made by President Jayawardene at the Havana Non-Aligned Summit. For this the first task should be the collation and collection of existing information on armaments production. One of the functions of the Authority would be the monitoring of Disarmament measures as well as the controlling and regulation of production and distribution of armaments. Speaking on behalf of Non-Aligned nations, the Sri Lanka delegate expressed a number of reservations on the Final document of the 1978 Special session. These were that its appraisal of the dangers of the arms race was not satisfactory, it did not sufficiently stress the matter of not stationing foreign troops, it was not satisfactory in guarantees of nuclear states to non-nuclear states as they were not binding enough, its pronouncements on nuclear free zones and zones of peace were qualified, its reference to the Indian Ocean Peace Zone was casual in manner. India was critical of the nuclear free concept for South Asia on the ground that the latter was a part and that the concept should rightly cover the whole region.

Having considered the Non-Aligned positions as stated in its communiqués to which Sri Lanka subscribed and the conclusions of the Special Session of the UN Disarmament with special reference to the thinking on it of the Non-Aligned group, it is now necessary to examine the various disarmament issues as they were considered by the General Assembly and their outcome together with Sri Lanka position on them. For this purpose the proceedings of the 43rd session of the General Assembly may be considered as the most updated version and its resolutions on the various issues and Sri Lanka's attitude on them will serve as a guide to its concepts and thinking on these issues. The proceedings and conclusions of the three special sessions on disarmament which were held by the UN in 1978, 1982 and 1988 and the views expressed by Sri Lanka on these occasions should also be considered.²⁵

It will be evident from the foregoing statements by Sri Lankan leaders at international conferences and the positions to which Sri Lanka subscribed as stated in the official communiqués that it attached the utmost importance to Disarmament as an integral part of its foreign policy. Its position on disarmament issues was unequivocal and amounted briefly to an emphasis on general and Complete Disarmament as the major objective, on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, on elimination of nuclear weapons from Outer Space, on the United Nations assuming supreme responsibility for initiatives on Disarmament, and on progressive measures for reduction of conventional weapons and diverting of expenditure on armaments to development.

These positions were reiterated by Sri Lankan leaders in their public statements and left no one in doubt of its stand on the key issues. However the subject of Disarmament has grown over the years into a highly complicated network of technical questions, sub issues, nuances which are not readily comprehensible to the layman. It has given rise to a large body of experts, specialists and technical committees engaged on a variety of subjects such as verification of testing and other similar specialized aspects. The result is that Disarmament

²⁵ For details of UN Resolutions referred to please see UN General Assembly and Disarmament 1988, UN, New York 1989.

in the way it is being dealt with at the United Nations has been broken up and differentiated into a large number of separate but inter related issues on which member States have to define their positions. These issues are of too technical a nature to be embodied in the public statements of leaders and hence it is necessary in order to appreciate the attitudes of States on them to examine their specific reactions and voting positions on these items at the United Nations. This evidence will afford unrivalled and authentic insights into the policies of the States concerned on the whole gamut of Disarmament issues as discussed at the United Nations which is accepted officially as the supreme tribunal and machinery for action on the subject. Thus any analysis of Sri Lanka attitude on global security should therefore necessarily call for a scrutiny of its positions as reflected in considerations at the United Nations of these issues. What follows therefore is a resume of Sri Lanka's position at the United Nations on the broad issues of Disarmament.

General and Complete Disarmament

In lieu of a comprehensive plan for implementation by the UN, proposals have been submitted by States pertaining to other aspects of the role of the UN in order to highlight its responsibility for Disarmament. Sri Lanka supported the following resolutions on this subject.

The Review of the Role of the UN in the Field of Disarmament

This recognized that the UN had the primary responsibility for this subject and that this obliged it to play an active role. It further requested the Disarmament Commission to continue its work of elaborating concrete proposals and recommendations as a matter of priority. This same request was reinforced and reiterated in another resolution entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission.

Report of the Conference on Disarmament

The gist of it was that it called upon the conference to intensify its work and act through ad hoc committees.

Implementation of General Assembly Resolutions in the Field of Disarmament

This merely stated that it deemed it important that States should facilitate the implementation of General Assembly resolutions.

Third Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament

This was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka and recognized the valuable contribution of this session in the field of disarmament. This resolution reaffirmed the validity of the final document as reflecting a " historic consensus on the part of the international community that the halting and reversing of the arms race and the achievement of genuine disarmament are tasks of primary importance and urgency".

Disarmament and International Security

Its essence was that it called upon the Security Council and in particular its permanent members to contribute to establishing and maintaining inter national peace and security and to take necessary steps for the effective implementation of Article 26 of the Charter.

UN Disarmament Fellowship, Training and Advisory Services Programme

Sri Lanka so sponsored this resolution which supported this programme as it had been very beneficial to officials from developing countries.

International Cooperation for Disarmament

This invited all States to increase cooperation for achieving arms limitation and disarmament agreements on the basis of reciprocity, equality undiminished security, non-use of force and the rule of law in international relations.

Guide Lines for Confidence-Building Measures

This was a new concept which first appeared in the Final Document of the 1978 Special session, the object of which was to contribute to confidence, better understanding reducing mistrust and fear.

Objective Information on Military Matters

This resolution which was viewed as a confidence building measure recommended that all States particularly nuclear and militarily significant ones should report on their military budgets to enable as assessment of their military capabilities.

Naval Armaments and Disarmament

This resolution which was also considered as a confidence building measure was co sponsored by Sri Lanka and directed the Disarmament Commission to continue its study of the subject.

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear war and weapons were the heart of the Disarmament problem because of their potential to cause the instant annihilation of mankind. It is understandable that it was a major preoccupation of the world community especially of the Third World and occasioned the most pressing resolutions. These resolutions and Sri Lanka's position on them were as follows:

Bilateral Nuclear Arms Negotiations

Sri Lanka supported the Non-Aligned draft which called upon the US and the Soviet Union to intensify their efforts to achieve a 50% reduction in strategic offensive weapons and agreement on a Test Ban.

Nuclear Disarmament and Cessation of the Nuclear Arms Race

The thrust of this resolution was the request to the Conference on Disarmament to establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate agreements for; cessation of improvement and development of nuclear weapons systems; cessation of production of nuclear weapons, their means of delivery and of fissionable material; substantial reduction of existing nuclear weapons with a view to their elimination. There was a separate resolution to prohibit the production of fissionable materials for weapons on which India abstained. Sri Lanka supported these resolutions.

Freeze on Nuclear Weapons

This called upon nuclear weapon States to agree through a joint declaration to a comprehensive arms freeze embracing a ban on nuclear weapons; cessation of production of fissionable material. This was supported by Sri Lanka.

Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons and Prevention of Nuclear War

There were two resolutions on this subject, one for the renunciation by nuclear states of being the first to use it and that this obligation should be legally binding and the other for

the establishment of an ad hoc committee to pursue negotiations for practical measures for the prevention of nuclear war. Sri Lanka supported both and the second was sponsored by India.

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons

This resolution was on the necessity for the legal prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons and requested the conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on an international Convention prohibiting the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons. This was supported by Sri Lanka.

Cessation of all Nuclear Test Explosions

Sri Lanka co-sponsored two resolutions on this subject, one urging all nuclear States and in particular the USA, the UK, and the USSR, as depositaries of the Partial Test Ban Treaty, to effect discontinuance of all tests and the other made the bold and imaginative proposal to consider an amendment to Article 11 of that Treaty to achieve cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date.

Conclusion of Effective International Arrangements for the Security of Non-Nuclear States Against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons

There were two resolutions on this subject which were similar in 3 of its operative sections namely the need for an effective international arrangement to assure non-nuclear States against nuclear weapons; welcoming an international Convention for this object; appeal to all States in particular nuclear States to agree on a legally binding instrument. Sri Lanka voted for both as a State in this category.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

These zones have a long history as the idea originated in the 50s and the Rapacki Plan of Poland for nuclear free zones in Central Europe was one of the first. Since then it caught on and produced a number of Treaties such as the Antarctic Treaty (1959), Treaty on activities of States in Outer Space (1967), and the Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967) prohibiting nuclear weapons in Latin America. Proposals for nuclear weapon free zones have since been made for several areas such as the Balkans, Central Europe, the Mediterranean. In 1974 the UN General Assembly adopted such a proposal for Africa as a Declaration which called upon countries to respect Africa as a nuclear weapon free zone. The issue of the nuclear capability of South Africa has since arisen in relation to this Declaration. Two resolutions concerning the implications of this development were adopted on this subject, the first entitled "Implementation of the Declaration" which condemned South Africa's nuclear capability as a violation and called for an international boycott and the other entitled "Nuclear capability of South Africa" requested the Disarmament Commission to pursue action. Both these resolutions were supported by Sri Lanka.

Establishment of a Nuclear Free Zone in South Asia

This proposal which originated with Pakistan was of particular interest to Sri Lanka being within that zone and because of its own proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean. Sri Lanka spoke in favour of it as a step towards the ultimate aim of a world free of nuclear weapons which it believed could be achieved through the joint efforts of states. The resolution

urged the States of South Asia to act jointly to establish this zone and for nuclear states to cooperate.

Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons

There were two resolutions on this subject urging the Conference on Disarmament to pursue negotiations to conclude a Convention covering all aspects of its prohibition and also a resolution on the prohibition of the development, stockpiling and use of radiological weapons. All these resolutions were supported by Sri Lanka and were adopted without a vote.

Outer Space

Sri Lanka has made a significant contribution on this subject. In 1983 along with Egypt it led a group of Non-Aligned countries which moved a resolution requesting the Conference on Disarmament to consider this subject of the principles which should govern the activities of States in Outer Space and to appoint an ad hoc committee to undertake negotiations for the conclusion of an Agreement. In 1988 Sri Lanka gain took the initiative and sponsored a resolution which was more positive than previous ones in that it requested the establishment of an ad hoc committee to undertake negotiations for an Agreement, urged the two super powers to pursue discussions and lease with the committee and called upon the nuclear states to refrain from actions which would prejudice the objective of preventing an arms race in Outer Space.

Conventional Weapons

Sri Lanka co-sponsored a resolution on this subject entitled "Conventional Disarmament on a regional scale". It merely expressed satisfaction at initiatives towards disarmament at regional levels and efforts towards a solution of regional conflicts. This is a subject in which Sri Lanka has taken the lead in its own proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean and its consistent support for the establishment of denuclearized zones in the world as a practical step towards ridding the world of the threat of nuclear warfare. On the subject of regional disarmament it is noteworthy that in 1980 a group of experts conducted a study which was called the "Study on all aspects of regional disarmament". It expressed the view that global and regional disarmament will complement each other in the attainment of the common goal of global security. it examined achievements in this field such as the nuclear free zones in Antarctica, and the Latin American continent and in the light of them, suggested measures which could be considered for regional security. In this context the "Declaration of Ayacucho" of 1970 by a number of Latin American countries announcing their desire for effective arms limitations and stopping acquisition of arms and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, was a landmark in progress towards regional disarmament. The proposal of Pakistan for a nuclear free zone in South Asia, the Sri Lanka proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean, the establishment of SAARC can be considered as major initiatives in the field of regional disarmament with which Sri Lanka has been associated.

UN Disarmament Studies Programme

The United Nations has undertaken studies on a number of subjects relating to the bearing of disarmament on other areas of international life and particular areas of disarmament itself. Some of these programmes are as follows:

"Study on the Role of the UN in the Field of Verification"

Sri Lanka supported a resolution which recognized that the role of the UN in disarmament enabled it to make a significant contribution in this field and requested the Secretary General to undertake an in depth study of it.

"Comprehensive UN Study on Nuclear Weapons"

This resolution was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka and requested the Secretary General to update the publication under this title for 1980.

"International Arms Transfers"

This resolution which drew attention to the potential dangers to international security of the free and unrestricted flow and transfer of arms through clandestine means throughout the world and the need for countries to be vigilant and for the UN to have a monitoring system was particularly relevant to Sri Lanka in the context of its recent experiences where insurgents have been equipped with sophisticated weapons. Sri Lanka naturally supported it but it did not receive much endorsement.

"Scientific and Technological Developments and their Impact on International Security"

This resolution which was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka and India was concerned that the application of scientific technology to weapons was producing lethal and sophisticated arms which were a threat to security and a diversion of resources. Some countries opposed it on the grounds that the blame was not on science but the countries which made the choice. The resolution requested the Secretary General to follow developments in scientific technology and evaluate their impact on international security.

"Disarmament and Development"

The utilization of funds realized through disarmament for development has long been under consideration by the UN. It undertook a series of studies of the subject, the most comprehensive of which was one completed in 1981 which made a number of practical proposals towards the achievement of this objective. Following a report on this subject by the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly of 1984 the latter convened an international conference for this purpose, which adopted a comprehensive document spelling out an exhaustive programme. Sri Lanka was closely associated with these initiatives.

It will be seen that apart from supporting the wide range of resolutions enumerated above, Sri Lanka co sponsored several of them and was actively associated with the Non-Aligned group at the UN in their formulation. On certain subjects like Outer Space and the non-admission of weaponry into Sri Lanka took the lead.

The above survey of the proceedings of a very recent session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament issues and Sri Lanka's position on them would give a comprehensive picture of Sri Lanka's concepts of global security as reflected at the United Nations which is the highest world and global assembly. This comprehensive range of positions when read together with its initiatives and the resolutions to which it subscribed at meetings of the Non-Aligned nations and of the Commonwealth will yield as complete a picture as can be of Sri Lanka's world view on the highly complex issues of disarmament. As will be seen from the above survey the debate over disarmament had developed over the decades into a highly complicated and convoluted labyrinth of issues,

nuance and sub issues so much so that it needs specialist knowledge and continuity of study to keep track of them and do them justice in accordance with the interests of countries. They offer no choice to countries as to whether to be associated with these initiatives or ignore them because of the overwhelming importance of Disarmament to the world community and mankind as a whole involving as it does nothing less than the very survival of mankind. Thus they encompass and engulf all states big because they have a material stake and small because they are at the receiving end therefore merits the most urgent attention by one and all. It must be said to the credit of countries that they have not faltered and being wanting in facing these challenges. Many of them have taken the initiatives and made striking contributions. Disarmament is a question which needs global communion between all concerned and not merely one or the others and the big powers have certainly found it to be to their advantage to have an international dialogue which can be a restraining force on them and produce new approaches and avenues which are beneficial.

The above record will show that Sri Lanka has throughout been active very often in the forefront in all the forums of the world open to her. For a country of its modest size this is a rare achievement which has been recognised internationally. Among Third World countries it has one of the longest records of international initiatives in the course of which it has made outstanding contributions. Its record in the field of disarmament and security is a reflection of its long experience and commitment to international issues. It was a pioneer of internationalism in Asia in the form of its association with the Colombo Powers which later broadened out into Afro-Asian and Non-Alignment. Sri Lanka's approach to disarmament and its philosophy was a continuation of these early experiences. Sri Lanka's approach to Disarmament which coloured its attitudes on the individual issues was based on a number of firm principles. Firstly, it was a rejection of the concept of deterrence as a basis for armament. In its view this was a counterproductive approach which was an incentive to armaments. It was really the old balance of power approach of balancing strength in a modern guise. It can have no other logical end but a conflagration meaning annihilation of mankind because in the tense situation created by competition in arms something could go amiss human proneness to error and fallibility being such. There was thus no sensible prospects of attaining a solution through escalation of the arms race on the basis of deterrence. It was feasible half a century ago when weapons had a limited capacity for destruction but it is inconceivable today.

Secondly Sri Lanka has traditionally subscribed to the ethical position that disarmament alone meaning elimination of armaments is not itself a guarantee of peace. Peace could only be achieved through the political will of nations and peoples to live together as brothers. This was not attainable in an atmosphere of military rivalry and the arms race and the elimination would create a setting for this spirit of brotherhood to assert itself. Sri Lanka's main objective was to foster the culture of peace as opposed to that of war by pressing for non-violent solutions which would render it unnecessary for nations to resort to war and hence build armaments. This was the point of the concept of dynamic neutralism where the non-aligned and uncommitted nations attempted to pit their moral strength of good offices, counsels of restraint, appeals to better judgement to arrest the plunge to war, against the power drives of nations and brinkmanship. This building up the forces of peace was thus the positive side of disarmament. On this view organised peace efforts could progressively reduce the need for nations to think of military solutions.

Apart from this moral and ethical side which reflected its commitment to its spiritual roots and the later day principles of pancha sila there was also a material side to Disarmament

which was its economic implications. This was embodied in the concept of the relationship between Development and Disarmament which was pursued at the United Nations and led to the convening of a conference and a Final Document for implementation. Sri Lanka was closely associated with this initiative. Other similar initiatives were the Campaign for Disarmament, the opening of Disarmament, the opening of Disarmament centres, the Declaration of Disarmament Weeks and Decades by UN all with a view to give maximum publicity and bring it within reach of the general public. The expectation was that this would create a climate conducive to Disarmament in the world and through public opinion move their government. The deeper purpose was to free the human mind from the grip of war and militarism and make it think positively.

As regards Sri Lanka's approach to the substantive issues of global security and disarmament it was based on a number of unvarying principles. Its position on the side issues which arose from the main problems of disarmament was an application according to the circumstances of each case of these principles.

These principles and the specific attitudes adopted may be summarised as follows:

1. The goal of endeavour was General and complete disarmament and this was repeated on every conceivable occasion. In fact in the early days of the UN this was acknowledged as the objective and inspired the UN General Assembly resolution of 1962. However in the course of time without any substantive headway being made towards its attainment it receded and was accepted as the final goal. This meant the acceptance of the gradualist step by step approach towards this goal as a practical course without in any way disavowing it as the goal of endeavour. From time to time however plans for comprehensive disarmament were prepared by the Disarmament Commission but were bogged down by disagreements.
2. Pending the attainment of this goal an urgent first step was the elimination of nuclear warfare and for this Sri Lanka along with many others felt that the prerequisite was a comprehensive test ban which would automatically kill the production, the stockpiles and connected systems of nuclear weaponry. However this also seemed difficult of speedy attainment because of technical problems of verification and also adherence and clinging on of the big powers to the deterrence theory its very frightfulness being in their view the surest guarantee against its use. In the circumstances this too like Geneva and complete disarmament was shelved and attention was focused on gradualist and subsidiary measures which would lead to it. Countries were obliged therefore to make do with these steps hopefully on a purely interim basis.
3. Among these interim measures the two outstanding ones were the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963 and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 in both of which Sri Lanka was a signatory. Both suffered from being half measures as the Partial Test Ban Treaty was never consummated because of the failure to extend it to underground tests while the other was not accepted by many powers and gave rise to new problems about safeguards for non-nuclear states. Both in fact raised more problems than they solved.
4. On the question of subsidiary measures to counter the continuing nuclear menace and stalemate a number of steps were proposed such as a nuclear freeze, cessation of tests pending a treaty on a comprehensive ban, non-use of nuclear weapons and prevention of war, cessation of the nuclear race and nuclear disarmament, prohibition of the production of fissionable material, convention on the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons. All these various measures were supported by Sri Lanka and the non-aligned

countries in the hope that at least it would bring them close to the goal. The limitations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty raised the question of safeguards for the non-nuclear states and this occasioned resolutions like the conclusion of international arrangements to safeguard these endangered states against the use or threat of use of these weapons against them. This was of little help because the danger of unrestricted distribution and of nations acquiring nuclear capability like Israel and South Africa presented a grave danger. It seemed as if nothing short of total prohibition of such weapons and an absolute ban of tests would serve the purpose. The world seemed condemned to live indefinitely in the nightmare of fear of sudden annihilation. Bilateral agreements between the big powers which raised hopes of speedy relief offered no guarantee that the example will be contagious.

5. The proposal for the establishment of nuclear free zones has opened a very promising field for disarmament and the successful creation of such zones in Antarctic and Outer Space has raised high hopes about its future. More recently two more zones have been realized in Latin America by the Treaty of Tlatelolco (1968) and in the South Pacific by the Treaty of Rorotonga (1985), which have inspired confidence in the prospects of extending these zones to other regions. The denuclearization of Africa was recognised in a UN resolution. There are also the peace zones which would in effect be denuclearized zones. One such proposal for a nuclear free zone in South Asia was adopted by the UN. Sri Lanka has welcomed and supported this approach and it is besides the sponsor of one earliest such proposals for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean. None of these zones are perfect as the treaties creating them have many limitations. Quite apart from the support of the regional states there is the recognition of them by other states. There is no doubt however that the acceptance of the principle and the proliferation of zones should certainly contribute positively and negate the effect of proliferation of nuclear weapons.
6. Since the dawn of the Space Age the extension of Disarmament to Outer Space and to celestial bodies has been under consideration. The first step was a treaty reserving it exclusively for peaceful exploration and use. A later initiative with which Sri Lanka was associated was for the prevention of an arms race in Outer Space through the orbiting of lethal weapons.
7. The prohibition of chemical, bacteriological and biological weapons in one on which there has been near unanimity among states.
8. Sri Lanka has taken a special interest in the question of suitable machinery in the UN to deal with Disarmament. A principle on which Sri Lanka has been unequivocal is the primary responsibility of the UN for this subject as laid down in the Charter. This is important because of the tendency for the big powers to treat these issues as bilateral matters for decision by them. The role of the UN is clearly stated in the resolution to this effect which was submitted in the following terms:

the primary purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace genuine and lasting peace can be created only through the effective implementation of the security system provided for in the Charter of the UN the UN in accordance with its Charter has a central and primary responsibility in the sphere of disarmament.

Its main function is to initiate action as requested by the Assembly and to monitor and control. At the same time it should work in close consultation with the Conference of

Disarmament in its capacity as the single multilateral negotiating body on Disarmament which should therefore play the central role in substantive questions on Disarmament. At the same time it is essential that there should be a firm link between the two to enable the UN General Assembly to be abreast of developments. The Disarmament Commission in which Sri Lanka is a member plays an important consultative and advisory role on disarmament matters one of them being the drawing up of a comprehensive plan for General and complete disarmament. Sri Lanka has also favoured the Security Council being drawn into the disarmament process in view of the position of the permanent members in this regard. Sri Lanka has also advocated the appointment of ad hoc committees to undertake various tasks as subsidiary bodies. The establishment of effective disarmament machinery in the UN is a matter of utmost importance in view of the necessity for the UN to be informed not only of the activities of its own agencies and auxiliary bodies but also of bilateral and multilateral negotiations. Without such coordination there is the danger of cross purposes in the initiatives and of the UN being bypassed and individual states taking the initiative in areas which are the responsibility of the UN. Sri Lanka has also keenly supported the proposal to convene a World Disarmament Conference and the Head of the Sri Lanka delegation was nominated as the Chairman of the Preparatory Conference.

9. The subject of nuclear non-proliferation has understandably been a matter of grave concern to the world community and particularly the non-aligned countries. The inherent danger of the unrestricted spread of these weapons is self evident. At a time when the world is grappling with the task of controlling the nuclear weaponry of a handful of nations one can imagine what a situation would be caused if the number increased. Concern over the situation is mounting due to a number of circumstances. A principal one is disappointment over the lack of further progress over the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which while it raised hopes was viewed as an interim measure in nuclear disarmament. Besides several countries like France and India did not sign the treaty and are in a sense keeping their options open. In the meantime the number of those with nuclear weapons capability has increased and one authority has expressed the view that "it can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that the number of states actually possessing nuclear weapons is higher than that openly acknowledged".²⁶ This means that nuclear material is at large in the world countries and is probably being used for various purposes free of any accepted IAEA safeguards. This is certainly a calamitous situation where countries may be sitting on a nuclear keg. The delay in arriving at some final solution is engendering bitterness between the haves and the have nets which is aggravated by the circumstance that the nuclear club is also the group of permanent members in the security council. This could lead to countries deciding and feeling morally justified in taking their own course. India which is believed to have nuclear capacity has been very critical and impatient of the present frustrating situation. There is also dissatisfaction over the endangered position of the non-nuclear countries. the offer of no first use or even absolute renunciation of use against them has been poor consolation. Something far more than mere assurances are needed and these should be nothing less than a major breakthrough in nuclear disarmament or at least cessation or total ban of testing. Some hope has been raised in the possibility that the Partial Test

²⁶ Disarmament, UN Review, Autumn 1989, p. 3.

Ban Treaty can be amended in respect of its provisions to become a comprehensive test ban which in terms of Article 2 would be binding on the present parties after ratification by a majority. Many regard this as the last hope though some are doubtful as to whether this is the best course or whether the parties concerned will be amenable. These critics think that a fresh multilateral treaty covering underground tests is the best solution. The recent bilateral talks between the Soviet Union and USA which have succeeded in achieving agreement on the elimination of several categories of nuclear weapons, are certainly a major breakthrough but these are not binding on others. There is anxiety and nervous tension over the current situation which is not less explosive than the nuclear arms build up because of the fear that it may fall into irresponsible hands. Sri Lanka is particularly concerned about the situation because of the fear of a development of a nuclear arms race in the region. This explains its support of the nuclear free zone in South Asia and its keen desire to promote the creation of a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean.

Apart from Sri Lanka's many sided initiatives and activities for global security through disarmament and other means, its main thrust and contribution in this regard is its proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian ocean which was adopted as a Declaration by the UN General Assembly in 1971. Since then its implementation has been under study by an ad hoc committee and a significant achievement in this regard was the meeting in New York in 1979 of littoral and hinterland states which laid down guidelines for future programmes. One of them was the need to convene a conference on the Indian Ocean in which all the countries concerned users, littoral and hinterland states and others interested should participate. This was the recurring theme of ad hoc committees which originally scheduled this conference to be held in Colombo in 1981. Since then there has been stalling and requests for deferment from States and the current position which was affirmed in a resolution of the UNGA in 1988 was to hold it in Colombo in 1990. Whether it will be held and if so its outcome are at the moment open questions.²⁷

It would seem that the prospects for it are a mixture of hopes and doubts. On the one hand the growing friendship between the USA and the Soviet Union which was marked by the INF treaty and other measures showing mutual confidence and understanding, the recent cataclysmic events in Eastern Europe which were obvious repercussions of rapport between the super powers, departure of Soviet policy from traditions of the past which were manifest in its attitude towards developments in East Europe and new initiatives all suggestive of an orientation and new look in its foreign policy give room to expect a global disengagement. This could be in the form of a lessening in their global rivalry and a progressive withdrawal of their combative postures in key areas of the world of imagined strategic importance to them. This could gradually free the Indian Ocean which is one of the key areas from their presence in a military capacity of armed rivalry. President Gorbachev's speeches at Vladivostock and Krasnoyarsk hinted strongly of similar thoughts in his mind some of which were embodied in the joint US-Soviet study on "Requirements for stable coexistence in US Soviet relations". This situation reflects not only the enlightened policies of the two super leaders but also the positive easing of international tensions in the region with the end of Soviet involvement in Afghanistan and of the American build up in the Persian Gulf caused

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Article by Mr. Edmund Jayasinghe on IOPZ, p. 120.

by the Iran-Iraq war. This could open the way to their responding positively to a policy of disengagement in the Indian Ocean and recognition of merit in a Peace Zone.

It would now appear as if this great power rivalry in the region which shows signs of receding is being transferred to states within the region where there is apprehension among the littoral and hinterland states about threats to their security originating from within the region. This is shifting the thrust of the Peace Zone concept as it was originally from fear of foreign powers to intra regional ones. This trend was perceptible in the deliberations of the ad hoc committee where members were becoming apprehensive about threats from among them. This could be attributed to threat perceptions about the military and naval and possibly nuclear capability of India which gave it the trappings and appearance of being a super power amidst a cluster of small states. Some credence was given to these fears by the record of India's relations with its immediate neighbours such as Nepal and Sri Lanka which smacked of great power posturing and political pressures. This situation has the potential to trigger off an arms build up and receptivity to nuclear arms on the part of states in the region on the pretext of danger perceptions resulting in an escalation of tension and possibility of conflicts. Besides there is no lack of inter-state problems to justify such conflict, in the long and chequered history of the scene either as allies of the parties in the conflict or on the grounds that such conflict was a security threat to their own global interests and hence merited their invention. The pendulum has thus swung from the outside powers to the regional states and placed the onus for laying the foundations of the zone on the latter. The main obstacles in its way are the mutual suspicions, historic rivalries, threat perceptions of each other which have created an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty in the region.

Much has been said about the role of so called CBMs which is the latest in the armoury of disarmament. If ever there was a need for such measures it is in the Indian Ocean region now and these should not be mere cosmetic or exhortations but genuine earnest and sincerity of intentions. An appropriate forum has been provided for such measures in SAARC which already in the sensitive area of nuclear energy has produced an understanding between the two rivals in this field in the region namely India and Pakistan. It should be possible to build on it and for SAARC to take an initiative in the creation of the zone. What is needed now is some sign of solidarity among the regional states in favour of a peace zone which would ward off foreign attempts to subvert it and motivate the regional states. There should be a clear unanimity among the regional states on the objectives and purposes of a peace zone as a precondition for discussing it at an international arena. The proposed Colombo Conference is certainly a laudable objective but for the big powers and other outsiders to respond the littoral and hinterland states should be able to present a solid front.

It is not sufficiently realised that the peace zone idea is not a unique or contentious concept which it may have been at the inception. Since it was introduced nuclear free zones and regional disarmament have opened vistas in the field of disarmament and the Indian Ocean Peace Zone concept is basically akin to them. In fact there have been signal achievements in this field which are not well known and which should provide an impetus to the Peace Zone. These are the conclusions of the Treaty of Tlatelolco among Latin American states and the Treaty of Rorotonga. Under the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the States concerned agree to use nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, to prohibit the presence of nuclear weapons in their territories, to refrain from helping others in production or use. The Treaty establishes a system of control through OPANAL. An important feature is in terms of a Protocol attached to the Treaty the nuclear powers have undertaken to respect it. The Treaty of Rorotonga which was signed in 1985 by the 8 South Pacific states forming

the South Pacific Forum established a nuclear free zone in the South Pacific. Its terms were similar to the Latin American one and prohibited manufacture or possession of a nuclear explosive device, providing fissionable material to other states, stationing of any nuclear explosive device, testing and dumping of radioactive waste on its territories. The impetus to it was certainly nuclear testing in the region by France and it was facilitated by the strong support given by New Zealand and the technological backwardness of the members themselves. Yet it was an achievement in that it established such a zone in a highly sensitive area in the face of opposition. A disappointing feature is that the UK and the USA have not signed the Protocols of acceptance but the signing by China and by the Soviet Union with some strictures were a great encouragement. Whatever its limitations this Treaty and its Latin American counterpart stand out as examples worthy of emulation by others which should dispel hesitation and reservations and should if at all strengthen the resolve of others. Although the Indian Peace Zone is of a different order in view of its implications for passage and navigation and relates to armaments as a whole still the principles involved are similar to those of the two Treaties which soon therefore serve as a kind of model. The proposals for regional disarmament which was the subject of a resolution supported by Sri Lanka is another avenue to explore which points in the same direction as the Peace Zone. The Declaration of Ayacucho is similar to the Declaration of the Peace Zone in the Indian ocean as it is directed to arms limitation and to stopping acquisition of arms for hostile purposes and confining nuclear energy to peaceful purposes. The Indian Peace Zone concept it should be said in conclusion is the link between the national and global security of Sri Lanka. It concerns the subjection of the island to threats from the global sphere in the sense of super power rivalry inside the Indian Ocean in which it is situated and which are its home waters. It is a means to prevent the danger of global rivalry and attendant conflict from being brought to its doorstep. It is in short to avoid a recurrence of those patterns of imperialistic rivalry of the past which were responsible for its colonial subjection from endangering its sovereign independence and freedom. It is essentially a global threat and the proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean attempts to meet it at a corresponding international level through recourse to the United Nations machinery.

Part III

The Current Situation

Chapter 6

The Contemporary Scene and the Future

The decade of the eighties has been one of the most painful and agonizing for Sri Lanka in its recent history. Things which Sri Lankans never dreamt of happened, such as an attempt at invasion and a foreign occupation force. It witnessed two civil wars, one of which is still raging. One in the North which was ethnic in character began at the start of the decade in sporadic terrorism but was transformed into a military conflict after the ugly racial riots of 1983 and culminated in intervention by India under the Pact of July 1987. After the latter event another civil war began with the attempts of a subversive group known as the JVP to overthrow the government through a series of well organised attacks against property and government establishments, political assassinations and intimidation of the administration and public by a campaign of terror and intimidation. This was crushed at the end of 1989 but gave anxious moments to the government and cost the country tremendous loss of property and of lives of both the subversives and among the public. These events were a realization of the worst fears of a country in respect of its security being a combination of outside intervention and domestic insurrection. Internationally this was a time of set backs and tension when Sri Lanka found itself both isolated and maligned due to campaigns of disinformation of it by adversaries and the inability of the government to take counter measures.¹ The president of the time J. R. Jayawardene, admitted that Sri Lanka was without any friends. This was a precipitous fall in prestige and reputation for a country which was acknowledged as one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned movement. In the economic sphere it was a dark period when the dividends of its open economy policy were lost in the escalation of expenditure of defence and armaments. This JVP insurrection took a heavy toll of government installations and property such as transport and factories and burdened the future with heavy responsibilities of reconstruction and rehabilitation. It seemed as if all the hopes of better times which the UNP administration had entertained had turned into a nightmare of disaster.

The Asian region was also under stress during this decade at its periphery as a result of the war between Iraq and Iran in West Asia and the civil war in Afghanistan centring round the Soviet Union's military participation in it. Even ordinarily their repercussions would have been felt in South Asia but in these cases some became directly involved. Pakistan was drawn into the ambit of the war in Afghanistan when it was called upon to shelter up to 3 million refugees fleeing from the brutalities of war. At the same time Pakistan became a major supply base through which US arms were supplied to aid the rebel forces in Afghanistan. This meant an increase in US military aid to Pakistan which in turn gave rise to fears in India about the effects of this arms build up in Pakistan on its security vis a vis the latter. The question of whether as a result Pakistan was being enabled to develop nuclear capacity also arose and disturbed India. The Soviet involvement in Afghanistan was a classic case of a great power being sucked into a conflict which it never wanted and like the Vietnam war for America, bogged it down with consequent loss of military prestige and grave impairment of its international image. This was a blessing in disguise because it prompted

¹ See S. Ratnatunga, *Politics of Terrorism*, IFSED, Belconnen Australia, 1988, Chapter 9.

Gorbachev's decision to wind up this involvement and also to rethink the concepts of Soviet foreign policy particularly in its dealings in Asia.

The Iraq - Iran war was a comparable challenge to the USA which saw it as a threat to its interests in that region. US naval strength and deployment in the area were strengthened and put in a state of readiness in view of the threats to navigation and freedom of passage in the Gulf which led to some serious incidents such as the shooting down of an Iran passenger plane and the attack on a US vessel. These incidents led to escalation and the prospect of a conflagration. Fortunately sober counsels prevailed in the diplomatic initiatives which were undertaken by the UN Secretary General and led to the termination of the war. One of the major casualties of both these wars and of the Iraq-Iran war in particular was the consideration of a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean. Both the USA and the Soviet Union suspended a dialogue which they had started on this subject on the grounds that these two situations rendered these talks inopportune and hence work on the ad hoc committee was delayed indefinitely.² Indeed the Persian Gulf experience may have affected the US attitude on these matters irrevocably as it resulted in the setting up of the Rapid Deployment Force as part of an elaborate security system in that area. It would seem as if that war served as a justification for the USA to establish a permanent presence in the region.³ These two wars however ended at the close of the decade and the nineties have begun in a setting of peace in the region despite local clashes and talks of war.

Certainly the striking feature of the end of the decade is the dawn of a kind of international peace and relaxation of tension which had not been realised before in the post war world. It even seems as if the era of the Cold War which was the overshadowing feature of the post war has ended. This is the outcome of the bold initiatives of President Gorbachev and the matching response of the US President and manifested itself in the tumultuous events of Eastern Europe with their far reaching implications for the world. There is also the signing of the INF Treaty for arms reduction and prospects for further cuts which encourage hopes in a future world free of the threats of nuclear annihilation. Thus the decade of the nineties has begun on a hopeful note and encouraged expectations of peace and progress in the future and it is necessary therefore to consider the likely trends in the years to come to determine the prospects in store. As far as Sri Lanka is concerned these relate to international affairs, developments in the UN, regional trends and domestic events. Sri Lanka's concepts of national security for the immediate future at least have to be conceived and shaped according to their likely nature and impact.

For this purpose it is necessary to make a projection of the kind of developments one can anticipate in the region, on the basis of observable trends at present. This will no doubt be a speculative exercise but it is only in the light of such a projection that it will be possible to determine the type of security challenge which Sri Lanka may face in the future and the type of security response this will call for. Up to now the threat has been primarily local in origin with instigation and covert support by foreign elements. However there are grounds to think that from current trends the prospects will be of heightened tension in the region as a result of the entry into it of several powers in a state possibly of competition and

² The latest position as reported recently was that the big powers have withdrawn from the ad hoc committee and the work of the latter has been suspended. However the possibility of having the proposed Colombo Conference in 1991 has not been ruled out.

³ This trend has been intensified following the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq and the resultant build up of US military might in the area.

apprehension of each other. The designs of these outside elements must necessarily collide with the interests and aspirations of powers within the region which could claim a proprietary interest. Hypothetically this could take the form of a reaction by a country like India which because of its size and the vast range of its interests in the region could feel endangered or as it is commonly asserted in such situations a sense of being encircled. This is quite distinct from the often repeated allegation about India's aspirations to be a regional policeman. However a threat perception could be invoked to justify such a role of regional policeman as a defensive posture.

In such a situation of big power rivalry in the region and reaction against it by the regional states, Sri Lanka runs the risk of being boxed in herself and of being caught in the cross fire. This could result in several possible situations. At worst short of any attempt at conquest there could be some desire of another power to subordinate it to its interests in order to utilize the strategic advantages of the island as a naval base. Alternatively the object of such a move could be neutralization of such strategic advantages and denial of them to an adversary. To that extent the sovereignty of the island could be threatened and Sri Lanka will have to consider how to meet such a threat whether by armed resistance or acceptance of some subordinate status. A third alternative would be to seek a protective alliance and of course it can always appeal to the United Nations if it feels that its sovereignty is being threatened. This external danger naturally links up with the problem of internal subversion which has plagued the island for a decade. It goes without saying that in order to combat any external threat the internal situation should be secure and invulnerable. This can be ensured not only by enforcement of law and order but also promoting internal harmony and contentment among the people. In relation to the current problems of Sri Lanka this means in practice resolving the ethnic conflicts by acceptable curative measures and as regards the uprising which was due to poverty and deprivation through remedial measures as recommended in the Youth Commission report referred to elsewhere. All this will not be easy because of the threat of an economic crisis overhanging the country like a sword of Damocles. Another danger to reckon with is the prospect of the island being reduced to a kind of economic servitude through over dependence on foreign aid and benefactors. Such a course could erode the economic independence of the country and therefore its sovereignty. In the light of all these possibilities namely the advent of power politics into the region, the reactions of regional States, economic drives under the guise of aid and also the internecine rivalries within the region between States which provide pretexts and justifications for intervention, Sri Lanka will have to follow a very cautious course in its external policies and the security forces will have to be geared accordingly in terms of the concepts of national defence decided upon by the Government. If it is to be a combative response this means strengthening the security forces and giving them a type of role which they have not known in the past. If the decision is for internal consolidation alone, the role would be to strengthen its anti subversive role. Whatever happens one cannot exaggerate the need for a comprehensive review of security policies by the Government such has never been undertaken by it in the past. This should not be a closed political exercise but one where the Chiefs of the Security forces play a major role in giving their considered advice in terms of their capacity and potential. Security advice should be coordinated with the advice of the Foreign Office on the available diplomatic options. That these apprehensions about the future of the region are not empty fears has already been proved by the West Asia crisis centring round the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq and the US reaction to it in the form of the massive US build up in the Persian Gulf. The survey of the prevailing situation which follows should be

regarded purely as a sketch of likely scenarios on the basis of what one sees happening at the moment. The US military build up in West Asia, intensified rivalries between regional States, the Soviet desire not to be left out, the unpredictability of China, the economic aspirations of Japan, the reactions of Australia and of South East Asian States which are not likely to sit by indifferent to development on their doorstep are all major factors which should be taken into account.

The options open to Sri Lanka in the future would therefore depend on the precise nature of the threat. In specific terms, if the threat is of great power rivalry inside the region in combative postures, the remedy would lie however visionary this may sound in some Peace Zone, Nuclear Free Zone formula in the background of major steps in disarmament such as headway on nuclear non-proliferation or a comprehensive Test Ban. The Great powers may see merit in such an alternative in preference to escalation which entails build ups of indefinite duration and heavy expenditure. If the threat is from a regional power a solution may be sought through defensive pacts or regional associations such as SAARC in South Asia. An economic threat could likewise be met through regional means. In facing these challenges there is no substitute for a small country like Sri Lanka for diplomacy which is and must remain always its main line of defence but this should be supported by a state of readiness and alertness on the part of its defence forces. In deciding on these issues as regards the appropriate course of action the need for a coordinated approach cannot be sufficiently emphasized. This should mean essentially between the three main arms of a Government in this field. These are the Chief Executive which is the Head of State and Cabinet, the Foreign Office and the Security forces as represented by their respective Chiefs. There has been throughout in the history of post-independent Sri Lanka, a tendency for the Government to act on its own without due consultation with the Security and other agencies concerned. A case in point mentioned elsewhere was the proposal for a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean where it does not seem as if the Naval authorities were consulted. With the foregoing preliminary observations in mind on the linkage and relevance of future trends in the region we may proceed to an analysis of them.

A starting point for an appraisal of the contemporary global situation with special reference to its impact on South Asia and Sri Lanka is the detente which has ostensibly been reached between the super powers - the USA and the Soviet Union. It is being hailed as a turning point in world history or even the end of history itself. Both sides have welcomed and hailed it with equal fervour. President Gorbachev, one of its greatest architects, was categorical on its significance when he stated in his farewell message from San Francisco after the June 1990 Summit in Washington that "The Cold War is behind us and let us not wrangle over who won the Cold War". Apart from the obvious personal rapport and cordiality established at the recent Summit the pronouncements on it indicate a very high level of satisfaction over its results. President Gorbachev stated at the end of it that the Summit was of enormous importance and elsewhere that his talks "make it possible to expect major results perhaps the biggest results from all the other Soviet American meetings". As against these optimistic reactions there are others who see this Summit as the end of the honeymoon in that it has exhausted the furthest both sides could go to. The argument is that both sides have now reached the hard core problems which may even be insuperable and in that event the detente will lose momentum and there could be a slide back. A fair conclusion is that while the Cold War in the sense it was understood as a global ideological, military, political rivalry and competition has ended, the power rivalry will continue, the geopolitics being what they, in different forms which it is hoped would be benign.

There are many grounds for these reservations in respect of both sides. The tangible breakthrough of the detente was the reduction in armaments and hence tension which was achieved by the INF Treaty of 1988 and the more recent agreement. Under the INF Treaty the USA and the Soviet Union undertook to destroy almost 2,700 guided missiles carrying nuclear explosives and the accompanying launchers and support facilities, spare parts, testing equipment. The ban was confined to the category of ground launched missiles with a range of 310 to 3400 miles and included the American cruise missile like the Tomahawk and the Soviet SSC-X-4 and the ballistic missiles such as the Pershing 2 of the Americans and the Soviet SS20. The real gain of the Treaty to both sides was the destruction of the ballistic missiles because missiles such as the Pershing 2 has a range of more than 1100 miles and travels at 6000 mph and is extremely accurate. It was the American answer in European defence to the Soviet SS20 and many think that it was the rather delayed installation of the Pershing 2 that persuaded the Soviet side to negotiate for their mutual destruction. The Treaty excludes several categories of nuclear weapons such as short range ones and strategic ones the latter with a range of 5500 kilometres and also air and sea launched weapons of any range. This will still leave America with around 4000 nuclear weapons at its disposal to make up for any gaps caused by the INF Treaty. In fact NATO has proposed that gaps if any should be filled by bombers with nuclear weapons, ships and submarines armed with cruise missiles. Thus any concessions made in the Treaty are heavily insured against by these supplementary measures and besides in the three year period specified for destruction NATO is hoping to acquire a range of new nuclear weapons. In the light of these possibilities and projections, the INF Treaty would appear to be a tactical concession in the name of disarmament without any real sacrifice on either side rather than a genuine and decisive contribution to it. Gorbachev's unilateral cuts in conventional arms which were announced at the UN in 1988 were not more convincing though its dramatic appeal to Third World countries was undeniable. The reduction in tanks by 10,000 and in artillery by 8000 really returned them to their 1982 levels of 38000 artillery pieces which were relatively high. The reduction was really of the increase after 1982. There was also the reduction of 500,000 in the armed forces. This announcement had a political component in the offer of a 100 year moratorium and total write off in some cases of debt burdens of Third World countries which understandably impressed the latter. While these limitations, where they fell short of absolute objectives may create doubts on bona fides and make them appear tactical cosmetic, yet it is possible that these were deliberately small doses so as to appease his local critics in the Army and were intended primarily as an earnest of his intentions to the doubting Thomases on the American side. Their impact was psychological as the end of a negative mentality and a start to opening new vistas of cooperation. From this standpoint president Gorbachev's almost spectacular offers of 1988, which took the wind out of the sails of the West must be seen and appreciated as a historic breakthrough which has opened a chapter if not an era.

This impression is reinforced by the outcome of the latest Summit where agreements were signed on a number of key issues opening new avenues and widening existing ones. The most important of them was the initialling of an agreement on the outline of a future START treaty which would for the first time effect controls on strategic nuclear weapons. This would limit long range nuclear missiles and aim at a 30 to 35% reduction. It is hoped that the START could be signed this year. Accords were also signed on elimination of production of poison gas, cuts in arsenals of chemical weapons, cultural exchange, aviation. What were unrealised were progress on a Treaty for reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe which is the objective of the Vienna talks, a Treaty giving the Soviet Union most favoured nation

status in trade which was held up pending a decision on Jewish emigration. The negative side of the Summit was the inability to reach agreement over Lithuania on which the US Senate is insistent and on unified Germany vis a vis NATO. One may question whether these gains are sufficient to warrant President Gorbachev's vision projected by him in San Francisco of the end of an order of Cold War confrontation and its transition to one of a common struggle against poverty, disease, and drugs. At least it affirms his commitment to such objectives. Western opinion has been inclined to be sceptical about the scope and impact of these disarmament offers, their position being that the massive military strength of the Soviet Union remains untouched as much as its wide ranging nuclear weapons systems poised all over the globe which threatens the USA. Further there has been no firm Soviet commitment about reduction of conventional arms. Yet Gorbachev deserves more credit than has been given to him for his bold and dramatic break through which has virtually turned the tide.

As against any doubts about the credibility of the Soviet offers, there are also some questions about the response of the West. NATO Commanders seem uneasy about appropriate measures to match the Soviet concessions. There appears to be a tendency to wring the most from the Soviet Union including non-military concessions like Jewish emigration and recognition of the claims of Lithuania. The US is also concerned with the issue of the future of NATO and its own relations with it because the effect of these arms reduction would be to loosen US control over the NATO members. The question of dismantling NATO in its present form not only because of the Soviet arms cuts which have rendered it somewhat redundant but also the political effects of the unification of Germany which would upset the balance of forces within it, have thus arisen. There are in fact two issues namely the future shape of NATO and its relations with the Soviet Union in the context of the virtual liquidation of the Warsaw powers.

Apart from some hesitation in matching Soviet concessions with comparable measures, the biggest question mark over US policies is its position on SDI which has been a sore point with the Soviet Union. There is no firm indication up to now of any rethinking on this subject out of respect for Soviet sensitiveness. On the contrary the US is reported to be proceeding with its research programme into it and last year the US Defence Department announced an important breakthrough in the development of an interceptor system in space which could destroy missiles. This was designated as the "Brilliant Pebbles system and in 1989 President Bush approved of a budget of 4.6 billion dollars for the fiscal year 1990 for research on Star Wars. The initial deployment was expected to commence in 1990 at a cost of around 25 billion dollars. This could become an obstacle to future negotiations and hence genuine give and take on both sides will be needed to achieve lasting results.

The positive achievement of the detente was as President Gorbachev Stated that "the Cold War is behind us". By this he meant that the global all out rivalry between the two powers which was like a personal vendetta and had encompassed every field had ended and the two were free to think clear of its menacing shadow. It meant in practical terms a dissociation of ideas between armaments and politico ideological rivalry. What intensified the latter was the grip of the arms race between the two powers which prevented them from thinking objectively about affairs other than as security threats. It should now be possible to have a separate dialogue on political and other matters while proceeding on a parallel track as regards disarmament. This approach should enable both to resolve issues peacefully and with understanding and likewise help in resolving problems of other states as well and thereby maintain the peace. At the same time they have a vested interest in working together because they may be faced with a common menace of nuclear threats from other sources. The inability

to achieve an end to nuclear proliferation or even a comprehensive Test Ban will give rise to the very real danger of these falling into irresponsible hands and becoming a challenge to the nuclear powers themselves. Thus a continuing detente and widening of its scope are entirely in the best interests of both countries and never more urgently needed than now. What therefore are its prospects for the future. With the best will in the world it will depend on the political future of both President Gorbachev and President Bush. President Gorbachev ironically finds himself in the same position as an American President because as a result of his glasnost, rival Soviet politicians and the Armed Services seem to be up in arms against him which is the equivalent of the Congress and Pentagon in American terms. Whether he could control them is the question and for this he depends to a great extent on the American response and international support. If the US exploit the opportunity to wring concessions which will weaken Gorbachev internally, it will be very shortsighted policy the consequence of which can be disastrous. The moral is that President Gorbachev is as important to the West as he is to the Soviet Union and every effort should be made to support him. To the American side the problem is whether the President can withstand his own pressures from lobbies demanding Jewish emigration or from the giant industrial complexes like the Lockheed, Boeing and Macdonald Douglas fearful of the effects on them of these arms cuts. The Soviet Union sees the arms reduction as a measure of economic relief for its shaky industrial system and economy but it would not have the same implications in America except as a help in its budgetary deficits but the urgency of the arms reduction and freedom from this burden is much greater for the Soviet Union because of its internal crisis. There is thus the political uncertainty on the Soviet side because of the unpredictability of the forces involved and the question of President Bush's ability to cope with his pressures which reflect the basic national ego and belief that it could live by itself regardless of what happens outside. This is the underlying isolationist trend which has manifested itself from time to time.

The question of the impact of the detente on the rest of the world seems to assume that the Cold War was the exclusive source of international tension and that its termination should imply an automatic liberation of the world from its grip. This is a naive assumption which may have been true initially in the immediate post war years when the Cold War was intense and crude. Since then the world itself has expanded in scope with the decolonization process which has now brought 160 states on the world stage representative of far flung regions. This development has diffused the overshadowing effect of the Cold War and given rise to a sprawling scenario with individual problems of their own. It is now a question of the super powers reacting to the problems in these regions in terms of their individual rather than in terms of an umbrella global competition. In this scenario the question of arms limitation and deployment has to be seen in relation to the perceptions of the big powers in different parts of the world. To that extent the armaments process can continue independent of cold war considerations. Thus the end of the Cold War does not imply in any sense a termination of the arms race. The race itself, the frenzied desire to outdo the other may have ceased but there are no prospects of a cessation or armament production or their deployment according to their global interests. The picture if at all seems to be of a horizontal spread of arms as discarded weapons find their way across frontiers rather than a vertical increase. Such a spread will proliferate fear and apprehension, threats and tensions will multiply. The big powers will in that event be obliged to be more than ever in a state of armed readiness. The farewell to arms is thus a philosophers dream. An increase in arms is in store if at all which will percolate the world over.

Another great event of this century which will have momentous consequences for the world is the rise of the European Community to become almost a super state. The prospect is of this actually happening in 1992, when at the end of the year the frontier barriers between the 12 member states are lifted and it becomes a single Europe. This will be if nothing else a political and economic miracle without a precedent in history. The consequences can be unprecedented because it will create a market of 323 million consumers which is a third more than USA and its combined industrial and technological strength will enable it to become a colossus which can compete with the super powers for economic dominance. There is the further prospect that non-member European states fearful of its impact would be lured into it in which event the Community would encompass the whole of West Europe. As we will see it may not end there. There are of course misgivings about the possible smothering of nationality and erosions of sovereignty which could retard its realization or make it fall short of expectations. However what could become a major obstacle has developed recently with the prospective unification of Germany at the start of 1991 which will be an event not less momentous than the European Community itself.⁴ It has the makings of an imperio in imperium, a colossus within a colossus which could end with it swallowing the latter. The record of the Federal Republic of Germany as a member of the EEC has been spectacular and will speak for itself. In 1988 it had a trade surplus of 71 billion dollars where its EEC partners accounted for half its exports. This was expected to rise by 5% in 1989 while in the major industries such as machinery, engineering, electrical and electronics a 5% rise of production was also anticipated. Since the tumultuous events in Eastern Europe began, it has been poised to seize the opportunity with offers of joint venture and aid which dwarfed US offers to Poland. This opportunity has now come with the pending unification with East Germany which has already been half achieved with their recent financial union.⁵ The latter was a virtual purchase of East Germany which has virtually integrated it financially with the Federal Republic. With this accession of the industrial and technological strength of East Germany which was allays rated as the most advanced among the East European states, one can imagine what the potential and power of an unified Germany would be. This has given rise to the question of how it could be accommodated within the framework of the Community which by comparison is the weaker body. Some partners are likely to be uneasy about its dominance in the Community. If however it is otherwise and the EEC is able to continue on course with an unified Germany as a member, there are tremendous opportunities open to it. These will mainly be in two directions namely the Third World and the new world of East Europe. Third World countries are aware of this possibility and see it as a frightening prospect which will amount to a technological continuation of the political imperialism of the past and if at all more ruthless. The fear is that it will exploit the technological backwardness of the Third World scenario to technologically enslave it. This gloomy view has been expressed in recent projections of this subject, an extreme version of which is as follows:⁶

⁴ On October 3 1990 the formal Treaty for the unification of Germany was signed under which the Bonn Government will be sovereign in all of Germany. On 13 September 1990, the Foreign Ministers of the 4 occupation powers namely UK, USA, France, USSR signed a Treaty relinquishing all their occupation rights and thus opened the way for the Treaty of Unification.

⁵ On 1 July 1990 East Germany handed over control of its economy to the Bonn Government.

⁶ See Report of Indian Institute of Management entitled "EEC Underlying motives and their implications", Ahmedabad, India, 1989, p. 11.

Under the combined power of the supra national institutions managed by the community of European origin under the planned direction of EEC and the emerging United States of Europe, the future "War of races" would bring untold misery to the communities of non-European origin. Seen from this perspective EEC is not only being evolved as a supra mercantile, supra national organization but also a prelude to ultimate War of the Races.

This is an overblown reaction which just shows the kind of fears aroused. The fear if at all is not of a racist war but of the combined strength of Europe, coming like a battering ram into the Third World utilizing their past political links to technologically dominate it. This would be in the form of credits, aid, investments, expertise, joint venture, technological inputs which would have the combined effect of subjecting the development of these countries to their tutelage in return for access to raw materials, cheap labour, export outlets for machinery and other types of penetration and advantage. This would be preferable to engaging in direct confrontation with the USA in trade and finding outlets in the developed world. The EEC would have the advantage in areas like Africa which have a background of European influence and which are as yet relatively untapped by rivals such as Japan, China and India or even the USA. If this happens South Asia would be a target area and the countries concerned should be prepared for it not as some security threat but as a relevant factor in their economic strategies. It will be a choice for instance as between Japan and the EEC. The alternative to the EEC is to tap the rich possibilities recently opened in East Europe. Geographically and historically they are ideally situated for the purpose. Germany through its unification would have half entered the field and besides it had always been active in it. The only obstacle could be memories of past Central European imperialism spear headed by Germany but in Europe memories have necessarily to be short. To that extent EEC should have a head start. Yet it has to reckon with the anxiety of the USA to be in this same field. This is for both political and economic reasons which are its desire to seize the economic opportunities on the one hand and also to curb the revival of old German imperialist patterns in that region which throughout has been a victim of such depredations. This could also act as a brake on German inspired expansion into East Europe. The anxiety of the USA to get there first was seen with their assiduous overtures to Poland and their ambitions no doubt to utilize the avenues opened by perestroika. There is thus both an American and European race to be first at the post in East Europe which could divert attention away from the Third World and leave the latter to others like Japan.

Finally one should speculate on the impact of detente on the Soviet Union as the other partner in this drama in respect of its global perspectives. The Soviet Union always claimed to be an Asian power but never really acted as one until its ill fated intervention in Afghanistan. That has caused a certain revulsion possibly against both involvement in Asia as well as external adventures. Until then it was the USA which had manoeuvred themselves into such blind alley situations but in Afghanistan the Soviet Union had a taste of it themselves and did not relish it. Apart from this revulsion the Soviet approach to Asian affairs appears to be a parallel to its attitude towards relations with the West where the object is to eliminate tensions and focus on constructive cooperation. The overriding desire of the President has been to free himself from political or military commitments which would be a drain on energy and concentrate on urgent tasks of internal reconstruction. This would explain his acquiescing in the liberation of Eastern Europe and the restoration of Sino-Soviet concord. As regards China he is thereby spared the problems of the watch on the Ussuri and vigil on the Sino-Soviet border which was a military burden. Under INF it will be recalled the Soviet

Union had to withdraw missiles from the Chinese border. As regards Western and Eastern Europe however President Gorbachev will be in a dilemma. While permitting the liberation of Eastern Europe he does not wish it to be under enemy occupation in the sense of attracting elements that would be hostile to the Soviet Union. He would not like to see it under the economic domination of the EEC and the USA. Perhaps his wish would be to foster independent initiatives among those countries towards promoting their economic development through their own efforts or forming combinations like the EEC. Indeed an East European EEC would seem to be the ideal solution which would be independent of both sides and be a threat to neither. In fact an approach on these lines was proposed by Zbigniew Brzezinski one time US National Security Adviser in an address to the Diplomatic Academy of the USSR Foreign Ministry. His proposal was as follows:⁷

I think it is in the interests of the common European home that efforts be made to promote regional cooperation in Central Europe. It is in our collective interest that Poland and Czechoslovakia develop more viable forms of political and economic cooperation in the region lying between the Soviet Union and Germany. This is in the interest of European stability. It is also in the interest of European stability that a cooperation in the Balkans be promoted for there is a real danger of fragmentation in the part of Europe.

In relation to the EEC countries Gorbachev's real problem is the future role and intentions of NATO. With the scrapping of the Warsaw Pact it would not do for NATO to remain as it was a symbol of an old order which has been disavowed. A new image has to be found which will match up to his conceptions of the end of the Cold War. The membership of Germany in NATO after its unification will not help to give that assurance and will instead compel President Gorbachev to continue defensive postures which means militarization and armaments. The proposal for a declaration of peaceful intent by NATO to the Warsaw Pact agreements accompanied by significant troop cuts may help to allay these Soviet anxieties.⁸ The continuance of NATO in a military stance would be anomalous in a context where its rival and counterpart has been formally disbanded and this imposes on NATO a moral obligation to make a matching gesture. The adherence to the concept of peace through deterrence and armaments has to be reviewed in the light and in the spirit of recent disarmament initiatives of President Gorbachev for European and global security.

To sum up therefore, the global impact of the detente, means for the present at least, the end of the Cold War, of the two super powers regarding each other automatically as rivals and going for each other in all the corners of the world. From now without prejudice to the pursuit of their interests they would attempt to work together for international peace and security. In terms of armaments the detente opens the way to progressive reductions without any commitment on either side to the ideal objective of total eradication. Within this framework the Soviet Union hopes to benefit from US technology and expertise and the US from opportunities for investment and trade while the world as a whole can derive some relief from the lessening of pressures. A side effect is the opening of East Europe which would attract the EEC and the USA but the former depending on the economic climate in East Europe may look towards the Third World as an area for development and investment. The impact of Asia is an open question. One should not assume that it will automatically rid it

⁷ Zbigniew Brzezinski, Address to Diplomatic Academy of USSR Foreign Ministry in June 1990 on "Changing Europe".

⁸ See London Declaration on a Transformed NATO issued after the NATO Summit in London, 5/6 July 1990.

of super power interference. What may happen is that they may not seek to follow a collision course and would endeavour to work for peaceful settlements but each will pursue and protect their interests as they think fit by force or intimidation if considered necessary.

Turning now to the situation in Asia in general and with particular reference to South Asia it is necessary to consider it at three levels. These are outside powers activities, the regional states and regional initiatives and the internal situations within states in respect of their security. The position of Sri Lanka could then be viewed in this wider picture. Among outside powers we may begin this survey with an enquiry into US activities. US politics in post war Asia were not notable for consistency. It is record of reacting to situations with the overall objective of checking imagined Communist expansion. In the fifties it attempted to set up SEATO from among Asian states as a barrier against the spread of Communism in the region. This led to its involvement with Pakistan both as a SEATO member and as a base from which it could watch the situation in India and also promote its Baghdad Pact initiatives in the Near East. In the sixties it stepped directly into the breach left by the British withdrawal from east of Suez and assumed the role of regional policeman operating from the staging post installations in Diego Garcia. In the seventies this involvement deepened with the decisive step of the entry of the US Enterprise into the Bay of Bengal with the same symbolism as the entry of Perry's black ships into Japan. In the eighties the US presence and its interest assumed an abiding character following the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan when Pakistan became a firm ally and an operational base from which to supply arms to the Afghan rebels. In the process the US entered the South Asian power picture because of its massive aid programme to Pakistan which helped the development of its programme of nuclear energy ostensibly for peaceful purposes. The result has been exacerbation of Indo-Pakistan relations. These diverse but continuous initiatives had very little to do directly with the Cold War and were prompted by US concern for its own interests in that region. The expectation that they would recede or abate with the detente is thus a false assumption. On the contrary the more embattled and complicated the situation in the region, the more one could expect the US interest in it. This position has been borne out by several developments recently in the US activities in the region and the US pronouncements on it.

In a speech by the US under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Mr. Armacost in 1988,⁹ he stated that the goals of US policy in South Asia were as follows:

Restore the independence of Afghanistan, avert a nuclear arms race in the subcontinent, encourage a reduction of tensions between Pakistan and India, forge international cooperation against terrorism, preserve national integrity in the face of separatist demands, support moves towards democracy and regional and economic cooperation including the impressive strides made by SAARC.

The statement gave no indication of US policies and intentions as regards security problems in the region and the overall attitude seemed to be in favour of promoting peace through cooperation and elimination of tensions. Comments in the course of the speech on separatism appears to draw a distinction between India where he states that "we oppose disruptive movements" and Sri Lanka where "we certainly support the efforts of India to bring the insurgents to the bargaining table". This amounts to an admission of a sphere of influence role

⁹ Address to Asia Society in Washington DC, 1988 & See 2 articles on US policy in South Asia by Selig Harrison and R. R. Subramaniam, pp. 134-152 in 35 below.

of India in the region. Recently in February 1990, US Secretary for Defence Dick Cheney made a clear cut declaration of policy on US policy towards Asia in a speech delivered in Tokyo in the course of a tour of the region.¹⁰ The keynote of his statement was that there would be no weakening of US military presence in Asia and the Pacific because its *raison d'être* was not only the Soviet Union but also the "potential for internal unrest and regional conflict involving a number of Asian countries". These were named as North Korea, Burma, Vietnam, Cambodia, China. Another reason to justify this armed presence was the likelihood of regional conflict which he described as follows:

Numerous countries in the region have territorial claims and counter claims that periodically flare up and their potential danger is seriously heightened by the spread of intermediate range ballistics missiles and by the increasing capabilities of near nuclear states in the region.

In accordance with this policy he called upon the Soviet Union to return the Northern islands to Japan and encouraged North Korea to have a dialogue with South Korea and help reduce tension. He further affirmed the US desire to retain the Clark Air base and Subic naval base in the Philippines which Secretary of State Baker later stated were necessary for both the US and Philippine security but Cheney and Baker both said that this would be as long as the Philippines wanted US presence. Thus the Defence Secretary's statement was a disclosure that future US policy in Asia would be to maintain an armed presence which could serve as a regional policeman and watchdog and safeguard its interests.

As admitted by the Defence Secretary, the US thinking on Asia is based on the view that one cannot expect stability in it in the foreseeable future. It will call for in the US view, a US commitment of indefinite duration, to deal with its diverse problems which have implications for American global and other interests. This would be apparent from a glance at the prevailing situation in the continent. Although Soviet troops have been withdrawn from Afghanistan, the latter is heavily dependent on Soviet military and financial aid and the destabilization continues as well as the conflict producing reverberations throughout the subcontinent. South Asia is overshadowed by fears of Indian hegemony which have occasioned defensive reactions from Pakistan including possible resort to nuclear armaments. The impasse in Cambodia continues and China freed recently from its preoccupation with the Soviet Union may be free to pursue its as yet unidentifiable interests in this region. Recent rapport between China and ASEAN countries like Malaysia and Indonesia may weaken the credibility of ASEAN as a buffer and require US buttressing especially in view of the uncertainty over the bases in the Philippines. The Middle East is the traditional heartland of US interests and its dependence on Arab oil may increase in the future but the prospects of peace in the region are as remote as ever. The end of the Iran - Iraq war has not left Iran in a forgiving mood and hence the Persian Gulf remains a sensitive area.¹¹ The Middle East crisis proper is likely to be aggravated with possible inroads of Jewish emigrants into Arab lands, the unrelenting stand of the Israeli administration which are shattering recent prospects of a settlement. The prospects in the region are therefore of continuing turmoil and uncertainty which afford ample justification in terms of the US approach to such problems for a reinforced US presence rather than a running down which was the expected aftermath of detente.

¹⁰ Reported in Sri Lanka Daily News, 24.2.1990.

¹¹ This has since been borne out by events in the Gulf entering round the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq.

Available details of plans for a US presence indicate a tremendously powerful build up combining military, naval and air capability with a wide ranging network over the continent.¹² This will constitute what is known in current US strategic terminology as a "new global power centre" covering the Indian Ocean area including the Persian Gulf, South and South-West Asia and the Middle East which has been designated as a "third strategic zone" in the world after West Europe and the Far East. This power centre will be the location of a Central Command (Centcom) which has an operational range covering 19 countries in Africa, the Middle East and South Asia and will act through the Rapid Deployment Force at its disposal with an ultimate strength of 60,000. The Command extends over a network of 30 bases spread out from East Africa to West Australia. The Command operates through a floating Armada and the network of bases each one well equipped with the latest in weaponry. The Armada consists of about 30 to 40 aircraft carriers, missile cruisers, destroyers and frigates, two to three nuclear powered submarines and floating storehouses with supplies and equipment. The warships carry such latest weapons as Tomahawk cruise missiles and anti-ship Harpoons. In the bases, by agreement with the countries concerned massive arms and supply centres have been built which serve as operational bases also for the RDF. Some of these bases are in Oman, Somalia, Kenya and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan it is believed occupies a key position in this Command. Under its 4.02 billion dollar military package with the US, the latter has supplied nuclear capable F 16s, helicopters, sea based cruise missiles as well as from other sources British frigates, Sea Wolf missiles, Plessey radar, and the French Mirage 5. There are besides reportedly Centcom electronic tracking stations in Sargodha, Gwalior, Peshawar and Karachi which could monitor India, Afghanistan and the Indian Ocean. There is said to be a further proposal for these to become bases for the RDF and to move the location of Centcom to Pakistan. Pride of place in this network of bases has been given to Diego Garcia as the pioneer venture in this field which has been built up accordingly as the premier base. It combines an airfield which can take B 52s, a pier for carriers and warships, an intelligence Centre and a station for electronic optical monitoring of space which includes a satellite destruction system. Some of the submarines at this base have vertical launch missiles with nuclear warheads designed under the SDI research programmes. When this build up was being inaugurated the Non-Aligned states adopted the Indian Ocean Peace Zone Declaration to preempt it but the big powers have blocked its implementation. Twenty years later it is on the point of collapse with the refusal of the USA to work with the ad hoc committee. This tremendously powerful and highly organized US build up in the region can be accepted at its face values a necessity to safeguard US interests in this crucial area of the world. At the same time it can be used as an intimidating instrument and pressure to regulate events in the region to be in accordance with the interests of the USA and its allies. Its very presence let alone its awesome capacity can have a stifling effect. It can be a deterrent on the one hand and also a provocation which could distort the evolution of forces inside the region.

In view of the highly organized US military presence virtually overseeing the continent we should consider the thinking and perspectives of the Soviet Union on this region as its super power counterpart in this global rivalry. President Gorbachev has thrown a characteristic bombshell in this regard in the proposals which he announced from Krasnoyarsk in 1988

¹² The current build up is a sequel to these preparatory steps and a test of US readiness in the region.

repeating ideas expressed previously in Vladivostock in 1986.¹³ There were seven such proposals aimed at strengthening security in the Asia Pacific region. These were that:

1. The Soviet Union will not increase its weapons in the area and it will invite the USA and other nuclear powers to do likewise.
2. The Soviet Union will invite naval powers in the region for consultations on not increasing naval forces in the area.
3. Multilateral discussions to be held with a view to freezing and lowering levels of naval and air activity in the areas where the coasts of the USSR, China, Japan, DPRK and South Korea converge.
4. In return for the US elimination of their bases in the Philippines, the Soviet Union will in return give up its base at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam.
5. Joint measures to be instituted to prevent incidents in the open sea and air space over it.
6. The Soviet Union will propose the holding of a conference not later than 1990 on the Creation of a Peace Zone in the Indian Ocean.
7. The Soviet Council with a view to setting up a negotiating mechanism to consider proposals relating to the security of the Asia-Pacific region.

The broad aims of these proposals were to lower the military activities of super powers in the region and to form them into a supervisory mechanism which would consider security problems in the region. The proposal to discuss the Peace Zone at an international conference was presumably with a view to combine it with the proposed supervisory mechanism. Clearly the underlying idea was to harmonize the interests of the great powers with those of the regional states and establish an atmosphere of peace. The main feature of these proposals is that they are diametrically opposed to the thinking of the US on security in the region which is for a permanent US deterrent military presence as a stabilization measure. These Soviet proposals should not be dismissed as propaganda in order to apply moral pressure on the USA to sacrifice the advantage by reducing its activities and place it on a par with the modest level of its own. Instead it should be viewed as an expression of concern of the Soviet Union that heightened militaristic activity of the great powers in that region could escalate prevailing tensions and cause destabilization which would invite exploitation by outside and inside powers. This situation would in turn rebound on its own considerable interests in that area as an Asian power and its potential to be a security threat. It was therefore in the joint interests of all concerned both great powers and regional states that the region should as far as possible be neutralised and denuclearized without prejudice to the peaceful interests of outside powers for which purpose a linkage with them was proposed in this package. From these points of view the Soviet proposals made sense and was in the wider interests of the region and should have at least served as a basis for negotiations. The response to it has been indifferent and these proposals may share the fate of the Indian Zone proposals following the disruption of the ad hoc committee and doubts about whether the international conference scheduled for 1991 will ever materialize. The US case would be, apart from their claims for freedom of the High Seas, that their own stakes in the region which include Middle Eastern oil, their links with South Asian states like Pakistan and their concern for stability in South Asia, traditional

¹³ Release of Information Dept, USSR, Embassy, Colombo, 24.9.1988.

ties at the other end with the Philippines and Korean are greater and more vital to the USA than to the Soviet Union which is a comparative newcomer to the scene. The US may probably be prepared to consider some undertaking regarding security threats to it from this region if the Soviet Union feels endangered. Another argument is that demilitarization may not be welcome to some of the states in the region who feel endangered by others in the region or outsiders and would therefore regard the US presence as an insurance. This is the view which was often heard at the ad hoc committee that the peace zone would leave some states exposed to designing neighbours.

Beneath this overall approach to Asia-Pacific security, the Soviets also entertain other ideas and have options at their disposal. One of them is the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 which is a key factor in Soviet diplomacy in Asia. Its major achievement was that it gave protective cover to India to accomplish its Bangladesh operation without Chinese intervention on behalf of its ally Pakistan despite requests to this effect to China by Kissinger. Does this mean that it is a licence for India to treat the region as a sphere of influence. Its purpose it appears was primarily to protect India internationally and this was served in 1971 when it was a deterrent to both China and the USA. Some think that as part of the detente the Soviet Union may have sacrificed it or will attach less importance. In fact during the historic visit of Gorbachev to India in November 1988 and his meeting with Rajiv Gandhi, this subject was a focus of interest and no doubt of discussion between the two. Various interpretations have been given of the outcome. President Gorbachev's own comments in the course of his address to the Indian Parliament was that "Its supreme meaning lies in the reciprocal commitment to act should a complicated situation arise for one side or both. Such situations did arise. Both the Soviet Union and India have remained faithful to their commitments and acted in accordance with the spirit and letter of our treaty". Elsewhere he said of it "The Treaty is not history. It is the present day the living practice of our time." Rajiv Gandhi referred to it as "a source of strength for our respective countries. Its importance has increased in the context of the current world situation and recent events in our part of the world". Gorbachev also affirmed in the course of the visit that "we stand for good hearty relations with the Pakistani peoples and approaches should be worked out to achieve such relations".¹⁴

In the light of these comments and in view of recent developments there is room to consider whether there has been a revaluation of this treaty by the parties concerned. A change if any would be the result of the restoration of Sino-Soviet Treaty of friendship in May 1989 as a result of the visit of President Gorbachev to Peking and the Summit meeting which followed. This could be seen as primarily a mending of their own differences but it could have wider implications. It could mean that the Soviet Union will no longer regard China as an adversary and will refrain therefore from assisting a party against China. This would amount to some qualification of its obligations to India but it should not mean that it will necessarily support China in its problems with India. If at all the Soviet Union can play a mediatory role. Yet this China link does mean that India cannot count on the unqualified backing of the Soviet Union in all its initiatives in the region with implications as to whether it will accept the region as a sphere of influence of India. Both sides will probably take a pragmatic view of the treaty invoking it when it suits their interests according to the merits of each case but without sacrificing their options. There is no doubt that the Treaty will

¹⁴ Cited in article by K. Subramaniam entitled "Looking at the Indo-Soviet Treaty in Sri Lanka Daily News of 26.1.1988.

remain a factor of great diplomatic importance in the region which can serve as a basis for consultations and even joint initiatives between two of its super powers.

The other factor alluded to already is the impact of the Sino-Soviet accord on Soviet thinking on Asia. The question is whether it is of local significance and confined to a settlement of bilateral differences or may affect the region as a whole. According to the text of the communique after the Summit their aim was to clear up differences in order to concentrate on bilateral relations.¹⁵ As stated in the communique "their differences on certain matters should not stand in the way of progress of their bilateral relations". Some of these difference were cleared through the Soviet decision to withdraw 75% of its troops deployed in Mongolia and an undertaking not to impose its will on others. The latter referred to Cambodia where their policies have been divergent. The keynote statement on general policy in the communique was that "neither would seek hegemony of any form in the Asian-Pacific region or other parts of the world and both deem it essential to denounce the attempts or action of any country to impose its will on others". The Summit was clearly a first step towards the restoration of Sino-Soviet friendship which in the past was the cornerstone of the Communist world. Its positive note was the decision not to compete with each other for global stakes. Yet it had the practical value that it ended mutual apprehensions and fears over border problems and left them free to pursue policies in their respective regions as they thought fit. It does not however give a blank cheque to China as the agreement prohibits either side from seeking to impose its will in the Asian Pacific region. Subject to this qualification in the Treaty, China can address its mind to the problems of the region in accordance with its perceptions of its interests.

What these will be is a key question which is now a matter of speculation and mystery. Currently it is in the throes of an internal upheaval the signs of which were the Tienanman Square incident but it will not be long before these problems are resolved and China can bring to bear its massive weight on the Asian region. The impact will be qualified by preoccupations for a long time to come with problems of development and internal restructuring which would call for crucial decisions on economic policy and political systems. The magnitude of these problems may drag it down indefinitely until such time as it can find the leadership cable of coping with them in a climate of popular acceptance. This process will absorb its militaristic posturing on its part other than what will be needed for its own security. This will in turn depend on the nature of the security threats it is called upon to face. The type of armaments programmes and weaponry for which it opts will be determined by these perceptions unless it entertains hegemonistic ambitions in which case the Asian scenario will be very different. In the normal course one could expect China to pursue its traditional policy of establishing good relations with the States in the region as it has done in the past and contributing as much as its resources would allow towards their economic advancement. Not too much could be expected in this regard because of its own urgent shortages and deficiencies. A vigorous cultural role to make itself known at that level can be expected. Its political role commensurate with its size and magnitude will be entirely in relation to the problems and challenges in the region. One does not think that it will approve of either a regional or outside state attempting to play the role of a regional policeman nor will China aspire to such a role herself. Instead it would like presumably to see it as a region which is free of hegemonistic attempts and militaristic posturing where states can enjoy freedom of

¹⁵ See joint communique of Sino-Soviet Summit in Beijing 20.5.1989.

navigation and set about their tasks peacefully subject to taking legitimate measures for their security. For the next decade at least one could expect the profile of China in the region to be essentially peaceful, concentrating on its economic development for which it will depend on aid from Japan, the USA and probably EEC while at the same time gearing itself for the absorption of Hong Kong in 1997 and its consequent role in international commerce. This presupposes that there will be no provocative forces in the region to challenge and goad her to deflect from this peaceful course.

High hopes are being entertained on the potential of Japan to be the saviour of the Third World or at least Asia. At the same time Japan is recognised as a new super power in the world which has made a dramatic impact on the international scene. There is no doubt that its almost fabulous resources should enable it to make a decisive contribution to the economic advancement of the developing world. It has already made substantial provision for this under its Overseas Development Assistance programme which was doubled in 1988 to 50 billion dollars, 20% of which has been earmarked for South Asia. The recent tour by Prime Minister Kaifu of South Asian countries in the course of which he assured them of Japan's interest in assisting them and discussed aid programmes was an affirmation of its desire to help.¹⁶ In his address to the Indian Parliament Prime Minister Kaifu envisaged the emergence of a new international order reflecting recent global changes, based on peace, security and democracy to which Japan could contribute through the expansion of economic assistance. For the success of this programme which should be pursued through dialogue and cooperation certain pre conditions were necessary such as the acceptance by the governments concerned of free market and open economy policies characterized by commitment to market mechanics and foreign investments, privatisation, minimal state regulation of economic activity, infrastructural changes and institutional restructuring to accommodate the new forces and conducive to them. This seemed to amount to a Japanese prescription for economic progress and implied that it was necessary for states to comply with its terms to qualify for aid. If this is true, aid on this view would be a leverage to extract revamping of the economic policies in favour of free market philosophies. This approach which has its merits may run into difficulties with mixed economy countries or those which have an open pragmatic mind on the subject and others like India which have adopted uncompromising attitudes like protectionism. These difficulties which should be adjustable should not detract from the viability or good faith of this vision which could veritably open a new chapter for South Asia.

At the same time this plan which some critics may maliciously dismiss as a veiled co prosperity scheme, should be seen in the context of Japan's position as an economic colossus and a super power. The question is whether this may be a bid for Japan to acquire political and diplomatic dominance as a corollary to its economic might with a view also to deter or check other aspirants for that position in Asia. It is further speculated that such a plan may have the blessing of the USA so that Japan could act as a surrogate for it in the security of the region and also that the massive markets of the latter could be an outlet for Japanese exports and to that extent relieve the USA from the mounting and almost intolerable pressure of the latter. There is evidence of a growing interest by Japan in political affairs in the discussions of Prime Minister Kaifu on Kashmir and Indo-Pakistan relations on his visit to these countries and also Japan's initiatives to resolve the deadlock over Cambodia. There is

¹⁶ Tour of Asian countries undertaken by Japanese Prime Minister Kaifu in the course of which he visited Sri Lanka on 3 May 1990.

further the bigger possibility which has been suggested that Japan may be bidding in keeping with its economic might for a global role as super power which will compete with the USA, where Japan is regarded in terms of its economic capacity as a greater threat to its security than Soviet military might. To this is added the fear that by a mere doubling of its allocation for defense expenditure which is one of the GNP its budget on military expenditure would equal that of America and hence automatically become militarily a super power as well. Whether as they say there are rooted aversions to war after the trauma of the last one which will prevent such a trend if it occurs is left to be seen. One does not see what Japan could gain from such a transformation which will only revive old fears and bitter memories and destroy its prospects of playing a key role in the region.

Another important question which merits consideration apart from the content and character of Japanese aid is its likely direction and distribution. Japan is in the enviable position that its aid is virtually in universal demand. To many countries both big and small it is the haven in which to seek relief. This poses an issue of alternative and choice on which Japan should decide and this would undoubtedly be related to its perceptions of interest. The relevant considerations would be the promotion of markets for its capital expertise and goods, the establishment of conditions of international peace and security and attainment of a position where it could play a role in global and regional affairs commensurate with its extraordinary strength. Its aid programmes encompass not only the needy states of South Asia but also China which in 1988 was promised a soft loan of 8 billion dollars. There are vistas of Japan playing a major role in China's future development. There are even prospects of making a similar contribution in East Europe and the Soviet Union itself but competition is heavy in this field from the USA and EEC which have earmarked it as a special area for their initiatives. Besides Japan has a personal problem with the Soviet Union over the Northern islands which has stood in the way of the normalization of their relations.¹⁷ It does not seem as if Japan is over anxious about this even to find compromise or interim solutions and this may be because the Soviet Union may not be a priority at the moment. The conclusion seems to be that in view of the heavy pressures and even hostility towards Japan in the USA and the high level of competition it will encounter in Europe it may concentrate on Third World countries and endeavour to play in respect of them the kind of role which the USA and Europe professed to have in the past. These are the programmes which were prosecuted by developed countries in conjunction with the World Bank and international credit agencies towards the economic advancement of the developing worlds with results which do not reflect too well on them in view of their worsening situation and the debt burdens they have incurred. The picture in recent times is a diminution in aid flows from these Northern sources accompanied by increasing difficulties in realizing conditions for equitable trade for these countries from developed countries which could have made up for shortfalls of aid. The result is a situation of virtually no relief from any quarter whether external aid or generation of internal resources which has placed developing countries in a dilemma. The recent wave of casualties particularly among African countries which are facing internal turmoil and unrest

¹⁷ Japan is still officially at war with the Soviet Union as the latter has not signed the Peace Treaty. Efforts to establish stable relations have been unsuccessful, the stumbling block being the refusal of the Soviet Union to return 2 island groups now its possession to Japan. These are the Etorufu and Kunashiri islands at the southern end of the Kuriles and Shikotan and Habomai north east of Hokkaido. In the sixties the Soviet Union offered to return them if Japan abrogated its Defence Treaty with the US.

due to economic deficiencies are signs that the situation is reaching breaking point.¹⁸ The situation seems ripe and opportune therefore for a new dispensation in the field of economic aid such as Japan is in a position to afford. There is every prospect therefore that Japan will be as good as its word about its desire to prosecute massive assistance programmes but the terms of these offers should be thought out carefully taking into account the record of the World Bank and the IMF in this regard. While Japan as the donor is free to dictate terms it would be in Japan's interest not to be rigid and ensure that they are flexible and understanding enough to take into account local idiosyncrasies and sensibilities and work through genuine dialogue and cooperation.

Several factors favour Japan in this regard. With its essentially Asian cultural background it can relate better than Western countries which were handicapped by their colonial legacy and alleged neo-colonialist tendencies. Although Japan too has a similar legacy to live down, it has successfully accomplished this through its post-war image of goodwill and friendship. It is therefore in an unrivalled position to effect a kind of economic miracle not only through transfusions of aid but also induction of countries into an understanding of its technology and its systems. This could also win for it export and business dividends but the furtherance of prosperity in these countries should not be viewed as the fostering or competition but as a return which will open avenues for intensified cooperation. The fear of Japan buying out which is what is said of it in USA is without foundation because the development of countries through investment which would set them up on their own feet would ultimately be to the advantage of donor countries. Needless to say these initiatives and programmes by Japan are likely to encounter competition from countries with similar aspirations in the region but it should be possible to operate on a shared basis considering the magnitude of the needs and the massive populations involved.

The security implications of Japan's entry into the region is another matter. As its mission is peaceful and devoid of militaristic implication it should not have any security implications to Sri Lanka by way of threats but it could create apprehension by others as regards Japan gaining an important position as an aid donor in the country. It could at the same time be a useful friend to small countries like Sri Lanka in its political relations in the region. One consequence could be that acceptance of aid on a mass scale would bring the countries concerned within the orbit of Japan. This may be viewed with apprehension by others. On the other hand if the countries concerned are able to utilize this aid purposefully and have the appropriate structure and the plans, this possibility can be eliminated. Whatever the risks and limitations there is every reason to think that a programme of assistance on the scale and dimensions proposed by Japan could be most timely for Sri Lanka and can be accepted by the latter without any serious fear of compromise to security. If such a risk is involved it would apply to every other country in the region and hence Sri Lanka should not unduly worry about it. Instead its concern should be not to accept anything and everything that is given but to confine acceptance only to such measures as it can utilize to best advantage and benefit. The proposal made by Japan to use SAARC as a framework for aid is good so long as it does not exclude bilateral aid. Channelling through SAARC may raise problems of priorities and equitable distribution between members.

¹⁸ This refers the unrest, civil disturbances, conflicts, attempted coups which have occurred recently in a number of African countries including Liberia, Gabon, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire recently.

Any current discussions of security in South Asia tend to centre on the recent military and naval build up of India and speculation as regards hegemonistic ambitions on its part and a desire to be the regional policeman. These views which reflect nervous apprehensions of its neighbours and regional states in general about Indian intentions and are also the subject of widespread comment internationally are based on the following considerations.

There has been a dramatic increase in all branches of India's defence and related activities including the military budget, the expansion of its navy, production of new weaponry, ventures into the field of missiles and rocketry with possible acquisition of nuclear weapon capability armament production and promotion of an export trade in arms, and entry into the international arms race in an apparent bid to assert its political and military dominance in the region.

1. India's expenditure on defence which was 5.38 billion dollars in 1983 almost doubled in 5 years to become 9.87 billion in 1988 representing 9% of its national income. This amounts to an annual outlay of about Rs 15,000 crores on defence and internal security.¹⁹
2. The most spectacular advance has been in the navy which is now in the second rank of naval power and rated as the 6th or 7th in the world. This has been achieved through its possession of the latest in naval armaments notably the INS Chakra which is a nuclear powered submarine leased to India by the Soviet Union and is a type of extremely sophisticated submarine of which there are few in the world. The significance of this acquisition to India has been described by one time Chief of the Indian Navy Admiral Chatterjee to the effect that "the deterrent effect of a nuclear submarine is colossal and the US would think twice about intervention if we were nuclear".²⁰ Other such acquisitions include two former British aircraft carriers named the "Vikrant" and "Viraat" carrying Harriers and the British Sea Eagle missiles which have more destructive capacity than the Exocets. A third carrier is being built in the Cochin ship yards. Even the Chakra is regarded as a trial and possible precursor of two more. The result is a truly awesome navy which leaves its neighbours trailing behind in a quandary of fear and perplexity over its implications for them.²¹ Apart from the Carriers and the nuclear submarine the present naval strength is made up of s submarine fleet of 16 including Kilos and Foxtrots, 4-6 Victor class attack boats planned within the next 10 years, a surface fleet of 27 Kashin destroyer leaders, Godaveri missile frigates, Leander frigates, corvettes and tank landing vessels. The acquisition from the Soviet Union of 4 long range TU 142 Bears and of squadrons of Jaguars and Canberras have given the navy a massive outward reach of approximately 4500 miles from Delhi which includes South Africa and Australia at the two extremities within its sweep. It will enable a wide range of tactical operations such as blocking access of extra regional fleets from the Arabian sea or the Straits of Malacca, blockades of ports in the vicinity such as in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh or further afield in Indonesia and Pakistan eliminating any resistance from those quarters and establishing zones of naval dominance under its control. This formidable naval build up amounts to a virtual miracle accomplished after

¹⁹ See article by Ashok Mitra in Illustrated Weekly of India, January 1988. & pp. 245, 35 below.

²⁰ See "Modern Indian Navy and the Indian Ocean", Centre for Indian Ocean Studies, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Canberra, p. 100.

²¹ See "Indian Ocean Navies" p. 28 and footnote 25 on p. 57, Centre for Indian Ocean Studies, Canberra.

1978 because till then the Navy was the Cinderella receiving only 3% which has since shot up to 15%.²² It is further reported that it has developed the equivalent of an RDF in the Indian Marine Special Forces to undertake special commando operations which was tried out against the Tigers in the IPKF actions in Jaffna.

3. In 1974 much to the consternation of the regional States and of the nuclear powers, India ostensibly entered the nuclear field with its explosion of a nuclear device at Pokharan in Rajasthan. This was followed by the launching of an intermediate range ballistic missile known as the Agni in 1988. It was launched from a site in Orissa and propelled a 2000 pound warhead over a distance of 2500 miles. Previously it launched a multi-warhead missile the Prithvi and a surface to surface missile. These developments leave no doubt that India has attached much importance to this programme and invested much in money, research and effort to promote it. The seventh five year plan for Science and Technology has allocated 2/3 rd of its budget to Space and Nuclear Research. The launching of Agni is regarded as signifying that India has acquired nuclear weapon capability and a delivery system for nuclear weapons. Western scientists however are doubtful of India becoming a real nuclear power earlier than the year 2000 as it lacks crucial items in missile technology such as a rockets guidance system. There is no reason to think that India will not forge ahead with this programme despite the fears it has raised, considering the headway made already, except in the event of a deterioration in its economy.
4. The Indian army has been referred to as the 4th largest in the world with a strength estimated to be one million.²³ It is credited with an armoured strength of 2600 tanks the bulk of which are British designed and Soviet T 72 and T 22. The Indian Air Force has over 500 Soviet MIGs, hundreds of British Gnat fighters and their local equivalents the Ajeet, several hundred helicopters of French design and the Ilyushin 76s which for their long range lifting capacity can only be matched in the US air force and proved their worth moving airborne troops within hours to the Maldives during the attempted coup in the latter. This massive military capability is the outcome of an arms build up which has been steadfastly pursued in the last two decades.²⁴
5. This was done in three ways namely outright purchase from foreign sources, manufacture under license and local industries and the choice has been governed by political, economic and technical considerations. Initially priority was given to local industry which developed a sizeable capacity producing a wide range of armaments from missiles and tanks to heavy ordnance, explosives, light arms and soft ware items such as military clothing and specialized supplies. However in the realm of heavy and sophisticated weaponry not only is the technical expertise lacking but it was found to be time consuming expensive and wasteful because by the time a particular item was produced it was already out of date and it would have been cheaper in the long run to purchase it. Further weapons were procured invariably according to emergencies which left no time for local production. Also political factors and service preferences played a role in procurement policies. Hopes of realising foreign exchange through export of arms as announced by its Defence Minister K.C. Pant were not realised. Export outlets

²² See *ibid.* 20 above p. 100.

²³ See article entitled "Know thy Enemy" in Sunday Times, London of 13.5.1990.

²⁴ See article by Raju G. S. Thomas entitled "Strategies of Recipient Countries - the case of India" in "The Dilemma of Third World Defence Industries", Pacific and World Studies No. 3, Westview Press, Inha University, Republic of Korea.

were not forthcoming and up to 1988 the value of arms exports amounted to only US Dollars 66 million. In the circumstances the bulk of its sophisticated weaponry were purchased from abroad or produced locally under agreements with foreign manufacturers. Some notable instances of such procurement were Mirage 2000 aircraft and Exocet air to surface missiles from France, Milan anti-tank guided weapons, 40 Soviet MIG 29s. There were further the purchase of over a thousand T 54/55 and Pt 76 tanks and 150 Sukhoi 7B fighter bombers from the Soviet Union. In addition a wide range of naval crafts such as Petya frigates, Nanuchka corvettes, Kashin destroyers were purchased from the Soviet Union. Instances of production under license include the Gnat interceptor by agreement with Bristol Siddley engines of UK, the MIG 21 interceptor with the Soviet Union, the British Chieftain tank in collaboration with Vickers Armstrong, the Mirage 2000 with Marcel Dassault of France, the MIG 23 and the T 72 tank with the Soviet Union. The most sensational of them was the decision to both purchase and manufacture the Anglo-French Jaguar fighter bomber at a cost of US Dollars 2.5 billion being the biggest foreign contract of its kind. This decision came as an upset to prevailing calculations that the MIG 23 was the favourite or the F 1 Mirage. Apart from hard bargaining from the rivals political considerations may have swayed the choice because the Janata Government may have wanted to end the apparent dependence on the Soviet Union. It will be seen therefore that despite a patriotic desire to produce their own armaments and develop it as an export, this policy failed in respect of high technology products where the long experience and know how of foreign manufacturers prevailed obliging the Government to settle for purchase or manufacture in collaboration with them. Local efforts at manufacture also fell short an instance being HF 24 Marut fighter bomber. This picture of a massive arms build up and industrial capacity to produce the most sophisticated armaments naturally added to the fears in the region and outside about India's intentions. A side effect of this was the likely spill over of arms from India to neighbouring countries fomenting insurgent activities within them.²⁵

6. The ideological background to this build up needs examination as it appears to mark a departure from India's avowed policies of pancha sila and Non-Alignment which rejected militarism. It would seem to mark a rethinking of concepts and a throwback to Chauvinistic ideas of Panikkar and other ideologues. This attitude was openly expressed by Mr. Subramaniam former Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis in an article in the Frontline where he stated that "The most thoughtless proposition put forward by some Indians is that India does not believe in the philosophy of deterrence and has been advocating a nuclear weapon free world and hence the country should not produce nuclear weapons lest it should affect its credibility in respect of its stand on disarmament and its stature in international politics".²⁶ Service Chiefs have been in the forefront calling for a militarily strong India which would be feared and respected and fulfil its obligations for its own security and that of the region.

These facts and considerations relating to India's military and naval build up have created a crisis of confidence in the region about its intentions and given rise to fears of hegemonistic

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ See article in "Frontline" February 18 to March 3, 1988.

ambitions on its part. Some credence has been given to these fears by India's recent track record of relations with Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Nepal and outside the region proper with Fiji. India's super power trappings in the form of its daunting military capacity have invested it with a new image in the region contrary to the popular impression of it as an advocate of pancha sila and of a moral and ethical approach in relations with States.

Of the fears aroused the most worrying is the prospect of nuclear warfare and a nuclear arms race in the region, resulting from the almost certain acquisition by India of nuclear weapon capability and in response to it by Pakistan. After the Pockharan explosion of a nuclear device by India in 1974, Pakistan has strained every nerve to develop nuclear energy but its early efforts were thwarted by the withdrawal of offers of supplies made to it by France and Canada, which obliged Pakistan to abandon a giant nuclear power plant which it had planned in Chasma on the river Indus.²⁷

Despite these setbacks Pakistan was able to achieve a remarkable break through in 1979 when its plant at Kahuta succeeded in producing 90% enriched uranium which is weapons grade. It freed Pakistan of dependence for its fuel supply on foreign sources and enabled it to launch out on its own nuclear programme. This has raised the suspicion of Pakistan possessing nuclear weapon capability which has triggered off the inevitable nuclear competition between India and Pakistan the consequences of which were India's launching of its missiles and the leasing of the nuclear powered submarine. Both countries are now interlocked in a blow for blow process where one side could allege advances in the other to justify forging ahead with its own ostensibly counter measures causing consternation in the region and alarm among nuclear powers. The conduct of the latter has been ambiguous and opportunistic. The relationship with the US in this regard is a glaring illustration. Following the incursion of Soviet troops into Afghanistan in 1979, Pakistan became an indispensable conduit for the transmission of US arms to Afghanistan resistance fighters. Pakistan seized the opportunity to obtain a waiver of earlier US restrictions monitoring its nuclear programmes and received a grant of 3 billion dollars as military aid which enabled it to carry out an ambitious programme. After six years it renewed the waiver until 1991 and added a further grant of 4 billion dollars. Pakistan has made capital of the opportunity with a programme where it is reported to have obtained the design of a tested bomb from China, it is producing enriched uranium weapons grade and has built plutonium and tritium production plant, has covertly purchased weapons components from the US and is designing casings for nuclear warheads to be fitted on to US F-16s. Whatever the veracity of these details it is clear that the headway made by Pakistan is such in the field of nuclear weapon capability that the US President can no longer comply with the standard requirement up to now as a condition for granting aid of certifying that Pakistan is not acquiring or developing nuclear weapons.²⁸

This has caused a deadlock in US-Pakistan relations in that since 1 October, the subject has been investigated by the US Congress which has suspended economic and military aid to Pakistan which for 1990 totalled 352 million dollars as military aid and 230 million dollars as economic assistance. The immediate reason is the inability of the president in the light of information in circulation to certify as he had done in the past in favour of Pakistan. The information which has been highlighted in the press is of efforts by Pakistan to purchase US made high temperature furnaces which are used for the manufacture of nuclear weapons.

²⁷ Ref. article by A. I. Akram entitled "Pakistan's nuclear awakening" in Sri Lanka "Island", 1988.

²⁸ See full report of discussions in US Congress on this subject in Washington Post of 19 October 1990 and article by P. L. Leventhal entitled "Cut off aid to Pakistan" in Washington Post of 8 October 1990.

Whine infringement of US Congress requirements is the ostensible justification the political reality is that US dependence on Pakistan as a supply base has ceased and there is no further case for being indulgent towards it. At the same time there is concern that this reversal of the US attitude could have adverse reactions in jeopardizing the traditional diplomatic links between the US and Pakistan and strengthening the determination of the latter to forge ahead with its nuclear programme. Whatever the US decision at this stage it will come far too late to undo what has been done.

The US Administration has been no less critical of Indian nuclear policy and given notice of its adverse repercussions on Indo US relations. Referring to the Agni launching, Senator Jeff Bingeman has stated that it would damage India's relations with friends and neighbours and diminish its stature as a peaceful world leader. Deputy Asst-Secretary Howard Schaffer has said at a meeting of the India Council in Washington that US policy was to curm missile proliferation in developing countries and that hence India's missiles programme could affect its relations with the US. The Indian case as stated by Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, the Director of the Institute of Defence Studies is that the missile programme was necessary to enhance its defence capabilities against potential threats and will be abandoned only if there is corresponding elimination of all land based intermediate vessels throughout the world. India has repeatedly referred to the formidable nuclear capability of China and the need for India to guard against it as well as the US military package to its rival Pakistan which could be used by the latter for a nuclear programme. It does not seem as if outside concern or intervention by the US or other nuclear power will be of much help because these exhortations lack credibility as the nuclear powers themselves are in no position to preach. In fact this attitude of advising restraint from others has caused resentment as it conveys the impression that the nuclear powers wish to have a monopoly of nuclear power and calls into question their moral justification for this. While it is incumbent on India and Pakistan to wake up to the horrors of the situation and take steps to arrest the plunge, it is equally obligatory on the nuclear powers themselves to set the example by meaningful measures towards nuclear disarmament.

India and Pakistan took an important step towards restraint in their nuclear policies when the two leaders Prime Minister Bhutto and Rajiv Gandhi signed an agreement in 1988 not to attack each other's nuclear installations. However the atmosphere remains tense and flares up from time to time with actions or statements from either side. The circulation of a nuclear powered submarine in the Indian Ocean has raised fears about possible radio active contamination from an accident. Similar fears are expressed about likely hazards from the proposed installation of two 1000 MW nuclear power plants in South India in close proximity to Sri Lanka. It is up to India and Pakistan to take viable measures to allay these fears and in doing so ease their own apprehensions. Some setbacks in this regard are that neither has signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and India is not enthusiastic about the Pakistan proposal which had considerable support at the UN for a peace zone in South Asia.

Apart from the fear of a nuclear arms race in the region, the other major concern is about the implications of India's phenomenal expansion in its naval build up which has raised understandable questions of its objectives. Many think that it wants to take over the erstwhile British role and make the Indian Ocean an Indian lake. It has become a premier defence arm

of India with a sweep extending from the Cape of Good Hope to Australia.²⁹ This seems to be a realization of the calls of India's ideologues on defence like Panikkar that India should play its destined role. Historically this was through sea power which from British times was the key to India's security unlike in the past when it was the North Western land frontier. To assess the significance of Indian sea power and naval expansion in recent times it is necessary to be clear about its objectives. The leading question is whether its objective is a blue water policy aimed at gaining mastery of the Indian Ocean in the manner of the British and exercising a supervision over events within it. Such a vision would necessitate the extension of the range of its naval power from across the Andamans, the Nicobar islands and Lackshadweep to South East Asia, the Middle East, Eastern and Southern Africa. The position as stated by Admiral R.H. Tahiliani who was Chief of Naval Staff was that "We must take the responsibility that size imposes on us without any hegemonistic aspirations. Coming to the help of a small neighbour is a responsibility but we have no intention of spreading our sphere of influence".³⁰ This statement is an acknowledgement that India has obligations because of its size for the exercise of which a degree of naval mastery of the region will be required. The acquisition of the nuclear powered submarine with the prospects of more to come as it was indicated that India may make them locally, raises the possibility that with a nuclear powered submarine force at its disposal India will become the dominant naval power in the South Asia region if not further and be in a position if it so desires to exercise hegemony and also deter other powers from operating in the region. It was a conscious leap forward which was tantamount to the acceptance of a blue water policy. The Indian navy has other obligations which are to defend its shipping and its sea lanes. The tremendous increase in the tonnage and value of its shipping in the context of its commercial and economic expansion certainly imposes a defensive role on the navy in this regard. protection of the sea lanes does not merely extend to its seaports and coastlines but now covers the economic zone projecting for 200 miles from the coast which stretches for 3500 miles. These responsibilities could presumably be discharged satisfactorily by a modern navy with conventional high powered technology without the need to resort to the nuclear dimension which would lit it to a different operational level altogether. Herein lies the heart of the question which is whether India's naval perspectives were confined to the safeguarding of its immediate and basic security or looked beyond to wider horizons encompassing the region.

Whatever Indian intentions hegemonistic or not, there is no doubt that its militarization and naval expansion cause ripples of alarm throughout the region and made the countries concerned undertake armaments programmes of their own. It was thus ironic that when the super powers were discussing disarmament, the regional states of South Asia were on an opposite course. There are reports of defence and armament measures by ASEAN countries including the proposed purchase of a helicopter carrier by Thailand and six by Singapore, plans to strengthen the Five Power Defence Agreement between Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Britain and New Zealand. These measures are prompted not only by fear of India but also possibly threats from other quarters in the Far East. What is significant is a spectre of creeping militarization. This is a familiar process in which one claims justification in the actions of the other until all are enveloped in a collective march to militarization the result of which will certainly not be conducive to political or economic security. It is a situation

²⁹ For implications in the region of Indian naval build up see "Modern Indian Navy and the Indian Ocean" vide 20 above, p. 147.

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 98.

where one can imagine enemies or not know the real enemies if any. It is hardly calculated to deter intervention by outsiders as militarization can only act as invitation for fear that it will cause conflict and destabilization. It is therefore up to the states concerned without showing a hard mentality to collectively review the situation and arrive at some sensible basis to live in peace with each other.

India is at the centre of the stage in this drama and is not winning any applause. Far from it, India has been the target of suspicion, criticism and accusations of imperialist behaviour. While many of its actions lend colour to such views, they are still for the greater part distorted and exaggerated versions. Firstly the notion that India is naturally hegemonic by virtue of its geopolitics is not borne out by its historical record. India has no record of imperialist expansion in the region. Its present perspectives may be a legacy of the British experience but one should not assume that it has deliberately inherited this mantle. Secondly the views expressed by so called spokesmen and writers do not necessarily reflect official thinking. On the contrary they try to goad it to a particular course. It is significant that Panikkar's utterances coincided with the Nehru regime but there is no sign that he was ever influenced by them. Unfortunately one continues to hear such expressions of Chauvinism which are good material for alarmists and extremists. It cannot be denied that India has deviated from past traditions in some of its actions like its intervention in Sri Lanka. Yet these actions are the consequences of entanglement in a web of fear caused by various circumstances like the intervention of foreign powers and their infiltration in the power politics of the region in a way which has promoted destabilization, introduced militarization and exploited divisions. The states concerned particularly the big powers are in the grip of feelings of insecurity which make them act in a defensive manner which only heightens the underlying tensions. The situation calls not only for statesmanship but acting big on the part of all concerned and courageous initiatives to break through the barriers of apprehensions and come face to face with the problems. It is a happy coincidence that at this juncture such an opportunity has become available to South Asia through SAARC.

The security of South Asia and of the States within the region in the future will be shaped by two factors, their interaction or otherwise. These are the policies towards it of outside powers and the relations of the regional states with each other. Foreign powers have a long history of involvement in the region in a capacity which was not always in the best interests of the region. Their entry into it was to checkmate one another or ostensibly to maintain stability in the region. The general effect has been to create tensions in the region which have aggravated its security problems. The outside powers concerned are mainly the USA, the Soviet Union, China and more recently Japan. The US involvement has been mainly with Pakistan while endeavouring at the same time to maintain friendly relations with India. The latter has been under a cloud in recent times because of the Indo-Soviet pact and later India's unwillingness to take a stand against Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. The upshot is that the USA has fallen back on Pakistan as a conduit for supplies to Afghanistan and Pakistan was rewarded with a military package worth 4 billion dollars and connivance in its nuclear programme. The US interest in the region was thus focused on Pakistan and India but in a way which fostered antagonism between them triggering their nuclear rivalry as a side effect and in the process poisoning the atmosphere of the region. Because of this focus on India and Pakistan other states in the region were comparatively neglected creating the impression that India was free with US blessings to do what it wanted with them. At the same time the US did not fail to express concern over the nuclear contest and increase of tension which it claimed as justification for its continued presence. As we have seen there is now a

highly organised US military presence in the region ready to use any opportunity to intervene in the region. This could be even over spin offs from other regions like Afghanistan or the Middle East. It seems as if the present US policy is to keep a tight rein over the region and be vigilant about developments inside it. How it will react if India decides to assert itself in the region is a key consideration? Will it accept India as a policeman and hence a security insurance or challenge it openly or by proxy is the big question?

The Soviet Union is a semi Asiatic power and justifiably claims vital interests in that continent. Its political activities in that region however have been more by proxy than directly like its support of North Korea and later North Vietnam against the USA. In these cases too the main object was not to allow China to go it alone in their sponsorship of these same regimes. China in fact did the actual fighting and the dying but the Soviet Union tried to extract political kudos and advantage. In recent times the Soviet Union has affirmed its clear interest in the region in the Vladivostok and Krasnoyarsk declarations where it advocated consultations between all concerned and a machinery for great power consultation with a view to ensuring peace and stability in the region. Gorbachev's objective seemed to be to deter any one power from becoming dominant in the region and to strike a balance between the rights of outsiders in respect of unrestricted navigation and of the regional powers which were proprietary in character. An actual Soviet presence in the region began only in the sixties and that was in response to US activities centering their installations in Diego Garcia which they took over from the British following their withdrawal from East of Suez. These activities were initially in the form of goodwill visits by Soviet ships to ports in the region, oceanographical and other research by teams of Soviet scientists and research vessels and they were never like the scale of comparable US activities. The reason again was the diplomacy by proxy which in this case was the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty. This was a political scoop which taking advantage of India's sense of isolation and need for diplomatic cover in the context of the Sino-Indian border conflict and later the war with Pakistan, served as an avenue for Soviet influence in the continent. India became a kind of watchdog indirectly for safeguarding Soviet interests without the need for direct intervention by the latter which would have been politically difficult because of likely US reactions. The Soviet support of the expansion of Indian naval reach and strength through the Chakra was in furtherance of this surrogate diplomacy of building up India as an ally.

There are however persistent reports of an active Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean.³¹ These are to the effect that the Soviet Union has developed bases at Socotra and Dahlak islands in the Arabian sea and in the Seychelles where it has supported the government of Albert Rene against repeated coups. There is a further report that it had offered to lease the Gan Island in the Maldives for use as a base but the offer was not accepted. As regards their actual naval presence statistics are quoted that it has three time the tonnage of the US 7th Fleet and that at any given time there are around 30 Soviet ships at large in the region. In South East Asia there is definite evidence of a Soviet naval presence and this is at the Cam Ranh Bay where according to the International Institute of Strategic Studies 20 to 25 vessels are at hand and a few submarines. If this is linked to Seychelles at the opposite end one gets the impression that there is a solid naval chain running right across the breadth of the Ocean. However this is probably a very exaggerated estimate for which the evidence is sketchy and which can hardly compare with the widely known and well entrenched US

³¹ See "Indian Ocean Navies" vide 21 above, p. 147.

presence. In fact President Gorbachev has offered to dismantle the Cam Ranh base in return for US withdrawal from the Philippine bases.

Whatever may have been Soviet intentions in the past, their current policy in the context of the US-Soviet detente is primarily to ensure that this would be a region of peace and cooperation. Their concern is that the presence of foreign powers could both aggravate and activate local problems and cause conflict and tension instead of peace. The Soviet Union has therefore supported local initiatives to a settlement of regional problems such as Cambodia. As regards great power interests its proposal is for an international conference which will consider measures to guarantee peace and security in the region. Recent developments such as the removal of Soviet medium missiles, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the Sino-Soviet accord should help in this direction. The idea that the Sino-Soviet accordant the re-establishment of friendly relations between India and China would reduce Soviet interest in the region is not tenable. It is too important strategically to the Soviet Union to be downgraded. Instead its aim is to promote overall peace so that it would be free of problems in that area and could concentrate on its own domestic and other matters.

China's future role in South Asia is a matter of speculation. One should expect it to continue its traditional policy of maintaining friendly relations with these countries and promoting economic cooperation as a means of exporting its goods as well as its knowhow. China is likely to concentrate more on South Asia than South-East Asia, as it has good friendship with Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The key question is whether it will attempt a political and militaristic role on the lines of its relationship with Pakistan. It does not seem as if the latter is a model because it arose under specific circumstances which were the strained Indo-Chinese and Indo-Pakistan relations which logically made China a sheet anchor of Pakistan. Yet China did not respond to Pakistan's expectations of help against India in 1971. This shows the pragmatic nature of its diplomacy. Besides the situation has eased greatly with its revived friendship with Indian and the concord with the Soviet Union which reduces pressure from these quarters. In the circumstances it is likely to pursue an essentially non-military role in the region and concentrate instead on resolving its own pressing internal problems and developing its relations with Japan and China which are crucial to its development programmes. China may act otherwise only if the situation in the region goes out of hand and is such as to endanger its own interests.

Japan's likely role in the region has been considered elsewhere in the light of the declarations and announcements of its leaders in recent times. This role would be to promote peace and security in South Asia and prosecute a massive programme of economic aid to the regional states bilaterally or collectively. It may in that sense replace traditional aid donors like the Western powers and the World Bank which would be preoccupied tapping the potential in East Europe. Whether in the process it will develop a political or military posture and become a regional power is a question. It may not pursue this consciously but force of circumstances in wielding so much influence could lead to its holding a commanding position in the region. This may not be welcome to other aspirants for this position in which case rivalry and competition will arise which could be benign rather than harmful. The specific role which Japan will want to play and its impact on the economic well being and evolution of these countries is a key consideration. Whether it will stifle their progress and make them satellites or will contribute positively to their growth is an issue. Besides these countries except India are relatively small and could be engulfed by a spate of Japan's ultra modern technology.

Fears have been expressed about Australia's intentions in this region in view of its participation in the US plans like Skynet and its location at one extremity of the region. Australia is aware that its security problems have an ultimate relevance to it but how Australia can respond to it is a major problem. If Australia decides to play a security role it would amount to acceptance of security responsibilities for an area which one writer has described extends through South-East Asia, the Eastern Ocean and the South Pacific to the point where Australia with a population of 16 million has declared for itself almost quarter of the surface of the globe.³² Thus Australia is in a dilemma of awareness of security implications for it in South Asia but not knowing how to cope with it because of the enormous distances involved. One step it may take is to become the dominant power in the South Pacific and Oceania and thereby control those approaches to the region. Australia tried to resolve this dilemma by the interest it took in the peace zone in the Indian Ocean the objectives of which accorded with its interests. Australia would thus be vigilant about affairs in the region and deal with problems as they arise without committing itself to set positions in advance.

From this survey of the likely impact of outside powers one must now turn to the nature of relations between the states themselves in South Asia. All these states have a history of friendly relations in post war times which have been disrupted however by three wars between India and Pakistan and more recently by strained relations between Indian and two others namely Sri Lanka and Nepal. There was also the incident of Indian intervention in the Maldives to save that government. These trends have given rise to the current theory that India has hegemonistic ambitions to become a policeman in the region. Its recent military and naval build up seem to support this view. The Indian case is that these defensive measures have been forced upon her as safeguards against security threats from within the region and outside. Specifically it has in mind the rivalry with Pakistan and the military aid which the latter has received from the US. This situation has intensified its rivalry with Pakistan which has now become a nuclear arms race with fearful consequences. Tensions between them have escalated and led to virtually an armed confrontation which was demonstrated recently when India conducted its military exercises in 1986 called "Brasstacks" to which Pakistan replied with its wargames known as Zarb E Momin. There is no doubt therefore that the major problem in the region is the fear psychosis among states of their neighbours and the overall dread of the nuclear horror overhanging them. The recent experience of Sri Lanka at the hands of India for centuries its trusted friend was not reassuring for states in the region and beyond. There are two aspects to this problem namely the nuclear rivalry and proliferation and threat perceptions by states. The first should be dealt with and resolved separately either through bilateral negotiations or under the aegis of the UN or in terms of UN resolutions on the subject of nuclear weapons.

The second should lend itself to bilateral or collective measures which would free countries of these fears and threat perceptions. For this purpose it is necessary to address one's mind to the nature of the problems and consider suitable appropriate steps. The first problem which is self evident is the rooted fear of India as a colossus.³³ This is not a static

³² See 29 above, Chapter 7 entitled "Indian naval developments and Australian strategy".

³³ See S. Paranje, *India and South Asia since 1971*, Radiant Publishers, New Delhi, 1985, p. 22, where India's mind set is described as follows "The 1971-72 model was based on the recognition of India's great power status on South Asia. Pakistan's acceptance of this status was implicit in the signing of the Simla Agreement. In the case of the small powers, India was now in a position to curb their drift away from India". Also pp. 86 for following conclusion "To say that the long term

fear meaning of its physical size alone in the midst of pygmies. The issue revolves round its mentality as demonstrated by words and actions. These fears cannot be shrugged away as baseless. They need definite counteracting confidence building measures. Mere exhortations to have faith and trust would not do in the face of actions which belie them. Hence the situation should be examined very closely in order to decide on the appropriate line of action.

The problem of inter-state relations in South Asia should be viewed in the background of certain sociological features of the region. The most striking of them is the ethnic diversity and a kind of diaspora which exists. In this respect India is unique for its overseas populations like those of China, of Indians or persons of Indian origin. They are scattered all over within the region in Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji, Mauritius, Sri Lanka. At the same time several of these countries are facing ethnic or other explosions due to efforts of groups to make demands acceding to which would be disruptive and destructive of the states concerned. Some of these groups profess pan loyalties which cut across frontiers and likewise are threats to sovereignty mounting to rebellion. In this context states are under very heavy pressure from such movements and the key to the peaceful settlement of them has to be strict adherence to non-intervention and non-interference in affairs of states. Unfortunately states bow easily to pressures and sacrifice good relations with others to please or appease such pressures.

The related problem is exploitation of such problems through armed action either in arms supplies or actual armed support. Such intervention whatever the specious pretexts or justification are frank hostile acts which negate friendly relations. Intervention can take the form of offers of good offices or arbitration but they should be free of ulterior motivations and be above board and may at times take the form of imposed settlements. The history of Sri Lanka from 1983 to 1989 was a rather painful ordeal of these disruptive forces at work. They took the form of the instigation of a Tamil independence movement by the State Government of Tamil Nadu, active military assistance to that movement by Tamil Nadu, tacit support of the Central Government for these activities, the culminating token invasion and threats against Sri Lanka by India resulting in a pact on which Sri Lanka virtually had no choice. The represent the kind of actions which it should be the object of the states concerned to outlaw and totally condemn as running counter to the principles of neighbourly relations. The government of the Maldives has proposed another approach which is the resolution which was adopted by the UN giving special protection to endangered mini states. Similar protection was also proposed by the Commonwealth to its members. This however applies only to states of a particular size.

Another approach to laying the basis for peaceful relations is that this could be accomplished through the medium of collective or bilateral treaties. These could be mutual security or the more popular form of Friendship Treaties.³⁴ Mutual security pacts are an archaic form which were readily applicable where the parties were more equitable in parity of size or populations. It may not fit in to a juxtaposition of an overwhelming big power with far smaller ones. Besides it would not make much sense if the big power was the aggressor. In that case inclusion of outside powers can be considered but that could destroy its essentially regional character. The alternative of a Friendship Treaty can be considered, a

policy would be in essence a return to 1971-72 would be simplistic and yet it is in this return within the SAARC framework that can in the present situation be a future order pattern for India to follow in South Asia".

³⁴ Regarding Friendship Treaties refer to Indo-Bangladesh Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation and Peace 1972 and also Indo-Nepal Treaty of 1950. Vide S. S. Bindra, *India and her Neighbours*, Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1985, p. 151 and p. 206.

good example of which is the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971. These are bilateral treaties and they could to that extent be asymmetrical and give rise to special relationships. Such a treaty has been proposed for India and Sri Lanka to replace the Accord. The main reservation on this form is whether in the absence of real friendship the latter could be secured through a Treaty. It would be preferable in that case for the countries concerned to solemnly adopt a Declaration or Treaty of collective friendship of which there have been several instances. In general the establishment of durable relations between states in a region would call for concentration and effort on their part and the acceptance of a code of conduct which highlights the principle of non-interference, of non-exploitation of internal problems, of taking measures to prevent such exploitation all of which would serve as visible confidence building measures to promote understanding and concord.

In the Indian Ocean region the environ is of crucial importance for the promotion of peace because of its embattled history and strategic importance. For these reasons it has a history of enticing foreign powers. At the same time the latter have invariably been attracted by the prospect of exploiting internal divisions. Thus some degree of insulation coupled with peace within seemed to be the real recipe for peace in that region. This was the underlying philosophy of the Peace Zone proposal for the Indian Ocean. It could divest the regions of past patterns of armed infiltration and enable the regional states to address themselves to living at peace with each other free of outside pressures or inducements. This proposal was welcomed initially with some enthusiasm but over the years it seems to have lost its appeal. The deterrent seems to be that in a context where a regional state was looked upon with fear, the elimination of outsiders would place these states at the mercy of a potential aggressor. It was a fear of replacing one enemy by another. The corrective for this would be regional solidarity which would automatically deter foreign threats. Such solidarity would eliminate the usual justification for intervention which is that division and conflict causes destabilization which is injurious to their interests.

The recent history of Sri Lanka has seen the worst fears being realized about its security. It has been a victim of invasion, of subversion of outside forces, of challenges to its sovereignty, of international isolation, of malicious disinformation. Its case was hardly heard in the international bodies such as the Commonwealth and the Non-Aligned movement to which it subscribed and it was a target of vilification in various quarters. The question arose among many as to whether this was the price it had to pay for its policy of peace and non-alignment and whether protection under Treaty alliances was a better course. This attitude questioned the record of Sri Lanka's foreign policy and its opting for neutralism which ostensibly left it helpless before its enemies. These experiences would therefore oblige it to take a much sharper look at her security concepts and consider the need for adjustments or other approaches.

What may appear to be a hopeful approach to resolving the problems of security in South Asia and related issues was the launching of the Organization known as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation among 7 countries of South Asia namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, by their respective Heads of States at a Summit meeting held in Dhaka in December 1985. This Summit adopted a Declaration and Charter which set out its objectives, aims and plan of action. This Summit was the culmination of meetings held since 1981 at official and Ministerial levels, acting on a suggestion made by the then President of Bangladesh to establish such an organisation. The initial plan was that it should be a coordinating bureau at official levels for technical and envelopment activity in a number of fields including Agriculture, Rural Development,

Meteorology, Telecommunications, Scientific and Technological Cooperation and a few others. However the Foreign Ministers carried it further and at their meeting in New Delhi which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, they took the step of adopting the Declaration and proposing a meeting at Summit level. The objectives which were stated in Article 1 of the Charter were broadly speaking to promote welfare and economic growth of the countries, to create mutual trust and to foster cooperation at various levels which were among themselves, with other developing countries and with international organizations.³⁵ The principles enunciated were fundamental in that they set out the parameters of the organization. These were that cooperation shall be based on respect for the principles of sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and mutual benefit, that cooperation shall not be a substitute for bilateral and multilateral cooperation and that such cooperation shall not be inconsistent with bilateral and multilateral obligations. These objectives were spelt out in detail in the Declaration. The thrust of the latter was on economic development and cooperation towards that end. This was also stressed in the Charter in 7 of the 8 objectives. This suggests that SAARC was conceived of primarily as an organization to further the economic development of the member states. The only references to non-economic objectives were in paras 4 and 7 of the Declaration to the effect that Heads of States were determined to pursue the objectives of seeking peace among themselves and the world at large and that they expressed their common resolve to promote a climate of trust, goodwill and friendship. It would seem therefore that political objectives aimed at settlement of disputes or problems between them was underplayed. Such initiatives were actually prohibited under the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

At first sight SAARC seemed to be yet another addition to the various bodies such as the Colombo Plan or UN agencies which have been set up to implement programmes of economic development among Third World countries. If this was its exclusive purpose it seemed rather ill equipped for the purpose because the bulk of the members were very small states and one failed to see how they could cooperate on equitable terms with their giant partners. The results could have been one sided with smaller states being swamped by the others. It was a closed circle where the larger states could conceivably dictate terms to the diminutive colleagues. The plan for coordination in technical fields gave scope for countries to benefit from each others technology and experience but this did not call for the formation of a regional organisation meeting at Summit level. All these plans seem to divert attention from the principle need for the region which was a durable basis for peaceful and harmonious relations between them and freedom from fears of each other. It seemed that the political aspects were being deliberately avoided. This created a paradoxical situation where the States were expected to blissfully cooperate with each other while the ground was being eroded underneath them by inter state disputes and hostilities. The ironical situation occasioned reservations by Sri Lanka which was then in the heroes of a civil war fomented by neighbouring states about being oblivious to such internal issues. It seemed at this early stage as if its days were numbered because of these contradictions. It seemed self evident that if so exalted a body meeting at the highest level was to serve any purpose it had to be frank about its problems and approach them honestly without inhibitions or reservations. Otherwise

³⁵ Refer Charter of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, 8.12.1985, Dhaka. See also article by Thomas Perry Thornton on "The Security of South Asia", pp. 226-227 in "The Security of South Asia", University of Illinois Press, Chicago 1987.

it would have become a classic case of Nero fiddling while Rome burnt where countries were exchanging pleasantries over development and cooperation while in fact some were victims of intimidation and pressures.

Fortunately in practice SAARC has evolved in a way which has enabled it to circumvent some of these inhibitions and provided opportunities for very frank and realistic bilateral initiatives. Two of its achievements in this regard were the Agreement signed between India and Pakistan, although outside SAARC, to refrain from attacking each others nuclear sites. The other was the SAARC Convention against terrorism which attempted to protect countries from attempts to undermine them through subversive activities which were incited and supported by neighbouring states. These were signal achievements which augured well for the future of SAARC in that they brought it into grips with the real problems at hand. They opened a new dimension in SAARC and that was its potential to serve as a venue for informal talks and understanding if necessary using the good offices of other member states. Thus almost unwittingly SAARC has opened avenues through which its disabilities could be overcome and the desired objectives achieved. It has been noted that the conduct of several countries has been very mature and restrained despite severe strain in an effort to save and preserve the Organization. This certainly is statesmanship of a high order which will augur well for SAARC. Such mature statesmanship should be matched all round by a sense of commitment and firm political will on the part of all countries particularly the big ones who enjoy the advantage of comparative size and abundance of resources. Perhaps the best recipe for success would be a spirit of magnanimity on their part as this will serve as a confidence building measure which will dispel fears and apprehension and guarantee peace much more effectively than deterrent militaristic policies.

The need to strengthen its political thrust does not mean that its avowed economic objectives should be downgraded in importance. They are as vital but less easy to solve because mere political will is not enough. They have not marshalled the tremendous resources needed for the purpose considering the scope and magnitude of the problem of dealing with the most populated and perhaps relatively least developed part of the world. This cannot be done by a closed policy of treating it as an independent and separate economic zone. That would be an ideal scenario for the exercise of an economic hegemony by the bigger members. It must therefore open its doors to investment from outside and cooperation with the rest of the world. Japan has already proposed it as a suitable framework for its economic aid package for South Asia. An organization called Asia-Pacific Economic Forum proposed by Japan and Australia is in the offing to protect this region from the inroads of the single Europe and trade drives by the USA. This does not mean that it should become an economic super star itself but that it could collaborate meaningfully with South Asia for the promotion of programmes for its economic development as envisaged in the SAARC Declaration and Charter. In a context where aid flows from Northern sources are diminishing or being diverted elsewhere it is timely for these Southern countries to join hands to organize their own resource bases. Without such outside help SAARC cannot on its own resources expect go too far in the realization of its very ambitious targets.

We may conclude this survey of the current world situation in relation to South Asia with a few concluding observations on their impact on Sri Lanka, in respect of its security and security concepts. During the last few years Sri Lanka has undergone one of its worst ordeals in a combination of insurrection, civil war, armed intervention from outside and invasion and a foreign occupation army on its soil. Slowly but surely the government has emerged out of this order. The insurrection was quelled, at the time of writing the civil war

in the North is being brought under control, the IPKF occupation force has left and the Government of India made a recent declaration of non-interference in the internal affairs of the island. This could mark a new era in the history of the country. However the future of Sri Lanka will be shaped by the interaction of international and regional events. Internationally the keynote is the polarization of the world into regional groups each concerned with its own affairs. These are the European Community which will concentrate on economic expansion either to East Europe or to the Third World, the USA now engaged in detente and dialogue with the Soviet Union which will absorb its energies, Japan looking towards economic expansion in Asia in concert with Australia and India viewing South Asia as a region where it can play a major role. The competition in South Asia between Japan, India and up to a point China and the US can give these countries the benefit of a range of economic and political options. The danger is that they may wish to carve out zones for themselves in a kind of protectionist spirit to keep others out resulting in acrimonious competition. One should also consider the political fall out of this economic competition and whether it will aggravate or reduce political tensions. An ideal setting would be one where within a framework of peace and understanding countries could pursue their own interests in a manner which would not erode or sacrifice their wider collective interests. The framework of understanding should dispel fears and threat perceptions which are at the root of tensions and the fuel of conflict. Internally Sri Lanka should be watchful of domestic unrest in the future after its taste and experience of disintegration and centrifugal forces. These could easily recur as the fabric of society which has stood for so many centuries and sustained the country has been severely damaged and its institutions and values eroded in the process. It is for the governments after order has been restored to bring to bear healing forces which will undo the damage and lay the foundation for the future. This will call for appreciation of the emergent forces and the establishment of a new order which will make due allowance for them, further the democratisation of society and incorporate these forces in the mainstream of development in a way which will strengthen the political and social structure and give it solidarity. Such a state of national solidarity will more than ever be needed in the future to ensure that the tides of foreign pressures and influences which are likely to be beating on her shores will not engulf her. The basis of its security should therefore be national solidarity and an united front which can stand four square to inroads and attempts at penetration, supported as its striking arm by a network of diplomacy in accordance with its traditions where it could work with like minded states through the international community for means of safe guarding its security.

Chapter 7

Internal Bases of Security

Throughout the 2500 years of its history prior to its conquest by Britain in 1815, Sri Lanka has been the target of successive invasions by outside forces and the scene of insurrections and civil wars. Details of these events have been given elsewhere in this study. Suffice it to say that before the 15th century these invaders were mainly from South India but after that they were a succession of Western powers one of whom finally subjugated the island in 1815. Internally there were palace coups and sudden changes of power which did not necessarily disrupt the country but from the 6th century a pattern of challenges to the central government developed in the form of contests over succession which led to civil wars, like that between the Southern kingdom of Ruhuna and Rajarata the seat of power in the 7th century and sporadic uprisings like those which faced King Mahinda 11 in the 8th century. In general it can be said that the central government was able to cope with these intermittent external invasions and insurrections successfully until the 10th century when there occurred the Cholian invasion and occupation for half century of the island. This was a turning point in the history of the island because apart from causing the transfer of its capital from the historic seat of Anuradhapura to Polonnaruwa it disoriented the political process in the country and the psychology of the state. The Polonnaruwa period is notable for the defiant aggressive mentality of its rulers where Parakramabahu 1 launched invasions against South India and Burma with disastrous results which weakened the resources of the country. Internally the death of Vijayabahu 1 in 1111 was followed by the division of the country by his family members into 3 kingdoms but later they were welded into a single kingdom once more by Parakramabahu 1 through a combination of diplomacy and force. He also fought a protracted civil war for over 8 years against Ruhuna which offered formidable resistance under skilful leadership but was devastated by Parakramabahu in his determination to make an example of it depriving the nation thereby of what had been a great source of national fervour and strength. However this political division of the country, the devastating civil war were fatal precedents which would plague the country in the future. They initiated a pattern of polarization of the country into rival kingdoms which became a continual source of unrest and conflict and made it a prey to invaders. In fact the Polonnaruwa kingdom ended with such an event when a foreign adventurer usurped the throne in 1220, forcing the legitimate rulers to establish their seat of power in the South West. From then except for brief periods this state of polarization prevailed and was even aggravated until 1815.

During the so called European period when for 3 centuries from the 16th century, Sri Lanka was under invasion by a succession of Western powers, the internal situation of division and rivalry remained except that the local kingdoms had to contend with the foreign invaders who found in their divisions a passport to success. After a triangular contest for a century the situation boiled down to a confrontation and conflict between the successive invaders and the kingdom of Kandy which held out like Constantinople of old. Understandably these 3 centuries were a period of great turmoil and violence in the country when there was conflict on two fronts. These were of the local kingdoms fighting each other and the foreign power backing one of the combatants. This situation resulted not only in conflicts between the main combatants at any given time but also patterns of insurrection and

civil wars where pretenders and adventurers took advantage of the situation or the kings incited the people to rise in rebellion against their foreign rulers. After the crystallization of the conflict into one between the Kandyan king and the foreign power, the monarch used the inhabitants in the occupied territories as a fifth column to engage in subversive activities against the occupying regime. These essentially guerilla activities became on occasions full scale civil wars like the Southern uprising of 1762 which brought the Dutch administration to its knees and the 1818 rebellion which gave anxious moments to the British. In the major wars which ensued, the Portuguese who were the first of the Western powers, overran the maritime provinces but failed to capture Kandy against which they sent five expeditionary forces. The Dutch dislodged them from the maritime provinces which they occupied but they also failed against Kandy. The British captured the maritime provinces from the Dutch and after one unsuccessful attempt against the Kandyan kingdom, acquired it through subversive diplomacy. Thus the security picture of this period consisted of protracted operations by the foreign powers against the local kingdoms and guerilla attacks at first in the low country later in the mountains against Kandy. The operations alternated between sieges like those of Colombo in 1579, 1587 and 1656, pitched battles and guerilla attacks in which the Kandyan excelled.

It is pertinent therefore for purposes of this study to enquire into the security means at the disposal of the king and the measures which he took to contend with these intermittent tides of foreign onslaughts and domestic insurrection. Compared to other island states in the world like Britain, Japan and New Zealand, the record of Sri Lanka appears to have been the most conflict ridden and embattled. Britain, after the storms of the Anglo-Saxon invasions which culminated in the Danish occupation and the Norman conquest, was free of invasion and successfully averted threats from Spain, France and Germany. Internally except for the feudal wars of the 15th century and the civil war there was domestic peace. Japan's only threat of invasion was from the Mongols which did not materialise and internally after a few centuries of clan warfare there was the peace conferred on it by the Shogun. Sri Lanka in contrast appears to have been whacked by conflict both ways and its survival as a sovereign state notwithstanding seems a miracle. The answer for this may lie in elements of durability in the society and state and perhaps in the effectiveness of its security measures. One would expect it to have been a militaristic society on a war footing like Assyria or Sparta but this was far from being the case. What surprises one is the relative unpreparedness of the nation to meet these threats and the reckless, short sighted conduct of its leaders in becoming militarily dependent on outside sources. One should therefore examine these threats and see how they were met. Up to the 6th century the external threats originated in South India in the form of military adventurers who expelled the reigning monarch and established their kingdoms. These incursions followed a set pattern where the ousted monarchs took refuge elsewhere in the country where they collected armies and returning, overthrew the usurpers. These were sagas of liberation on the lines of the Alfred the Great model, the classic case of which was the liberation of Anuradhapura from the Tamil ruler Elara by the Sinhalese Prince Duthagamini which has become an epic of Sinhala nationalism. The invasions however were relatively infrequent there being six in a period of six centuries but the duration of some were long and had an impact on those times. It does not seem from the pattern of these events that there were permanent arrangements such as a standing army or defense system to cope with this threat from which one may conclude that it was not perceived as permanent security

threat by the rulers.¹ Each invasion was dealt with as and when it arose through a liberation struggle involving recruitment and training of an army, upsurge of patriotic feeling, and well planned out campaigns where the traditional strategy was to advance from the south to the north on the eastern side and then cross the Mahaveli Ganga into enemy held territory. The campaigns of Dutthagamini and of Vijayabahu 1 are classic examples of this warfare.

From the 9th century onwards these foreign invasions assumed a very serious form where instead of being sporadic onslaughts they were a sequel to the power struggle between South Indian kingdoms and Sri Lanka's involvement in it as an ally first of the Pallavas and later of Pandya. This new order was marked by the invasion and sacking of Anuradhapura by the Pandyan ruler Sirimara Vallabai as a punishment for Sri Lanka's friendship with the Pallavas. However Sri Lanka avenged this humiliation with the expeditionary force which was sent by King Sena 11 under General Kuthaka which stormed Maduara, and Sirimara rushing to its defense was killed. This impressive success was a clear demonstration of the military prowess of the Sri Lanka armies and their ability to conduct overseas operations. This event opened the way to a cycle of invasions of the island by the Rashtrakuta, the Cholians and counter invasions by Sri Lanka where a Sri Lankan expeditionary force was sent to help its Pandyan ally but both were defeated by Chola at Vellur in 915, all of which led inexorably to the Cholian conquest of the island. This period of conflict indicates that Sri Lanka had considerable military capacity and also leadership an instance being General Kuthaka and also an infrastructure which enabled it to send overseas expeditionary forces. Another feature was the appearance of the Senapati as a key factor in both political and military affairs. Thus the failure to prevent the invasion of Sirimara was due to a dispute between the Commanders which demoralized the army but the situation was redeemed by General Kuthaka. In 972 there was the lurid incident of the Senapati's brother having an amorous intrigue with the wife of the King Sena V and when the latter had the brother assassinated, the Senapati and the Queen took up arms against him forcing him to flee. He was later reinstated on acceptance of the Senapati's daughter in marriage. The machinations of the Senapati caused factionalism in the court which the kings were too weak to control. This was the setting of the final act when the army mutinied during the reign of Mahinda V who fled from Anuradhapura abandoning it to the Cholian invaders. Thus the final collapse of the Anuradhapura kingdom was due in large measure to political ambitions and intrigue of the Army Commander which undermined the court.²

The Polonnaruwa period which followed from 1111 to 1220 was the zenith of Sri Lankan militarism when the kingdom not only assumed an aggressive outward posture to deter invasion but also launched invasions overseas. There were two such expeditions both grandiose undertakings of Sri Lanka's paladin king Parakramabahu 1. One was against Chola in South India which fought a campaign for two years, acquitting itself with great distinction at first winning several victories, occupying large areas of the country and even installing a puppet ruler, but ended ignominiously. The other was sea borne expedition against Burma but only a fraction arrived due to bad weather which yet achieved some success and withdrew after coming to terms. These military operations were significant not as vain glorious actions but that they revealed the innate military prowess of the Sri Lankan forces and the high calibre of their leadership. The Generals concerned namely Jagadvijaya and Lankapura in

¹ See Muttukumar, *Military History of Ceylon*, p. 20.

² See Chapter on Decline of early kingdoms in Mendis, *Currents of Asian History*, Lake House Investments Colombo, 1981.

Indian and Kit Nuvaragal in Burma excelled in their roles. They also demonstrated the latent organizational and logistical capacity of the country to undertake such operations which included maintenance of supply lines to South India and even building of irrigation works and the fitting out and construction of a fleet for the sea borne invasion of Burma. It showed that the country possessed skills of the high order and variety required and also the talent thus believing the popular notion that the early societies lacked nautical ability. Up to the end of the Polonnaruwa period and throughout the period of the struggle against South Indian kingdoms the performance of the Sri Lanka troops was exceptional in the conduct of the men, the strategic sense and outstanding calibre of their Commanders who can compare with the best of their time. After the reign of Parakramabahu 1 who by his dynamic leadership invigorated the nation there was a deterioration of the kingdom which was due to the recurrence of the phenomenon of the political Generals who attempted to become rulers themselves or manipulate the successions.³ During the last few decades of this period this big for military dictatorship reduced the kingdom to shambles and opened the way for its occupation by a foreign adventurer and the expulsion of the legitimate Sri Lankan ruler from his historic domains.

From the 13th century the political scene in the island shifted to the South-West where the ruler sought to install himself in a permanent seat of power, a key consideration being its defensibility and hence his choice of natural fortifications and mountain terrain. Security wise the pattern of external invasions from South India continued but it was complicated by a new factor of a second front within the island against hostile regimes which installed themselves inside it, in the north as the aftermath of the expulsion of the Sri Lanka ruler from that quarter. During the 13th century, the Sri Lanka kingdom in the South West was at the nadir of its fortunes being beset from all sides.⁴ While it was concentrating its plans to overthrow the hostile kingdom in the north it had suddenly to face two invasions by land and by sea by Candrabanu both of which were very successfully repulsed by the Sri Lankan armies. At this juncture the kingdom of Pandya allied itself with the Sri Lankan ruler in a joint attack against the northern kingdom but the Pandyan ruler insidiously seized the opportunity to install the latter within the island as his puppet. This action was followed by a devastating attack by a Pandyan General against the Sri Lankan kingdom which virtually placed the country at the mercy of the Pandyans. It was able to recover from this debacle because of the conquest of South Indian by the Turks but its troubles were not over. In the 14th century another challenge arose from the Northern kingdom of Jaffna which was a very formidable foe and a naval power. However the Sri Lankan kingdom of Kotte rose to the occasion and decisively defeated the invaders in two major encounters. During the 15th century the Kotte kingdom under another of Sri Lanka's greatest rulers Parakramabahu VI was able to unify the country and restore some of the glories of the past.

The critical situation in Sri Lanka from the 13th to the 15th centuries was caused primarily by the succession of security threats and it is necessary to consider how the nation measured up to them. It was unlike during the early kingdoms when such threats were intermittent and did not disrupt the country as a whole. During these critical centuries however the kingdoms had to struggle for survival against security threats which encompassed the whole nation. It was a combination of threats from within and without which interacted

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1 above pp. 52.

in a background of near political breakdown of the Sri Lankan kingdom. It should be remembered that at least in the first half of the 13th century the Sri Lankan kingdom was struggling to find its feet and establish itself in its new surroundings in the South West while at the same time endeavouring to expel the invader in the North. One of its first tasks would have been to organise a fighting force and there are signs of this because it was slowly and steadily extending its frontiers to the North in an effort to contain the northern kingdom. The proof of the success of its military prowess was undoubtedly its decisive defeat of the two Candrabanu invasions which according to the description in the chronicles had a vicious character such as the use by them of poisoned darts. Undaunted the Sri Lanka forces under the intrepid Virabahu, the brother of the king, put them to flight. Further this same army along with its Pandyan ally launched a concerted attack on Polonnaruwa each army taking one flank and reduced it thereby destroying the hostile kingdom of Magha of Kalinga, its usurper. A similar joint operation was launched later against Candrabanu where the latter was reportedly killed but the outcome seems to have been his replacement by a nominee of the Pandyan king in some political manoeuvre in which the latter probably gained some political hold over the island. At this point it would appear as if the Sri Lanka forces were either exhausted or overwhelmed by pressures because it was not long after that it was crushed by the invasion of the Pandyan General Arya Cakravarti. The end of the 13th century found the nation brought to its knees but it recovered in the next century but not before experiencing some anxious moments. This anxiety was over the threat from the Jaffna kingdom and the reason for apprehension was the political division of the country between two separate kingdoms. This was aggravated by a personal feud between the two powerful families of the time who apparently were kingmakers. However when the challenge materialised the Sri Lankan kingdom was equal to the occasion and responded magnificently. The circumstances of the conflict makes one wonder about the military resources at the disposal of the Kotte kingdom. Anticipating land attack through sea borne troops Kotte had strengthened its natural defence by building a fort which was protected by surrounding marshes. As it happened however the attacks when delivered were destroyed almost at the waters edge, applying the favourite theory of Rommel about defeating sea borne invasions, when their fleet was burnt at a coastal point in the South. Whether this was effected by naval means is an interesting consideration. If that was so it would mean that the Sri Lankan kingdom had developed some naval capacity to meet the challenge knowing the naval resources of the Jaffna kingdom. Whether the Kotte kingdom received any naval help from the muslim traders who were active on the Western seaboard is an aspect to be considered. It is strange however that being aware of the naval capacity of the Jaffna kingdom which was well known for its trading activities as Ibn Battuta has testified, the Sri Lanka kingdom failed to respond with appropriate naval measures.

It is timely at this stage to raise the oft repeated question of whether Sri Lanka had a naval side to its history.⁵ One assumes as Sri Lanka is an island that its early inhabitants were sea faring people. To the extent that the island was dependent for its existence and livelihood on sea borne communications, its government and people were naturally appreciative of the importance of the surrounding seas. This is not to say that they were sea farers in the sense of living off the sea or large scale voyaging in it. The evidence is that

⁵ See article by B. J. Perera on Foreign Trade of Sri Lanka in *Ceylon Historical Journal* and also Sirisena, *Sri Lanka and South East Asia*.

while Sri Lanka had trade relations with states in the region and specially with Indian which was its chief trading partner, it had no merchant marine or navy or a sea going community. Instead it was essentially a commercial staging post in the great oceanic routes linking Africa to South East Asia and the Far East, a meeting point for traders and the exchange of goods and an emporium for international merchandise from where diverse items could be obtained. Persian, Indian, Chinese and Sri Vjayan ships called at its ports for procurement or exchange of wares or in the course of oceanic voyages. Sri Lanka itself exported a range of commodities and sent trade delegations notably to China. This atmosphere of the island as an international port of call trading freely with all countries on a kind of most favoured nation basis and specializing in certain commodities such as religious objects for offerings, seems to have precluded initiatives on its part to be a naval power or develop naval capacity. Besides there were no naval powers in the region to justify resort to becoming one and as trading was peaceful, free of aggressive rivalry the question of protecting commerce did not arise nor one of policing the shores against invasions as the latter were far between. There was thus a disincentive to develop naval capacity and this situation prevailed till the Cholian conquest. The Cholians introduced a naval dimension into the region as it was a naval power which sent an expeditionary force against Malaya causing much damage and generally shaking the Sri Vijaya empire and overran Sri Lanka. In the post Cholian period there was a trend towards emulating this example which probably inspired the naval expeditions of Parakramabahu 1 but this was apparently abandoned after the shift of the Sri Lanka kingdoms to the South West. This move also amounted to a change in the economic base of the kingdom from an agricultural to a commercial export economy for which purpose it established close relations with the Muslim trading communities on the seaboard as the spice trade of the island was in their hands. This was a further instance where the ruler refrained from taking his own initiatives and instead preferred to act through his Muslim allies. These Muslim traders were a part of the wider network of Muslim trading communities throughout Asia which controlled the spice trade of the region. These resident communities were steadfast allies of their patron and not only handled external and internal trade but also undertook trade promotion on his behalf because in 1284 a delegation of Muslim merchants were sent by the King Buvanekabahu 1 as a trade mission to the Mameluke court of Cairo with a view to conclude a commercial agreement. To recapitulate the position regarding the naval aspect of early history, one may conclude that while the kingdoms concerned did not lack the technical skills and knowledge needed to develop naval capacity as demonstrated by the expeditionary force which was fitted out to invade Buma, they preferred to be middlemen and an intrepid for which they were uniquely suited by their geographical location in almost the dead centre of the continent. This was in contrast to Sri Vijaya which likewise had a favourable location which it utilized to organise a sea borne maritime empire whereas Sri Lanka chose to be passive. It does not seem as if in this case religion promoted the rise of capitalism and the external thrust of Sri Lanka if at all was in the sphere of overseas missionary activity. This is not to deny or downgrade the existence and importance of overseas trade in the early kingdoms which was a lucrative source of revenue to them. The ports of Jambukola and Mannar which were the main outlets in the North would have been centres of the flourishing trade and traffic which existed between Sri Lanka and Indian and other states in the region. There are also the references to Sri Lanka in the famous commercial guide the Periplus which testify to its trade links with West Asia and its commercial products which were listed as pearls, transparent stones, muslin and tortoise shell. However despite the importance to it of

foreign trade there is no evidence of active participation by Sri Lanka or that it had a merchant navy and personnel for the purpose.

As against the external threats to Sri Lanka another source of insecurity were threats and challenges of internal origin. The early kingdoms had a long history of intermittent succession disputes, palace revolutions, assassinations, factional conflicts, religious schisms extending into civil wars and insurrections which disrupted the country from time to time. Initially these were mainly usurpations and political assassinations with an impact limited to the palace but later they developed into a pattern of civil strife as a result of disputes over succession and challenges to the centre from the provinces like Ruhuna Rata. One such civil war devastated the country during the 6th/7th centuries but its most alarming feature was that the rival leaders employed Tamil mercenaries from South India who in the course of time accumulated into a lawless mob of soldiery ready to follow any leader, who became a grave threat to law and order and also national security.⁶ This gave rise to a form of military dictatorship where the soldiery nominated rulers. The nation was rescued from this predicament at the end of the 7th century by a strong ruler who restored stability but the legacy of lawlessness remained to plague the future. In fact insurrections and uprisings became a regular occurrence in the country after that, undermining the state and society. In fact the weakening of the monarchy and the condition of political instability at the centre during the 10th century on the eve of the Cholian invasion which probably prompted it, can to a large extent be attributed to the cumulative effect of this trend of lawlessness and disregard for authority in the country. The situation was if at all aggravated during the struggle against the Cholian occupation when as often happens guerilla activities were encouraged in the name of freedom which invariably came home to roost. In fact Vijayabahu was constantly hampered in his campaign against the Cholians by his rivals and almost came to grief when he was treacherously attacked by one of them at a crucial point obliging him to abandon the campaign. His own people was probably a greater menace to him than his Cholian enemies. On his death in 1111 there was a violent dispute over the succession which led to civil war and fragmentation into rival kingdoms and it was left to Parakramabahu 1 to assert himself through force and restore unity and usher in one of the greatest periods in the history of Sri Lanka. His reign was a watershed in Sri Lanka history because he was the last ruler of a unified Sri Lanka and the situation which prevailed after him can appropriately be described as *apres moi le deluge*. The expulsion of the Sri Lanka ruler from the Polonnaruwa kingdom and its usurpation by a foreigner marked the division of the island which till then had been a unitary state, into separate kingdoms and this political pattern would remain except for a brief period till the British conquest. Although the political order in the country changed from time to time from purely local conflicts to those against invading Western powers the underlying political pattern remained unaltered and the changes fitted into the latter. The presence of separate kingdoms in a state of rivalry created a tense situation which triggered off spells of violence and conflict. During the period from the 13th to the 18th centuries the country was therefore engulfed in waves of violence and conflict as a result of a collision of these rival forces. This belligerent atmosphere gave rise to some noteworthy developments in national security in the country. Firstly, a pattern of insurrection came into being which arose wither of their own accord or at the instigation of the king against the occupation regimes. They usually served as diversionary operations for the king either when he was

⁶ See Muttukumaru ref. 1 above p. 55.

himself engaged in combat or the enemy was advancing against him. They were usually organised on the rear or the flank of an expeditionary force and invariably frustrated its plans. The cinnamon peelers who were an essential service to the Dutch for their cinnamon trade were incited by the king to rebel as a form of blackmail against the Dutch. Thus insurrections were part of the Cold War strategy of the king where he utilised the patriotic fervour and loyalty of the inhabitants of occupied lands to harass and thwart Dutch purposes. During the Kandyan wars the guerilla system of warfare against invading armies was perfected by the Kandyans. This was a means of utilising the natural fortifications of the hill capital such as its inaccessibility, lack of roads, the hazardous mountain passes and thick jungle to intercept communications, cut off supplies, ambush and waylay advancing armies until they were forced to retreat or perished of hunger, disease and exposure. This was the fate and pattern of several expeditions some of which captured their objective of Kandy but were beleaguered thereafter without supplies and beat a hasty retreat during which they faced the fury of counter attacks and were often decimated. These wars produced patriots and paladins like Vidiya Bandara and King Rajasinghe 1 and capable rebel leaders who excelled in the military art. Rajasinghe was outstanding for his courage and organizational ability as demonstrated in his two massive sieges of Colombo which were a tour de force of siegecraft. Where they failed was in their lack of naval support and cover because despite the fury of their onslaughts from land, the Portuguese were able to withstand them because of uninterrupted supplies from the sea. This was appreciated by Mayadunne of Sitawake who enlisted the help of the Zamorin of Calicut who had a naval force but the alliance was short lived and not very successful. The continuous exposure to warfare stirred the fighting spirit of the inhabitants who showed an indomitable spirit and daring in standing up to their oppressors. A clear manifestation of this was the Southern uprising of 1762 which shook the Dutch administration when the inhabitants revolted against the iniquitous land policy of the Dutch Governor. At the same time it should be said that this climate of conflict eroded law and order and encouraged lawlessness as it was patriotic to rebel against the foreign regime. The British cleverly exploited these divided loyalties to install themselves in power but they too had to face a backlash in the 1818 rebellion which almost succeeded. However the new administration took no chances and by its policy of road building and opening up of the country for plantations eradicated any opportunities for challenges to its authority. That was the foundation of the Pax Britannica in the island which at least restored peace and stability after centuries of disruption. This pattern of disruption originated in the 13th century with the expulsion of the Sri Lankan ruler from his historic seat of power in the North Central province to the South West where he was obliged to find a new capital. This shift however was more than a geographical change and was dimensional in character as it was a transition from sovereign unity to division. Furthermore it shattered the fabric of the ancient society as it was rooted in those territories in its inter related complex of temples, tanks and halls of worship. The shift was thus an abandonment of a rooted way of life and a philosophy of existence which had stood the test of almost two millennia.

There was no question of recreating or restoring it in another part of the country as it was not an object which could be transplanted. The history of the country thereafter was an aimless futile quest to regain a heritage which was lost forever. The disruption which was to characterise it was really the reflection of this dilemma of a kind of loss of identity which

has been described by Toynbee as the schism of the soul.⁷ When a society breaks apart as it happened in Sri Lanka after the watershed of the 13th century it was not due to any security failure but the repercussions of the breakdown of the moral, spiritual and economic foundations of the ancient societies following the transfer of the seat of power. The question which has perplexed historians is why this division was perpetuated and the inability of the expelled monarch in due course to regain his domain. A short answer is not malaria or the jungle tide but irreparable breakdown during the period of abandonment of the elaborate agricultural and irrigational infrastructure and administration which was the mainstay of the life of the early kingdoms. It was an interlocking mechanism of tank, temple and court and a cleavage of this was certainly a mortal blow to the culture. While therefore one can attribute the instability which characterized the country after the 13th century to a breakdown in security where the country was unable to cope with multiple security threats, the deeper reason as we have seen was a moral and spiritual vacuum reflecting the loss of its historic heritage.⁸

The British conquest of 1815 ended the political division and conflict patterns which had ravaged the country for 6 centuries and restored the basic unity which had characterised it under the early kingdoms. It also brought peace after almost a millennium of turmoil. This enabled the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the society and ushered in a period of progressive development of the country. British rule had the limitations of a colonial system which gave priority to the interests of the imperial masters but unlike its counterparts elsewhere it attempted as far as it was practicable to rule in cooperation and harmony with the wishes of the community and promote their interests. This was effected through a system of benevolent despotism which provided opportunities for education, employment, economic advancement to Sri Lanka. Although these opportunities at first benefitted only certain sections of the community their impact spread ripples which fostered political consciousness and the growth of a modern community which progressively aspired to assume control of its own affairs. This was the setting of the movement for political freedom in Sri Lanka which bore fruit in the attainment of independence in 1948. Unlike in other colonies it was a bloodless achievement which earned for Sri Lanka the reputation of being a model. This cordial relationship was if at all strengthened after independence with Sri Lanka, an acceptance of membership in the Commonwealth and the conclusion of the Defence Agreement with the UK. This phase in the relationship between Sri Lanka and the UK ended in 1956 when Sri Lanka repudiated the Agreement and opted for a neutralist policy in its foreign relations and Defence. The administration of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike which initiated these steps was a new phase in the political and social evolution of the country and broke with the UK oriented policies of the post-Independence regime which seemed to many to be a continuation of colonial traditions. These decisions had a major impact on national security and raised the question of future policy in this regard. This is an appropriate moment therefore at which to trace the history of the security forces after independence and assess their role and career up to the present time.

Under the Defence Pact with the UK, the latter more or less accepted responsibility for the security of the island. The UK undertook to provide Sri Lanka with military assistance

⁷ See Arnold Toynbee, *Study of History*, the Toynbean theory of schism in the soul as a cause for decline of societies, Volume V, C4(d).

⁸ See Mendis, *Currents of Asian History* which suggests a parallel to 7 above in respect of the decline of the early kingdoms of Sri Lanka, Chapter 5, pp. 152-197.

in order to defend the island, protect it from aggression and safeguard vital communications. The Treaty further envisaged the formation of Sri Lanka's defence capacity as it provided for officer training. The question arose whether this would imply an involvement of Sri Lanka with the NATO oriented Cold War policies of the UK. Government position was that as far as Sri Lanka was concerned its scope was limited to ensuring its security. As to whether it covered internal security is an open question but it is conceivable that it could have been invoked in the event of a domestic insurrection which had foreign links and was aimed at destabilization.

The reasons for accepting military aid from an outside power and the choice of the UK have been considered elsewhere.⁹ The position in brief was that the Prime Minister at his disposal, which he lacked. As regards the choice of UK there was no feasible alternative. Of non-regional powers it was the one which Sri Lanka knew best and in which it had confidence. Also not being a member of the UN it could not turn to the international community for security. In the region there was only India to consider but it was hardly a credible alternative being itself in the throes of the partition agony and its conflicts with Pakistan over Kashmir. Also the political situation in the rest of the region did not admit of other candidates as Malaysia and Singapore were still colonies, Indonesia in the midst of a colonial war and Burma wracked by civil war. They were hardly eligible as defence partners. The UK was thus an automatic choice, having all the required credentials, of capability, prestige and reliability.

In accordance with the policy of developing the defence capacity of the island, steps were taken to organise a defence force. For this purpose a British army officer Brigadier Caithness was appointed as army Commander and entrusted with the task of building an army appropriate to Sri Lanka's needs as perceived at that time. He appointed Brigadier Anton Muttukumar as his Chief of Staff and the two soon proceeded with their task which began in 1949 and was accomplished in a very short time. The initial concept of the army by the government which was implemented by the Army Commander envisaged the following features.¹⁰ These were the retention of the existing volunteer units, the formation of an artillery regiment for coastal and aircraft defence, an infantry battalion for internal security, guard and ceremonial duties, logistical support, a recruit training depot and an Army Headquarters. This struck one as a very modest force which was designed primarily for internal security and seemed to imply that the government's main objective was the latter and that it was not thinking in terms of a regular army equipped with the necessary attributes of one. It fell short of the Chief of Staff's own concept of what the army should be which in his views should have included Armour, Field Artillery, Field Engineers and an infantry force of at least Brigade strength.¹¹

This narrow concept of the defence forces required on the part of the government could have been due to the low priority which it gave to defence in the belief that this was the responsibility of the UK under the Pact and its unwillingness to commit more funds for the purpose. Preparatory measures for the implementation of this plan was speedily set afoot and culminated in the drafting and passing of the Army Act by the house of Representatives in October 1949.¹² The way was now clear to proceed with the formation of an army as

⁹ For background to Defence Pact with the UK see Chapter 3.

¹⁰ See Muttukumar, *Military History of Ceylon*, p. 143.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

envisaged in the plan. This included action in several areas. Recruitment of personnel was undertaken by a special recruiting staff and those selected were sent for training to the Recruit Training Dept. A fruitful recruiting ground was the demobilized Ceylon Defence Force from which a large number was selected and even officers were obtained from this source. It was decided that the Army Cantonment would be built to accommodate all groups of the army other than those on duty in the outstations. It was conceived as a township providing all facilities including schools and religious places and was located outside Colombo. The services of the Brigadier from the Royal Engineers was recruited for the purpose who worked along with the local architects and army engineers. Under the provision for officer training in the Defence Agreement, a dozen cadets were sent to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst for training to hold responsible positions in the newly created army. Finally the old Ceylon Defence Force was disbanded following on the Act and sections of it were formed into the Ceylon Volunteer Force which was organised in many respects as the counterpart of the regular Army. The final shape of the newly created army on completion of these preparatory measures was made up of the following components namely a Coast Artillery regiment, a Ceylon Engineers service unit, one Army Signal corps, one battalion Light Infantry, one Medical Corps, a Company each of the Service Corps, and Engineering Corps, the Army Police and the Recruit Training Depot. With infantry only at battalion strength and without armour and field artillery it was less as an army than what it should have been but hopefully it was a start towards the realization of a properly equipped regular army with its due complement. This was the note of the farewell message of Brigadier Caithness the founder of the Army on leaving when he said that "I feel confident that these standards will always be of the very highest order and that you will form a splendid and secure foundation on which the army can be built".

The creation of the Army was followed shortly after by the formation of the two other services namely the Navy and the Air Force. The Navy was formed under the Navy of 1950 when it took over from the Ceylon Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, and was designated the Royal Ceylon Navy. This name was changed after 1972 when Sri Lanka became a Republic to Sri Lanka Navy which is its present designation. At first it was a Flagship type navy and consisted of two minesweepers - the Vijaya and Parakrama, and two frigates - the Mahasen and Gajabahu and some patrol. Later it became functional in character as it focused its activities on anti smuggling and anti illicit immigration. The greatest asset of the Sri Lanka Navy and its pride is undoubtedly the world famous harbour of Trincomalee which dominates the Bay of Bengal and has played a role in the naval history of the region. At this period it was being used as a British naval base and the Sri Lanka navy played an auxiliary role. Recruitment as in the case of the army was from the demobilized CRNVR from which a large number of the personnel and some officers were chosen for the newly established Royal Ceylon Navy. Officers were trained in prestigious establishments in Britain. The Ceylon Air Force was formed in 1950 under the Air Force Act of that year. Its formative history is similar to that of the other services. Its role initially was auxiliary to the Royal Air Force which had bases in the island under the Defence Act. At the outset it consisted of light aircraft such as Doves and Herons which were used mainly for transport and some degree of reconnaissance.

The Sri Lanka army had its first taste of action in 1953 during the hartal or strike which occurred when Mr. Dudley Senanayke was Prime Minister over an increase in the price of rice. It was really a policing operation but it foreshadowed the role which it would be called upon to play in the future. This was only a mild dose of civil disobedience compared to the

events of 1958 when there were violent communal disturbances where the Sinhalese attacked the Tamils in different parts of the country causing much loss of life and damage to property to them. The troops had to deal with situations of violence and rioting where the use of force was required which could not always be limited to minimal proportions in terms of the regulations governing action in situations of civil disobedience. A unique feature of this operation was that the Governor-General assumed the powers of Commander-in-Chief and issued operational orders to the Service Commanders. In 1952 the Army undertook another task which in due course became one of its major security responsibilities and this was its anti illicit immigrant operation which was later called TAFII and for which a Special Task Force was created.¹³ Its context was that after the adoption in Sri Lanka of citizenship legislation large number of South Indians unable to qualify under them attempted to enter the country illegally. This became a thriving industry for racketeers who had already experience in this type of activity through smuggling which was a fine art. The North-Western and North Eastern shores of the country forming the two sides of a triangle and lying closest to the South Indian peninsular were the favourite landing areas for the small boats used for the purpose. In the background of the controversy over Statelessness in the Indo-Ceylon problem which the two countries were at that time attempting to resolve, illicit immigration became not only a sensitive issue but a menace in view of the numbers involved which frustrated the attempts at settlement. There was however cooperation from the Tamil Nadu authorities as regards the measures to be taken and soon joint action was instituted in which the security forces of both sides cooperated. This meant policing and surveillance of the shores and waters, pursuit and interception of the illicit immigrants. Of course it also needed preventive measures at the South Indian end to check it at the source. For this operation a special army base was established in Mannar which controlled it. The operation involved close coordination with the Navy which conducted surveillance of the coastal waters in their patrol boats while the army kept a look out on the shores to apprehend those who got across. There was political feeling in the country about the danger of illicit immigrants infiltrating into the country causing unemployment problems and also disease as they were circumventing quarantine, and hence national importance was attached to the TAFII operations. This was typical of the role which the security forces in Sri Lanka were called upon to play where in lieu of armed combat, they yet protected vital national interests.

With the Bandaranaike administration of 1956 the Security Services entered a period of radical change which broke with the past. Not only did the government effect structural changes like the disbanding of the two volunteer regiments, the Ruhunu regiment and the Rajarata Rifles on the grounds that they had a regional connotation but its outlook on security and foreign policy was a repudiation of the concepts on which they had been based since independence. The most drastic change was the virtual abandonment of the concept of Defence with the termination of the Defence Pact with Britain by mutual agreement and the resultant return of the bases to Sri Lankan control. This step therefore repudiated the Defence policy which was announced by the Prime Minister D.S. Senanayake in 1947 as the justification of the Defence Pact with the UK. Prime Minister Bandaranaike's policy as announced by him was in accordance with the concept of neutralism and universality which he espoused as the guiding principles of his defence and foreign policies. This meant in practice a non-aggressive peaceful posture aimed at settlement of international disputes and

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

relaxation of tension through negotiation and collective action of the international community. The keynote was a peaceful approach of clean hands which implied a divesting of defence policies and lowered priority to it. He believed in the potential of disarmament and the leadership of the United Nations as the surest means of ensuring international peace and security and to that extent opposed military organizations and defence systems which he regarded as incitement to conflict.

The impact of this policy and concept on Sri Lanka's security was understandably drastic and placed the Security forces in a dilemma and called for a complete rethinking of policies for national security.¹⁴ The main problem was that until then the Security forces of Sri Lanka had been geared and perhaps even conceptualized as an auxiliary to the UK in terms of the Defence Pact. This applied not only to British control of the bases but also the size, character, equipment of the forces, their training arrangements and logistics. To all practical purposes it is no exaggeration to say that it was an affiliate of the British defence forces with the potential no doubt and perhaps objective as visualized by Brigadier Caithness of becoming in due course an independent Defence Force in its own right. The termination of the British connection and adoption of neutralist policies which repudiated the defense approach to national security was therefore disruptive to it and consequently placed the onus on the government to conceptualize the new role of the Security forces and define its objectives. This would have been an appropriate occasion for a White Paper on National Security and Defence policy or some major policy statement and a corresponding adjustment of the Security forces in line with the new policies. However there is no indication that such action was taken by the government and this left a kind of vacuum which may not have been in the interests of the morale of the services and to some extent left them in the lurch. This is not to say that the administration was devoid of ideas or was indifferent to security issues. Perhaps the Prime Minister's faith in the potential of the United Nations as an international peacemaker may have inclined him to give less priority to matters of National Security. It is on record that the Prime Minister had referred to the possibility of Mutual Defence Pacts or regional pacts. He further referred to the participation of units of the Sri Lanka defence forces in UN peace keeping operations. In fact much later Sri Lanka did contribute a small unit to the Congo. This was certainly a constructive worthwhile idea because Sri Lanka with its avowed neutralist policies would have been well suited and also internationally acceptable for this role. It would seem that this opportunity of spelling out a new policy was missed no doubt because of the pressures on the Prime Minister and his untimely demise. The only noteworthy action of the Defence forces during this period as stated earlier was in coping with the ethnic disturbances of 1958 when it had to contend with rampaging mobs and violence which lasted for several days and needed resort to maximum force. This was its first real baptism of fire in dealing with domestic disorders which set a pattern for the future.¹⁵ This tended to give an internal security orientation and image to the army. It is noteworthy that this experience prompted the Army Commander to propose a system of regional commands in which the country was divided into three regions namely, Northern, Central and Southern. Apparently it was not accepted at that time but adopted later. By 1959 the army had come a long way in composition and organization and consisted of the following elements namely an Armoured corps, 1 Coast Artillery Regiment, 1 Field Artillery Regiment, 1 Field

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Engineer Regiment, 1 Battalion Light Infantry, 1 Battalion Sinha Regiment, the others being a medical, ordnance, engineering, general services corps and the Army Training Centre and Police.¹⁶

The sixties were a period of relative calm and peace within the country except for the two abortive attempted coups by army officers which did not however affect the country at large. Abroad it was far from peaceful and it was a time of gathering storms and explosions. There was the Sino Indian border conflict which shattered visions of Asian unity and the Vietnam war which was another ordeal in the agony of Indo-China. The Indian Ocean was astir with reports of the impending withdrawal of the British from these parts ending the era when the region was a British lake and their replacement by the US which was pursuing plans to build a staging post in Diego Garcia. Besides the US took the opportunity of the Sino-Indian conflict to offer aid to India. In this tense situation the last straw was the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 which brought the Soviet Union into the scene. With the three superpowers drawn into the arena and the States in the region fighting each other, the continent seemed to be on the brink of a conflagration engulfing all concerned.

These developments were viewed with great concern by Sri Lanka which in 1961 had adopted the policy of Non-Alignment which like neutralism was an approach to peace through negotiation and discussion and rejection of the military option. Initially Non-Alignment was focused on the Cold War centering around the future of Berlin but now it became necessary to focus it closer home and the first step in this direction was the proposal of Sri Lanka for a nuclear zone in Africa extending to other oceans and other areas beyond. There is no indication that these events had any particular impact on the security forces or security policies of Sri Lanka at this juncture. Prime Minister Mrs. Bandaranaike did not view the Sino Indian border conflict as a security threat to Sri Lanka but she was very concerned over its political and diplomatic implications. As noted elsewhere she took the bold step of convening a meeting of Non-Aligned States to Colombo which recommended a formula to both sides to serve as a basis for a settlement through negotiations. Perhaps if Sri Lanka in keeping with the peace keeping ideas of Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike had developed this role, this would have been an opportunity to use it. Another development which caused some concern at this time was the Maritime Agreement with China of 1964 as it was viewed in some circles as a secret agreement which granted base facilities to China in Trincomalee. No basis has since been found for these allegations as the Agreement was purely commercial in character but the agitation over it showed the sensitivity of the subject of Trincomalee. This was to recur later and this case was a warning that Sri Lanka had to watch its step in its actions in such matters touching international security.

The gathering storms of the sixties burst in a muted kind of way in the early seventies with the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty and the third Indo-Pakistan War which was a kind of Ceasarean operation for the birth of Bangladesh. These events were certainly a backlash to the sixties in that the Friendship Treaty was the reply to China and Bangladesh a blow against Pakistan and its US ties. Sri Lanka viewed these events as a materialization of its fears of the advent of foreign powers into the region in a militaristic role and to counter it, the proposal for the Declaration of a Peace Zone was submitted by Sri Lanka to the United Nations which adopted it in 1971. However the follow up action was half hearted and at present it seems as if it has been abandoned. On hindsight one thinks that its timing was belated as it coincided

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

with the realization of the very fears which it wanted to avert. By that time the situation was too far gone for rectification as the super powers had now entrenched themselves in the Indian Ocean, the Soviet Union through the Friendship Treaty and the US through their installations. At that stage, states in the region were also fearful that the withdrawal of the big powers would leave them exposed to their enemies. Perhaps in the sixties when the situation was in abeyance the Peace Zone concept might have made more sense. This proposal of Sri Lanka for a Peace Zone is a checkpoint from which to see the policy making process for national security in Sri Lanka. The view of the Sri Lanka Navy and other security authorities would have been very relevant from the standpoint of whether it was in the interests of Sri Lanka. Whether there were such evaluations by the security authorities and if so their thinking is not known. If there was no consultation let alone an in depth study by them it amounted to a serious limitation in Sri Lanka's security planning and perceptions.

Meanwhile security problems in Sri Lanka entered a new dimension with the so called Che Guevara uprising of early 1971. Although ostensibly it took the government by surprise there were warning signs of its approach in the late 70s. It formally began in 1971 with attacks on 90 police stations and seemed at that point to be primarily a local security threat but soon it was clear that it was widespread and national in scope and purpose and well beyond the capacity of the local police forces as regards coping with it.¹⁷ It became therefore a responsibility of the Defence forces and engaged the resources of all three services to the utmost. The initial headway made by the rebel forces when they destroyed 52 police stations and one column was almost at the gates of Colombo showed that the Security forces were not sufficiently prepared in deployment, equipment and training to deal with such a situation. It was several months before it was brought under control and eradicated. During that period large parts of the south was in their control. Historians are unsure as to whether this was a terrorist or a political movement but actually it was as in most such cases a mixture of both where guerilla methods were adopted to fight for a political cause. The movement had two major elements in it. It was a grass roots uprising against poverty, deprivation, unemployment in the rural areas and the failure of the administration to carry through the promise of its Sinhala only policy and provide outlets and opportunities for the Sinhala educated who felt and were in fact left out by an English dominated bureaucracy. Secondly this disaffection was exploited by left wing political groups intent on promoting a Communist type revolution and also international elements wishing to destabilise the country. The latter in fact infiltrated the country through dissemination of inflammatory literature and also training programmes in ideology on the lines of Mao's education of the peasantry. These training courses were a mixture of ideological indoctrination and battle tactics. These tactics were really hit and run methods and avoidance of pitched battles and confrontations with the forces. Unlike the later JVP movement it did not extend to indiscriminate assassination, and intimidation and terrorizing of the public. Compared to the JVP of the late eighties they seemed amateurs but they gave the government anxious moments. In combatting it the government took two interesting steps.¹⁸ The first was the appeals for help to a number of Commonwealth countries in the form of troops. The request for troops was not entertained but certain Commonwealth countries obliged with weapons and ammunition. The second was the assistance obtained from friendly neighbours which were India and Pakistan. Secondly, in

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

response to requests made by the Government for assistance from friendly countries, several obliged with timely contributions of armaments, supplies, equipment and even men for logistical duties only. The countries concerned and the assistance provided were as follows:

India sent troops which were deployed for the protection of the Katunayake Air base to ensure the safety of Sri Lanka's air links as well as of Sri Lanka aircraft and helicopters engaged in operations. The Indian Navy provided a security cordon round the island to prevent outside supplies reaching the insurgents. The Indian Air Force sent 6 helicopters which were stationed at Katunayake. Pakistan sent 2 helicopters which were stationed in Colombo.

According to a statement made by Mr. Anthony Royle, Under Secretary of State of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United Kingdom had sent supplies of small arms, ammunition, communication equipment and vehicles, drawn from the UK and Singapore. The UK Government further purchased 6 Bell Jetranger helicopters on behalf of Sri Lanka from the USA which were flown from the latter to Sri Lanka. The Soviet Union provided 6 MIG 17s which were flown by Sri Lankan pilots and Soviet instructors and technicians to train Sri Lankan personnel. It should be mentioned that the helicopters obtained from Indian and Pakistan were only used for transport of supplies and never for offensive purposes as the latter role was carried out exclusively by the aircraft and helicopters of the Sri Lanka Air Force using its own men.

Militarily this was great educational experience for the services and the first of its kind involving actual combat and facing fire. The JVP were courageous fighters using relatively primitive weapons but which they put to good use. Given modern weapons like the later JVP they would have done much better. The defence forces for their part after the initial shock never lost their grip on the situation but they bided their time until they were well equipped and ready to hit back and then there was no stopping them. It did not seem as if the army had received much training in guerilla war but its Commander at that time had been trained in Yugoslavia and other officers in Malaysia.¹⁹ The other significance of the JVP uprising was that it developed a concept and practice of joint operations between the three services. This involved a coordinated plan of bombing and strafing by the Air Force, coastal protection by the navy and guarding of naval installations. Communications and detection played an important part because this was not a war of advancing in the open and artillery barrages but spotting the enemy hideous and their movements using sensitive apparatus. Above all the JVP experience was an object and timely lesson in the wider question of security concepts and planning, as well as threat perceptions. The security authorities had ample warning not only from armed robberies for money and arms, the circulation of revolutionary literature but also the increased traffic in travel grants from certain countries for youths to visit them on ostensible cultural programmes which were a cover for training in subversive activities. The partiality shown in these matters because of the avowed Socialist inclinations of the Government enabled these subversive elements to proceed with their plans. The question is whether the Security authorities had addressed their minds to these subjects, identified potential security threats and geared themselves accordingly to combat them. One such preparation would have been intensive training in guerilla warfare preparation would have been intensive training in guerilla warfare preferably in Sri Lanka itself in relation to its terrain in lieu of purely simulated operations according to text books and models. The types

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

of combat units required, weaponry, equipment, logistics in relation to the kind of warfare anticipated are subjects which should have been studied in depth. More than ever it was necessary to define security policies and objectives, subject them to full time evaluation and scrutiny and direct the security planning of the country accordingly in the light of these evaluations and perceptions. This is a matter of structure and machinery which will be examined later. Another effect of the JVP uprising was the plethora of weapons of all kinds which it brought into the country. As gestures of goodwill they were flattering and welcome but they were a planners nightmare. This experience emphasized the need for stable and far sighted procurement policies and decisions on appropriate weaponry, suited to local fighting conditions.

Just 10 years after the JVP ordeal, Sri Lanka found itself in the throes of the biggest security crisis in its post independence history. In fact one can discern an escalation and continuity in these crises which began with the communal riots of 1958 and was followed by the JVP uprising of 1971, the conflict with Tamil terrorists who were helped by India of 1980 and finally the second JVP insurrection of 1987 and the recurrence of the Tamil conflict in 1990. From a local communal clash and insurrection, the security threats escalated into international terrorism with outside intervention and the country was caught in the crossfire. The impact of these conflicts is that since 1980 the security forces have been almost continuously engaged in combatting these threats where when one ended another began. It became a prolongation of violence and conflict such as the country has not experienced after independence which has been a severe drain on the essentially modest security capacity of the country. These uninterrupted cycles of conflict had their roots and causation in complex interrelated social, economic and political factors an analysis of which is outside the scope of this study. Our immediate concern is the impact of these events on the defence forces and their implications as regards the security situation in the country and the prospects for the future.²⁰ One should further consider the role of the security forces in relation to these challenges.

Since 1980 the Security Forces of Sri Lanka have been fighting a war successively on two fronts. These were against terrorists in the North and East from 1980 to 1987 and again from June 1990, and against the JVP terrorist movement in the South from 1987 to 1989. Both are called terrorists in that they are led by militant groups and leaders and resort to guerilla and terrorist methods of widespread attacks against the government, its personnel and property accompanied by indiscriminate assassinations of persons. Both profess specific ideologies, the Northern terrorists that of the establishment of Eelam representing the Tamils and what they claim as their homeland in the North and East, and the Southern terrorists profess a leftist, Maoist type political credo of destruction of the capitalist class and replacement by a kind of egalitarian society under their domination. Both groups have the support no doubt of sections of the population but the broad mass of people certainly abhor both their philosophies and their barbaric methods and ruthlessness as regards slaughter of civilians and scorched earth policies of devastation of valuable property in an effort to destroy the administration. Both seem to follow a policy of destruction without compunction regardless of the long term consequences to the nation so that theoretically they can start anew and restructure society according to their ideas. Both group of terrorists have adopted identical strategies and tactics of sabotage of installations, terrorist attacks on innocent

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

civilians, fostering an image of ruthlessness in gaining their ends, and in combat of avoiding frontal engagements with the forces but resorting to a well organised plan of ambushes, attacks on outposts, mining of communications, operating from jungle hideouts scattered on a decentralised basis. Their basic strategy has been for a number of well trained groups to act simultaneously harassing the government, public and forces on all sides and destabilizing them apart from instilling fear and terror. Both groups have excelled in intimidation of the population at all levels, including government officials, transport services, shops, schools, services so as to paralyse them and bring life to a standstill. The JVP was particularly successful in their campaign of intimidation of the public during 1989 but they over reached themselves when they turned against families of service personnel to blackmail the latter. This had the effect of totally antagonising the services against them who thereafter put their full weight into the campaign which was launched against the JVP and brought about their destruction by the end of 1989. A key factor in the success of the government was the capture in quick succession of their hardcore leaders including the head of the movement as a result of which it fell apart without direction. It must be conceded that at its height the movement showed chilling efficiency in their success in infiltrating all walks of life and holding the community to ransom through their technique of blackmail by letter, telephone calls, posters which gained credibility because of their prompt follow up action. It is clear that both these movements had evolved and perfected infrastructures, and networks of command and control which enabled them to act with speed and simultaneously in different areas thus invariably taking the authorities by surprise. A feature of their operations was their attacks on police stations and army camps with a view primarily to seize arms and ammunition.

Despite their operational and organizational similarities there was however one major difference between the two terrorist movements. This was in respect of outside support and political motivation. From the outset the Northern militants had the signal advantage of the patronage and active support particularly in the crucial area of arms supplies and military training of the government of Tamil Nadu which espoused their cause. This support was both on ethnic grounds and to certain sections as a promotion of their own cause of an independent greater Tamil Nadu like the Cholian empire of the past for which the DMK party was agitating. The Northern terrorist movement suited them ostensibly on grounds of fraternal feeling as a means of gaining a foothold in the island which probably they had coveted and also as a challenge to the Central Government of India in the context of the Tamil Nadu secessionist movement. The local Tamil groups in Sri Lanka were thus willing tools in their hands because of their own local problems with the majority community in the island. The insurrection in the North began like all such operations as a series of sporadic attacks against government personnel specifically the security authorities and property alongside armed robberies of banks to collect funds. However it soon assumed the form of a well organized confrontation with the Government in which the latter under severe pressure was obliged to reply appropriately in the interest of law and order through the security forces. By 1985 it had escalated into almost a full scale war. By then another factor entered the situation which affected it decisively. This was the intervention of the Central Government of India which was insistent on playing a role on the grounds that as it involved the Tamil people they had a special interest in the problem. The attitude of the Indian Government while ostensibly helpful seemed ambiguous because while they called for a peaceful settlement which was also the earnest desire of the Sri Lanka Government, no steps were taken to control the support of terrorist activities by the South Indian authorities about which open allegations were made in the Indian press. These referred to the existence of military training camps in India, supply

of arms and instructors, logistical support of the insurrection by the Tamil Nadu government presumably with the tacit knowledge of the Central Government and the involvement of the Intelligence Agency known as RAW.²¹

The Sri Lanka Government was thus placed in an unenviable position where their efforts to combat the terrorists was condemned as genocide and obstructed thus allowing the militants to act with impunity and all its efforts to come to terms were unsuccessful as the militant groups precisely because of the external support made excessive demands which were unacceptable to the Sri Lanka government. In fact foreign patronage acted as a disincentive to them to come to terms. It also seemed as if the Central government was unable to exercise control over the militants. I must be said that the Central Government did not officially support the militants' demand for an independent state of Eelam but it was insistent on the acceptance of certain conditions by Sri Lanka which the latter was not in a position to concede.²² Various talks were held under India's good offices to reconcile the demands but without success.

The security forces were thus called upon to fight an almost hopeless war and foredoomed to failure because of the constraints and restrictions hedging them. These were fears of civilian casualties, adverse international propaganda about genocide which the terrorists exploited to the hilt, and the warnings from India. The terrorists has no such restraints and could get off with anything whether cold blooded massacres or bombing outrages but the government could not retaliate in equal measure. From the outset therefore it was a one sided war where the terrorists had outside support and all the logistical advantages and the security forces only abuse and condemnation. However they did what they could engaging all three services to the utmost of their limited capacity. There were really two phases in the conflict. At first the forces concentrated on holding their own and dealing firmly with sporadic attacks endeavouring where possible to destroy their hideouts and supplies. This too was futile because of the flow of supplies from across the Palk Strait and the habit of their leaders when hard pressed to fall back on Tamil Nadu territory. The terrorist operations in the North seemed to be like bridgeheads of forces assembled and deployed from South India and supplied from bases in that territory. The navy which concentrated on interception of supplies and militants moving to and fro were hampered by denial of the right of hot pursuit, constant collisions with Indian vessels alleging violation of territorial waters and other obstructive tactics. Field operations of the army were seriously hampered by the menace of mines which greatly retarded mobility and caused considerable casualties. The second stage came in early 1987 when all attempts at settlement by peaceful means through negotiations had failed while violence was escalating from one outrage to another including bombs in civilian centres, massacre of bus passengers, attacks on villages with women and children the main targets and genocide the objective. This was the context of the famous Vadamaratchchi operation which seized the vital ports of Kankasanturai and the Velviturai area and was an almost spectacular gain and morale booster for the security forces. They were at the very gates of Jaffna when stern ultimatums were issued by India about the consequences of further operations and amounted virtually to a threat by India of military intervention against the island.²³ This was followed by an attempted invasion by a flotilla of small boats on the pretext of bringing food and the still more provocative food drop in violation of Sri Lankan

²¹ See S. Ratnatunga, *Politics of Terrorism*, p. 399.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 357-362.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 365.

air space and disregard for its sovereignty. This was the threshold of an armed intervention by India which left no choice for the government except to agree to the Indo-Sri Lanka accord. Under it India undertook the responsibility of disarming the militants and restoring peace in return for acceptance by Sri Lanka of a local settlement of the ethnic problem and of some constraints in the conduct of its foreign policy which in some respects gave India a monitoring role. An Indian occupation force the IPKF, was sent for the disarming and peace keeping process which they were unable to accomplish during almost three years of occupation. Instead of being eliminated the so called Liberation Tigers who were now virtually the only militant group, having liquidated the others, fought back inflicting considerable casualties on the Indian occupation forces and boasting that they were taking on the fourth largest army in the world. The IPKF left in March 1990 thus ending one chapter of what may be called the Indian phase of the conflict but paving the way for its sequel which was the predictable armed confrontation between the Tigers and the Sri Lanka government.

IPKF Forces in Sri Lanka

The IPKF arrived in Jaffna in August 1987 with 6000 troops which rapidly increased after it undertook combat operations against the LTTE in October that year. In October in fact they launched an attack on Jaffna which was almost a disaster. The operations were soon extended to cover the entire Northern and Eastern provinces and involved pitched battles with the LTTE forces, attacks on their jungle hide outs and bases, patrolling, cordon and search, all of which required a considerable military build up. By the end of 1989, it was estimated according to available reports in the media and visiting correspondents that the total military strength of the IPKF in the North and East consisted of the following; 16,000 troops in Jaffna including parachute battalions, infantry battalions, mechanized infantry, armoured squads, field artillery regiments and companies; the 24th infantry division of 8000 men in Vavuniya; the 57th infantry division 10,000 strong in Amparai and Baticaloa; the 36th infantry division of 11,000 men in Trincomalee. This amounted to around 45,000 combat troops and if one takes into account the logistical support needed or them by way of doctors, engineers, Commissariat staff and other services, the Central reserve police, the total number of personnel would have been around 75,000. The armaments and equipment which were employed in IPKF operations consisted of Soviet made helicopter gunships, Soviet built ME 8 transport helicopters, heavy field artillery, Soviet built T 72 and T 55 tanks, BMP's which are Armoured Personnel carriers and thousands of trucks.

The official casualties which were announced at the end of the IPKF operation were 1,500 dead and 2000 injured. A notable feature of the casualties was the high ratio of officers to other ranks being 1: 7: 5 compared to 1: 9: 8 in the Pakistan wars. In retrospect the IPKF operations which lasted from October 1987 to March 1990 can hardly be regarded as a success for Indian arms and the boast of the LTTE was that they had defeated the 4th largest army in the world. The opinion of military commentators as regards the positive side of the operations is that it afforded valuable tactical experience in guerilla warfare to the IPKF and in the conduct of a combined air, naval and land operations.

Ostensibly the JVP uprising of July 1989 began as a wave of rioting and civil disobedience in the southern areas particularly, protesting against the Indo-Sri Lankan Pact. This gave the impression that it was patriotic and nationalist in motivation and anti-Indian in its objectives. However after these opening manifestations of violence the movement assumed

a different form as a vicious and insidious form of terrorism aimed at overthrow of the government by a combination of armed sporadic attacks throughout the country on the one hand and intimidation and blackmailing of the community on the other by terror tactics, assassination of targeted victims, which with time grew more and more daring. The security forces retaliated with restraint concentrating on protection of property and persons and keeping the community services going which were under threat with orders for stoppage of work in key sectors like health, closing of schools all aimed at bringing the life of the community to a grinding halt. The security forces were placed in almost the same dilemma as in the Northern campaign that they were fighting an invisible enemy who specialised in hit and run attacks and daring raids on a variety of targets. Normal combat techniques were of little use against this type of enemy and the role of the forces became essentially an extended police operation of cordon and search where they complemented and shared the burdens with the police. It was really a combing out search operation rather than any field campaign as the terrorists avoided such confrontations knowing their limited fire power and weaponry. The latter was mainly small automatic arms the most notorious being the T56 which was meant for raids, assassinations and close encounters. Their aim was not to destroy the armed forces but to undermine them and concentrate on destabilizing society in the way of obstructing day to day life and thereby attempt to overthrow the government. Their ambitions were far ahead of their resources as the defence capacity of the government when fully deployed was more than adequate to deal with it. Yet there is no doubt that their terror campaign did have an impact and demoralized society and gave an impression that they were gaining the upper hand. The turning point many think was their decision to attack families of service personnel which strengthened the resolve of the latter to destroy them. However the real causes for their ultimate failure is that the public was not with them, their resources were not equal to their ambitions and time was against them. They could not wait but had to achieve a quick success to maintain credibility but in the process they perhaps erred tactically and the organization also fell apart. While there is no doubt that they were well organised and got very far yet they probably overrated their capacity not realising that Sri Lanka was too sophisticated and well structured a society to be overthrown by mere terrorist attacks. They were able to shake the society but that was the limit because when the security hit back in earnest using all their far superior resources and the intelligence and knowledge of the JVP organization and techniques acquired from defectors the movement collapsed relatively fast. The capture of their leaders within a very short time was certainly a turning point which left the movement in disarray and they consoled themselves by destructive scorched earth tactics which revealed their true natures and forfeited whatever sympathy there had been for them. The JVP movement was really an affliction which the government and society had brought upon themselves by their narrow complacent policies, the gulf between promise and fulfilment, the diminishing credibility because of corruption nepotism and the callous insensitive feathering of their own nests by the powers that be while disregarding the interests of large sections of the populace who were neglected, their grievances totally overlooked and left to languish in poverty and frustration while a small coterie monopolised office, wealth, influence, authority and flaunted themselves in the public eye. The democratic system of which the country was proud did not produce the desired results partly because it was vitiated by a selfish party system which degenerated into tribalism. The benefits of free education and one of the highest literacy rates in the world were sadly not availed of in the administrative and political structure of the land where political influence seemed to be the driving force. The effects of this factor on the governing process in the country, the public service at one

time the pride of the country, on the day to day functioning of society, public orality and standards of public life were indescribable. It was therefore a political solution that was needed rather than a military one and after the security forces had done their job of liquidating terrorism it will be time for government to bring to bear the curative and healing processes of healthy government and justice to all.

By a tragic irony after 10 years of battling against terrorism and even foreign powers peace was as yet not to be. Contrary to the expectations of the government which as an earnest of its bona fides had held talks with the Tamil Tigers several times, the latter resorted to conflict after weeks of provocation against the authorities and violations of law and order in the North and East which brought government to a standstill. The security forces thus find themselves where they were in 1987 fighting the same enemy but there are differences. Firstly there is no sign of a hidden foe organizing plans behind the scenes. India has very correctly refrained from intervention and made pledges to this effect of non-interference in Sri Lanka's internal affairs. Of Tamil Nadu the situation is not clear because its leadership have criticised the IPKF and denounced earlier intervention but there are allegation and evidence of secret, covert support by the DMK government of the LTTE. This insulation has made the military task easier but it is none the less arduous and very far from being an easy street. The Security forces have been engaged in battle for several months to date but progress has been slow and the war has entered a state of attrition. The problems of the Security forces are good fortifications on the ground in the form of bunkers, a flood of mines and the inability to fight an all out war because of civilian casualties which is always a crippling factor in this type of combatting domestic insurrection. Also the forces have limitations in weaponry and armaments. The lack of bombers means inability to really blast the concrete bunkers from the skies. In aerial terms it is a war of helicopters and light trainer type aircraft which lack the hitting power which is required for the purpose. Use of heavy artillery is restricted for fear of civilian destruction. Aerial bombing too is ruled out except on purely military targets for the same inhibitions. The army is unable to open out and strike because of minefields specially light pocket sized mines scattered around and lack of adequate heavy armoured vehicles in the absence of tanks. In this somewhat static situation the advancing forces have to contend with sneak attacks, mortar fire and ambushes. It is very typical Vietnam combat with armies bogged down in jungles or paddy fields unable to use its superior fire power and heavy stuff and thus a sitting target to marauding bands wandering at will over a country of which they are master, attacking and retreating at will. The task of the army is to destroy their supply depots, their hide outs but this needs cordon and search operations which are also vulnerable to the type of quick assaults which the terrorists have perfected. The navy has done its operations covering landings, patrolling the shores of interception of arms and terrorist bands coming across, using their high speed patrol boats and sophisticated detection apparatus. The seas around have thus to a large extent been cleared and the conflict insulated therefore from outside supply bases which were the undoing of the earlier operations when counter Indian naval operations hampered surveillance and interception. The security forces have certainly acquitted themselves as best as they can under these highly circumscribed conditions but as things are at present a break through like that of Vadamarachchi has not yet been achieved.

In fighting this war the security forces have been able to come into their own and operate as never before without being hamstrung with political threats and obstacles except for the combat inhibitions. If they have not done better it is due to limitations in armaments lacking the explosive force needed and that the terrorists are also well prepared and good

fighters with 10 years of experience of this type of combat. The experience of this has been probably beneficial to the troops in giving them a genuine taste of combat compared to the somewhat half cock operations of the past, fighting under handicaps and consequent lowered morale. The defence forces are themselves better organized than ever, profiting from the challenge which has institutionally invigorated it. As an organization it has become a credible and tried fighting force. This is not only in the calibre of its leadership and men but also their strategic perceptions and sense and structure. The army today has a strength of three divisions and is divided into 3 regional commands, each under a commander with the Army Commander at the helm who is in operational control. The other services have their own Heads, an Admiral for the Navy and the Air Marshall for the Air Force but they coordinate action through a joint operations centre. The current conflict has been more than ever a highly integrated action calling for the utmost coordination between the 3 services. While the burden of the ground fighting is borne by the army still they lean heavily on air cover for destruction of ground defences and reconnaissance and on the navy for coastal protection and interception of outside help. The striking power of the Air Force is mainly in a combination of helicopters and light aircraft which are being used to good effect but fall short in some respects.

Sri Lanka's endeavours to meet security threats to which it has been exposed throughout its long history, have evolved through several phases. Initially in the apparent absence of a standing army, the ruler had raised armies during an emergency such as a security threat through a national levy. There was also the practice of hiring mercenary forces from South India but later they became themselves a security problem. Under the Polonnaruwa kingdom there was a militaristic upsurge and it had a standing army which undertook major military operations and it organized naval expeditions against South India and Burma. After the collapse of the early kingdoms and the shift of the centre of power to the South West, the new kingdoms which were constantly engaged in warfare had standing armies but they leaned heavily on external help which was their undoing. When contending with European powers who successively occupied the sea board of the island, the rulers relied on a combination of guerilla tactics, fifth column activities to incite rebellion in occupied territories and frontal attacks which were courageous and skilful. The lack of sea power was a serious handicap. The history of the Kandyan kingdom which became the last Sri Lankan bastion was that of a protracted siege where it resisted successive invaders. It succumbed finally to conspiracy and intrigue.

Since Independence, the security of the island has been the responsibility of its Defence forces which consist of the Army, Air Force and Navy each under its own Chief and the President of Sri Lanka is the *ex-officio* Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces. Until 1956 the Defence forces were conceptualized as auxiliary to the UK in terms of Sri Lanka's Defence pact with the UK under which the latter assumed responsibility for the security of the island. The UK undertook to train the Defence Forces and as part of its defence role had naval and air bases in the island. This situation ended with the repudiation of the Agreement in 1956 as a result of which the Defence Forces were on their own and had to shape a role for themselves in respect of the national security of the country. The simultaneous announcement by the Government of a policy of neutralism and later Non-Alignment emphasized the need for a definition of this role.

Since 1958 events in Sri Lanka have brought problems of internal security to the forefront and the Armed forces have been called upon to cope with them and this has involved military actions against armed militants and insurgents. In the process the Defence forces have assumed a primarily domestic role of enforcement of law and order. Whether it

can or should play a wider role such as an external one would depend on the evolution of events in the region and internationally in the future. If as one fears the Asian region becomes a theatre of big power and regional rivalry, Sri Lanka could be caught in the cross fire and may be obliged to think in terms of regional security. Its strategic location in the region would militate against it being indifferent or unaligned. Besides Sri Lanka possesses certain attributes of both location and logistics such as the harbour of Trincomalee which has the reputation of being one of the best of its kind in the world, which would enable any power controlling it to bestride the neighbouring oceans. However for Sri Lanka these very attributes could be a liability as they would be an invitation to a power with regional ambitions. Thus Sri Lanka has to guard against the danger of becoming a bone of contention. This strategic value was recognized when in 1943 it became the headquarters of the South East Asia Command in the war against Japan.

Internally the role of the Defence Forces in internal security raises the question of its relations with the internal security forces which is the Police and the Intelligence Agencies. In combatting recent insurrections and terrorist activities both have worked closely together sharing intelligence and conducting operations together. In the process the police forces too have gained a para military character through the formation of the Special Task Force and the wide powers which they enjoy. Police personnel and stations have been the targets of armed attacks and in combatting them the Police Forces have been obliged to adopt a military character in their training and arms. Proposals have also been made for a National Service scheme which will create a national reserve for use by the Government in an emergency. A step has been taken in an opposite direction when under a scheme of reorganization in 1979 the Army was enlisted for participation in National Development projects where army personnel are employed on large scale construction activity related to economic development as distinct from military logistics. However the recent experience of the wide proliferation of lethal weapons in the country and the resultant wave of violence and fall in standards have discouraged these ideas of militarizing the community.

Thus the internal bases of security in Sri Lanka in modern times have been its Defence Forces acting in association with the Police. Although the Defence Forces are responsible primarily for the overall security of the island against both external and internal threats, circumstances have obliged it to focus more and more on internal unrest and its role has therefore been narrowed in scope. It was unable to make an effective response when under threat of invasion by India in 1987. However in the light of recent experiences in Sri Lanka one can conclude that the best assurance for its security in the future would be the capability of its Defence forces in the background of the removal of grievances within the country on ethnic and socio economic grounds.

Chapter 8

The Role of the Security Forces

In the light of the history and experience of the security forces of Sri Lanka in the last two decades, it is appropriate at this stage to take stock of the situation and attempt to evaluate its role in relation to the security problems as well as concepts of Sri Lanka. It will be seen that conceptually there was a change in 1956 from a deterrent defence pact policy to neutralism and non-alignment. This meant in practice an emphasis on peaceful approaches to international problems and an eschewal of arms and armed confrontation in international relations. Such a policy need not have necessarily implied a total rejection of a self defence capacity by Sri Lanka. As a sovereign state it was entitled to defend itself against external threats and prepare itself to the extent of its capacity. In 1956 the country already had the nucleus of a good defence force which could in time be developed to play its due role. Under the UK pact it was essentially auxiliary in character in all branches but the British consciously had in view the development of a good independent force with the necessary capacity. It does not seem however that at this time or any other, any professional evaluation was made of the role which the defence forces should play. In the absence of that, a kind of play by ear attitude was adopted of responding to situations as they arise. In the external area it seemed clear that the repudiation of the UK Pact meant that the government of that time did not favor foreign involvement in defence. This was an implication of its neutralism. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike did refer to mutual defence pacts but did not pursue it in his lifetime. This meant that for practical purposes in matters of security and foreign threats Sri Lanka had to depend on its own resources. The Government pinned its faith on the UN and friendly countries presumably to look after its security. This attitude while laudable for a small Third World country was somewhat idealistic the world being what it was and perhaps the matter should have been pursued later and some decision taken. It looks as if that aspect was overlooked in the faith in the UN and also Non-Alignment. In 1958 the first major security problem arose in the communal uprising and this was followed by the JVP insurrection of 1971, which was also a local matter but in fact it was found that it had some external ramifications as the staff of the North Korean consulate were requested to leave the country for suspected complicity. At the same time Sri Lanka's non-alignment seems to have paid off because several countries gave help in military supplies though a request for troops was turned down. The fact remains that external help was needed as India was invited to offer coastal protection through its navy. This the policy of total isolation did not in the light of this experience seem realistic. After the 1971 uprising Sri Lanka proceeded with the Peace Zone proposal which was a form of neutralism as it sought a kind of neutralization and demilitarization of the Indian Ocean.

The events after 1980 and particularly the collision course with India highlighted the gravely exposed situation of Sri Lanka in the world where it was the target of misrepresentation and vilification while its security was being seriously eroded by Tamil terrorists working in league with Tamil Nadu authorities who were mounting a full scale war in the North from secure bases and training camps in Tamil Nadu. Ironically Sri Lanka seemed helpless to combat this terrorist campaign besides defending its positions because of political pressures. As we have seen then the Security forces effected a spectacular

breakthrough at Vadamaratchchi they were threatened by India. At that time the conflict seemed to be between India and Sri Lanka which meant of course that Sri Lanka was forced into submission. The impact of these successive experiences on the security forces is that they became essentially a domestic peace keeping force concerned with combatting local insurrections and civil disobedience and therefore serving primarily as an extra police force. This role conditioned its outlook and perceptions and its choice of equipment and armaments. Whether it was consciously conceptualized in those terms or whether this role was a matter of circumstances is an open question. This is not said in a derogatory or pejorative sense because such a role is inescapable when faced with the type of threat which Sri Lanka had to contend with. The issue is purely one of national policy and conceptualization of the expectations of the security forces, in relation to the security challenges facing the country. For an answer to this, one has to appraise the nature of these security challenges. This subject has been considered in detail elsewhere and suffice it to say that the prospect of peace and freedom from tension in the region are not bright at all. One should view the security problem from three angles namely global, regional and national. The global threat really concerned the possibility of nuclear warfare as a result of the cold war. The recent detente may reduce that fear though due to nuclear proliferation and the failure to check it by the nuclear non-proliferation treaty the danger remains. It is hoped that at the UN or through other multilateral means the world will wake up to this menace and take steps to protect itself.

At the regional level dangers abound. The dangers of the cold war have been transferred to the regions and certainly the Indian Ocean is a focal point in its own right and in being adjacent to the Persian Gulf which is now a storm center. The problems in the region are twofold. These are likely activities of the superpowers particularly the US as an extension to their commitments in the Gulf area and also in view of the prospect of there being a regional policeman in the area and others like Japan being attracted and even Australia and Indonesia. There is every prospect of highly intensified rivalry and hence tensions in the region far more than in the past. Secondly from within the region there is the question of India's aspirations to be a regional super power or regional policeman like a head prefect to keep the small states under control. The latter are likely to look for outside patrons. China will not remain indifferent. Of course SAARC will try to mollify the situation by hopefully establishing harmonious relationships between these members but this is left to be seen. Sri Lanka cannot expect to be uninvolved and unaligned in all this because of its central location and also its possession of Trincomalee with its acknowledged logistical importance. This situation of intensified power politics and rivalry in the region is therefore bound to have an impact on the island and it is incumbent on the latter to study the problem carefully and keep it in view. Thirdly it would be naive to expect calm and peace to return to the island overnight after the disruptions of years. Much would depend on the settlement effected in the north but one should be ready to contend with a continuing tendency of Tamil Nadu to regard the North as an extension of its interests and attempt to foment mischief. This could be a side effect to its bid for accession or to attain some autonomous status for Tamil Nadu as a kind of Dravidastan. All these factors should be taken into account in the conceptualizing of the future role of the security forces. The leading question is whether it is to be confined to the local threat alone or will it take in the wider regional dimension. If it decides to accept a regional role in the sense of gearing itself to face these challenges it will for its part have to undergo a radical transformation in perspectives. The onus will fall on the Navy which may have to move from a brown water patrolling and surveillance navy to the blue water navy which will extend the scope of its purview and activities. One such area which it should cover

and where it must assume effective control is the economic zone recognized under the Law of the Sea. The Zone will need large scale development of fisheries and oceanic activity with a view to exploit the mineral resources of the sea bed. All these expanded activities will be the domain of the navy which in that capacity could play a blue water role. A fleet air arm for patrol activity or one added to the air force could be an asset. The army will have to consider a transformation from an insurrection oriented fighting force to one capable of dealing with incursions from outside. This is not necessarily an invasion by a big power but a lesser one insidiously organized by some designing rival. In that event changes in deployment and weaponry will be needed. The Air Force, in such a positive role for the security of the forces, would need more striking force and perhaps a defensive capacity against violations of air space or territorial waters and economic zones. Thus an enhancement of the role of the security forces as envisaged will require costly investment and new concepts which, it is appreciated, may not be accepted as a priority for financial reasons. This is the choice facing the security forces and machinery today namely whether to trust to good fortune and hope that such threats will not materialize or prepare oneself meaningfully or at least give the subject earnest thought and study. Apart from the question of the precise security role of the Defence Forces in the future, there are other aspects to consider such as their psychology and outlook on both foreign affairs and internal developments. The leading issue here is what the Security Forces themselves consider is their own role. Is it not to question why but do and die in the spirit of the Light Brigade or does it have a mind of its own and an inclination to act on it. This is a very relevant and topical question to raise in the context of events in our time when army coups, military regimes have become a regular feature. We have seen instances of it in several countries mainly of the Third World such as Burma, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Liberia, Ghana, and Nigeria. There are other countries which have a facade of democracy but where power is in the hands of the Armed Forces who manipulate the government making changes according to its whims and fancies. In this background the Armed forces of countries face this temptation and there is a tendency among the public to think of them as a saviour and a virile alternative to a decadent, corrupt democratic system no longer capable of delivering the goods.

In this regard the Armed forces of Sri Lanka have throughout enjoyed a good reputation.¹ It has been faithful by and large to the traditions of the British army which melded it and its first generations officers. There were some shadows of course like the attempted coup of 1962 and of 1965 but these were essentially local affairs reflecting the disaffection of particular officers and groups which did not engage the forces as a whole.² They were nowhere like the army coups elsewhere or those which have become a frequent occurrence in the Philippines. The most striking feature of these coups was their aftermath where unlike in other cases which were invariably followed by bloodbaths the accused in both the Sri Lanka cases had a fair trial and were acquitted. In the 1962 case this was a sensational outcome because 21 of those indicted were freed on appeal. These cases actually brought out the basic stability of the political systems of the country and its impeccable judicial traditions inherited from the British. It does not seem therefore that any trends of this kind towards a military takeover by the armed forces or political ambitions on the part of the army are likely in Sri Lanka as matters stand at present.³

¹ S. S. Bindra, "India And Her Neighbours", Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1985, p. 284.

² General Muttukumaru, *The Military History of Ceylon*, Navrang, New Delhi, 1987, p. 183.

³ Howard Wriggins, *Ceylon the Dilemma of a Nation*, excerpt quoted in 2 above, p. 182.

This is not to say that elements of disaffection and divisions are not entirely lacking. At the time of the first conflict with the Tamil militants up to 1987, there were indications of frustration and dismay in the High Command over the decisions of the government which it was felt were marked by vacillation resulting in failure to press home the advantage or loss of opportunities. This could have been due to the political pressures under which the Government was acting. If at all this emphasizes the need for the Government to act in close consultation with the Armed Services giving the latter an opportunity for genuine participation. Perhaps taking the Armed forces into confidence could bring the best out of them. At the same time it should be pointed out that recent events in the country have augmented the power and influence of the Armed forces. The Government has been zealous in looking after its needs. This dependence of the country on the Armed forces was brought home during the JVP insurgency when it was the threat by the latter against the families of service personnel that moved the latter to strike back and overcome them. Until then there was some disquiet about the sympathies of the rank and file and the younger officers. Herein lie the seeds of possible discord in the future because the composition of the Armed forces has undergone some transformation. This is similar to the crisis facing higher education where there is a social revolt in the offing by the students from a rural background denied the affluence and social position of their urban colleagues against Universities and the bourgeois educational values which in their eyes these seem to represent. In the armed forces the rank and file come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds resentful of the gap between classes. The younger officers many of them without higher educational qualifications may share these prejudices. They may even be identified with narrow nationalism in ethnic terms and revolutionary creeds disseminated by the JVP. They may see India as the great despoiler and enemy. This could be a throwback to the Duttagamani nationalist complex which patriots keen to stir up ethnic feeling like to foster. There were dangerous indications of this during the 1983 ethnic riots when members of the Armed forces were either standing by doing nothing or actually participating. The other factor is its ethnic composition. Because of the recent conflict against Tamil militants the army has become except for senior officers almost totally Sinhalese. These are all matters which should be faced in considering the future reactions and behaviour of the Armed forces.

The remedy for this would seem to lie in a number of directions. As regards the quality and prejudices of the rank and file drawn from rural backgrounds and therefore reflecting local prejudices this should right itself given programs of poverty alleviation and removal of disparities. Among officer class the answer would certainly lie in educational qualifications and appointment of officers with some academic background. A major step has been taken in this direction by the establishment of the Kotelawala Defence Academy where officer cadets get both their technical training and also follow academic courses to acquire Degrees. This Institution which was set by special Parliamentary Act is unique and appears to meet the needs of having a high quality of leadership in the Armed forces. In recruitment the need for screening cannot be emphasized. Many JVP sympathizers were able to infiltrate the army before the insurrection. For part of this political interference and influence was responsible where members of parliament anxious to please their constituents gave letters of recommendation which the authorities because of political influence were unable to reject. As regards appreciation by the High Command and senior officers of the Armed forces of foreign affairs and related matters, this needs consideration. On the one hand there is the school which believes in keeping the army out of these matters their duty being on this view to carry out orders however wrong they were. This is the old British army tradition which saw the

destruction of British military might in the Somme and Flanders and Gallipoli. The modern trend is towards education of the armed forces and the evidence of this are the number of prestigious Institutes established in countries both for a study of foreign affairs and education of officers. They are the equivalent of Universities and some instances of them are the National Defence Academy and Institute of Strategic Studies in India where officers of foreign countries can follow courses. These give an academic lift to Defence and National Security studies. Of course the educated, academically trained Officer staff raises the other question that they may be tempted to intervene in State matters which are not their strict responsibility. One has seen in recent times the phenomenon of retired military chiefs making pronouncements on foreign policy which could alarm other countries and cause embarrassment to the Government concerned. A good example of such military ideologues was Admiral Mahan whose ideas certainly influenced States.⁴ There was also the case of General MacArthur on the campaign in Korea which could have sparked off a global conflagration. Yet educated officers with academic backgrounds are far better than those without and a surer investment for a nation. Besides at a time when the world is moving towards understanding and cooperation and peaceful resolving of conflicts the need for Pattons and fire eating Colonels seem to be less. Perhaps in the development of a humane and civilized officer community throughout the world who realize the limitations of war and violence may lie good chances of a durable peace. Sri Lanka is far from this stage though recent measures like the Kotelawala Academy referred to are on the right track.

Besides the political and social climate of Sri Lanka has an old society rooted in certain basic traditional values and institutions which will not easily lend themselves to military rule. It has a very sophisticated culture embodied in the Buddhism religion which is an all embracing and powerful force in the land. In the post war period it was said that Buddhism was the surest bulwark against the spread of Communism in the island. Likewise the country has a sophisticated people who have exceptional levels of literacy and education and a considerable degree of affluence which in recent times has percolated to a fair degree though far short of what it should be. The JVP movement is regarded as an uprising of the educated youth who were economically underprivileged and to that extent it was an index of the level of awareness in the society. Besides the society is used to democratic forms and its boast is that it is the best democracy in Asia which had witnessed the election to office of some 7 governments by normal electoral process. Its party system though prone to abuse has still kept an even course on the lines of the British model maintaining a basic two to three party structure in contrast to the crazy splinter party fragmentation found in many countries. It has praiseworthy institutions notably the judiciary which have stood the test of time and fears of dictatorship or one party rule have still not materialized. Governments in power have generally enjoyed very good majorities which have encouraged them to act in an authoritarian manner. Successive governments have resorted to emergency rule for long periods which were essential to cope with insurrections. However due process has been observed of sanction by Parliament. This is contrast to governments which have ruled through martial law. For all these reasons the imposition of military rule is not one which can be contemplated lightly and if such a regime comes to power its task will not be enviable. The durability of its institutions, the hold of Buddhism, the influence of the Buddhist order, the high literacy and educational levels not to mention the volatile character of the peoples will all act as a

⁴ Admiral Mahan, American Admiral well known for his work "The influence of sea power on history".

disincentive to would be military dictators or advocates of rule by a military junta. The countries where these have worked at least for a while are those with very contrasting political conditions. The danger of military rule is that it drives the rulers to counter productive excesses and becomes a tiger from which it cannot dismount. The Armed forces also face certain logistical problems cantering round the basic shortage of funds for procurement of weapons. Already up to 15% of the budget is for defence expenditure with no signs of diminution. The biggest worry is the choice of weaponry at affordable prices and shortage of import sources because of a subtle campaign of denial of weapons. Sri Lanka has to make the best of what there is and this has meant purchases from China, South Africa, Israel in the face of political inhibitions. There is danger in this as Sri Lanka experienced recently when a large cargo of arms which was purchased from Iraq was intercepted by the UN blockade. The choice of weapons suited to requirements calls for careful evaluation in relation to the type of combat anticipated. Just anything would not do as the country found to its cost during the 1971 uprising when it had a flood of armaments which it could not absorb. Thus an experienced procurement agency is a requirement. There is no indication that Sri Lanka has made much headway in armament manufactures whether under license or locally.

Consonant with the recent uprisings and conflicts and the resultant augmentation in the power and prestige of the Armed Forces, some incidental questions have arisen such as the abuse of power by these forces and the development of a gun culture. The security forces acting under emergency powers have certainly wielded much power and there have been allegations of excesses which have raised eyebrows at UN and other circles. In these circumstances when fighting a ruthless enemy it is normal for armies to retaliate with equal severity with resultant excesses. Yet there is no evidence of systematic genocide or massacres as has been alleged and the authorities have been quick to act. The real danger is that civilians particularly politicians have tended to take the law into their hands and organized private armies for self defence and revenge killings and the Armed Forces have been hard put to controlling them. Another source of difficulty has been the establishment of para military forces which are not under control of the army. An instance was the Special Task Force which was a highly trained crack team which carried out special anti terrorist operations with much success. Bringing all these diverse forces under a unified command has posed problems. Several years of insurrections and conflict have strained the fabric of society and eroded respect for law and order and the sanctity of institutions. The most dangerous outcome was the proliferation and distribution of arms both officially and illicit. The administration distributed arms to private persons for protection while the insurgents obtained illicit supplies for their acts of violence. As a result there is an insensitiveness to violence and taking of life which augurs ill. The government is therefore proceeding with measures to retrieve arms as well as outlaw illicit weapons. Perhaps with the end of the conflict the necessity for arms will cease and the way should be clear for a clean sweep to rid the country of lurking armaments and divest people of the instinct for violence which was nurtured by recent events. This is a factor which has gravely affected national security and earned a bad reputation for the country as having the highest rate of violence and bloodshed. This may be a gross exaggeration compared to the appalling losses suffered in many countries through natural disasters like drought and famine and prolonged warfare and violence. Conflicts have dragged on for years in countries like Sudan, Ethiopia with devastation and much loss of life and no end in sight. There is besides continuing violence in the occupied territories by Israel in the Middle East, in the Philippines, in South Africa compared to which Sri Lanka's ordeal was milder and a

good part of it has been brought under control. These achievements speaks well for the Armed forces and the policy of the Governments.

At the same time certain changes at a constitutional and functional level seem to be called for in Sri Lanka which should be analyzed. The constitutional position is that the Head of State is ex-officio the Commander-in-Chief of the Security forces. Under the earlier constitution where the Prime Minister was the chief executive the role of Commander-in-Chief devolved in effect on the latter. However at present with an executive president, the latter is the effective Commander-in-Chief who in the exercise of this office can take key decisions which may overrule the opinions of the Security Chiefs. Constitutionally this is as it should be but in practice it calls for very close association in decision making with the Security Forces. This would call for a Supreme Council with the President at the head to decide on security questions. Sri Lanka also has at the helm of National Defence and Security a Cabinet Minister responsible for those subjects who in effect advises the President on policy and implements. The Minister concerned played a key role in Sri Lanka recently where like Ramon Magsaysay who put down the Huk uprising in the Philippines he played a leading role in stamping out the JVP insurrection. It seems that there is a case for greater coordination and organization in the high echelons of the Defence authorities. This could be in the form of 3 levels of decision making and consultation. These are a National Council for planning as well as decision making on matters of National Defence and Security with the President in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief presiding over it. Secondly there could be a parallel committee at a secondary level of the Minister with the Security Chiefs and any others required. There could also be a third level where the Security Chiefs could meet representatives of the Foreign Office, Finance Ministry and other key sectors and examine these questions. These structures are intended primarily for planning and formulation of high policy. They do not of course relate to combat or security operations. At the operational level it is understood there is the joint operations where the Services coordinate operations and there are also the Security Council meetings where the Service chiefs brief their masters on the ongoing situation. These are good as far as they go but the need is for machinery of a more durable and far reaching kind. The Services through their Chiefs should be enabled to play a positive decision making rule in policy questions of National Security. Hence the machinery suggested above should achieve this end of bringing them inclose touch with the President and the Minister in the policy making process as distinct from mere operational matters. Hopefully the current internal problems may end with suitable solutions being found to them which will restore internal peace. However as this study had indicated elsewhere there is no hope for an era of tranquillity and serenity in the years to come when the region may have to face many challenges. In these matters the advice and the judgements of the Security authorities will be crucial. As indicated elsewhere a reorientation may be needed in defence and security approaches. A crucial sector will be in the surrounding ocean areas which may be the scene of foreign naval activity. Unless Sri Lanka is able to cover them adequately in terms of protection of its economic zones which could be exploited for fisheries and ocean bed exploration, Sri Lanka may lose these to intruders and trespassers. Heightened naval activity accompanied by a measure of air cover through a naval air arm or Air Force cover are equally essential. The aim should be to project a role of capability in protecting and utilizing one's lawful possessions. Any remissness in this regard or default could have adverse effects on Sri Lanka's economic and security interests. The question of attempting this on a regional basis in association with other countries could be considered. It would then be a

matter of mutual benefit to a number of countries and therefore preferable to proceeding alone. For Sri Lanka the viability of SAARC for this purpose could be considered.

A corollary to the above propositions is that they presuppose a high degree of awareness of defence and security issues at a global and regional level by the Service Command. For this purpose it is advisable for each service to organize a study group as a kind of Think Tank which will make an intensive study of events within its field. The Think Tanks of the Services could form a joint Think Tank where they can pool ideas and knowledge and advice the different Councils through their Chiefs. It goes without saying that those who man these committees and groups should have the necessary background, insight and capacity for appreciation. The addition of the dimension of study and research into the machinery of the security forces is certainly a vital need. The availability of such research material and studies should enable the Government to correctly evaluate security questions and arrive at decisions on the larger questions. The establishment of a link between security services and Foreign affairs is a *sine que non* for formulation of security concepts and planning. The Security Chiefs should be able to form an advisory body in its own right which can advise the government on these questions briefing them on the service standpoint. One thinks that for the National Security forces to play its due role in the country and to do its duty by the nation it should rise to something more than a purely local security authority which function is being played by the police and be able to guide the country and government on the higher issues of security as they affect a nation in the international and regional spheres. The financial constraints which would prevent them from aspiring to a higher status are appreciated but this should not inhibit thinking and appreciation of wider issues.

The conclusion of this aspect of this study is that Sri Lanka has since independence attempted to develop its defence and security despite crippling financial constraints. It has security forces of quality and motivation. However their development has been handicapped by lack of planning and study as to its proper role in the country. Concepts of neutralism and non-alignment while being admirable policies have not yielded the expected benefits and left the country in an exposed position. Without planning and a sense of purpose the Security forces have been reduced to an agency for dealing with internal security. This is certainly of paramount importance but even internal security is now seriously intertwined with external forces and hence one cannot afford to ignore the external factor. Yet Third World countries are fearful of going beyond the internal parameters because of the prohibitive costs involved. Be that as it may there is yet an obligation on the security services to undertake proper planning of policy from the highest level possible down to its own professional levels and have access to Think Tanks where indepth studies and research can be undertaken into these subjects. In this way one can build a national security structure which can do justice to the security problems of the country.

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