SECURING PEACE
AN ACTION STRATEGY FOR SRI LANKA

JUNE 2004

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CFA	Ceasefire Agreement
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
HSZ	High-Security Zone
IDP	Internally displaced person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISGA	Interim Self-Governing Authority
JVP	People's Liberation Front
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PA	People's Alliance
UNF	United National Front
UNP	United National Party
UPFA	United Peoples Freedom Alliance
SCOPP	Secretariat for Coordination of the Peace Process
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lankan Muslim Congress
SLMM	Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission

OBJECTIVE

Sri Lanka has experienced over twenty years of internal armed conflict. With a ceasefire agreement in place between the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), there is a renewed possibility for peace. However, much work needs to be done before a final peace settlement is negotiated. What steps do Sri Lanka and its supporters need to undertake in order to transition from the current ceasefire to a more stable and peaceful post-conflict period?

Given the changing composition and perspectives of the GoSL and the LTTE the need to plan for and enable peaceful transformation is more urgent than ever. This report is concerned with the window of opportunity existing in the upcoming 24 months. During this immediate period, practical steps must be taken to ensure that the ceasefire lasts, allowing Sri Lanka the time to consolidate its peace and finally enter a stable post-conflict period. Creating a secure foundation for longer-term peace building efforts is critical; it will require a secure and stable environment to address root causes of the conflict, dismantle conflict-generating institutions, and create structures and practices that effectively prevent further armed conflict.

This report offers a practical and priority-focused action strategy plan that will assist Sri Lankan and international actors to create an enabling environment in which a foundation for peace in Sri Lanka can be laid. The action plan, consisting of integrated and innovative strategies coupled with practical recommendations, offers a fresh perspective for those actors – both domestic and international – who are active in the peace process and in the political and economic development of Sri Lanka. It is the hope of the authors that the report will make a unique contribution to this broad community in its ongoing efforts toward establishing peace in the country.

LIMITATIONS

The civil war in Sri Lanka is undeniably complex. It involves various combinations of actors at conflict with each other, including Sinhala-Tamil, PA-UNP parties, LTTE-alternative Tamil political groups, and Tamil-Muslim. The causes of conflict in Sri Lanka are multifaceted, spanning economic, political, cultural, religious, and geographic considerations. In addition, the causes and consequences of the conflict have in many cases become intertwined.

After 20 years of civil war, positions are sufficiently entrenched to predict that the peace process will require a long-term investment on behalf of the negotiators. Although some say each day the cease-fire is extended moves Sri Lanka one step further from a return to violent conflict, this does not mean that each day brings the country closer to a long-term political solution. Therefore, it is crucial that a political commitment to peace be sustained for the duration of this protracted process. Moreover, the parties to the conflict,

as well as the Sri Lankan people, will need to demonstrate significant patience and restraint to ensure that the process remains on track despite the many setbacks that are certain to frustrate progress.

Recognizing the complexity of the Sri Lankan conflict and the many obstacles to its ultimate resolution, this report does not purport to establish a comprehensive conflict analysis framework. Instead, it seeks to identify a set of priorities for immediate action to address several key factors that are currently inhibiting progress towards peace. Recommendations emerging from the analysis aim not at resolving the conflict, but at catalyzing progress in these critical areas so that a lasting peace may ultimately be attained. The recommendations do not constitute the full range of actions that could or should be pursued, some of which are beyond the scope of this report.

It is important to acknowledge that several of the key obstacles to peace identified in this report could be most effectively addressed through reforms to the current constitution. For example, the inevitable institutional gridlock that is created through the often-competing authority of the President and Prime Minister almost certainly needs to be resolved. Parliament has failed to find a solution that received the required 2/3 super-majority vote in the past. Although we have opted not to delve into the complex legal arguments in support of proposed constitutional reforms, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for a peace agreement to be signed without them.

Likewise, a constitutional amendment is necessary to address the issue of federalism and devolution of power from the central Government to the Interim Administration and/or Provincial Councils (or other potential regional bodies). This report also does not take a position on the type of federalism, i.e. symmetrical or asymmetrical devolution, that should be pursued in Sri Lanka, although it is deemed improbable that power could be afforded to the North East province(s) without similar desires for local control emerging throughout the country. The report also avoids comment on whether the North and the East should be treated as one province or two. While these issues are critical to a long-term solution, it is our view that the relevant Sri Lankan actors must internally resolve the nature of power devolution over the course of ongoing peace negotiations.

Similarly, the issue of re-structuring the Sri Lankan Army is of vital importance to sustained peace. While specific arguments about, and suggestions for, reducing the size of Sri Lanka's military and integrating rebel elements are included in this report, the focus is on the immediate steps that must be taken to alleviate current tensions and begin building relationships between the various military assemblages operating in Sri Lanka.

ASSUMPTIONS

The GoSL is committed to maintaining a unified country under Colombo's control. The LTTE, until recently, have been committed to the creation of an independent "Eelam," or Tamil state. Positions have softened through negotiations and a common desire for peace. Both parties are now willing to concede to a federal solution, wherein the country remains unified but a degree of power and autonomy is devolved to local authorities. The current peace process therefore entails devolving powers from the central Government to the North and the East (at a minimum) and granting these regions a degree of autonomy.

However, these regions, to be governed by an Interim Authority, are to remain a part of the country of Sri Lanka.

This report assumes that the peace process, as conceived, is working towards an end state that is both workable and desirable for the chief parties to the conflict. A federalist solution – a unified country with devolved powers – offers a governing framework in which the two main parties to the conflict can realize their goals. Current difficulties over the scope and extent of devolution, sequencing of reforms and demilitarization, and levels of mutual trust are real challenges, but they do not indicate that the peace process itself is misguided or unrealistic.

Furthermore, this report assumes that the two main parties – the GoSL and LTTE – are participating in the peace process with good intent. Federalism is a model that both parties are willing to attempt in order to end the conflict. While we expect that high levels of mistrust and suspicion will continue, the report assumes that both the GoSL and the LTTE are willing, in principle, to make concessions in order to avoid the possibility of relapsing into armed conflict.

METHODOLOGY

This report was prepared by a group of nine graduate student researchers at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University:

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The project was co-sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a policy think tank based in Washington D.C. Rick Barton, Co-Director of the CSIS Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project, led the team of researchers and provided guidance in establishing a theoretical framework for assessing post-conflict situations and reconstruction efforts. This framework is largely based on the four-pillar approach adopted by CSIS in its analysis of post-conflict situations. The four pillars that ground this approach are: Security, Governance, Economic and Social Well-being, and Justice and Reconciliation.

The research project began in September 2003 and concluded in January 2004. Early stages of research focused on examining case studies of post-conflict reconstruction in order to identify common challenges and opportunities, relevant actors, lessons learned, and best practices. During this time the researchers developed a clearer understanding of factors that inhibit or contribute to post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The team also conducted extensive advance work for the field research component of the project, including monitoring current political developments in the Sri Lankan press as well as contacting various individuals and institutions both in the United States and in Sri Lanka.

Project researchers conducted field research in Sri Lanka from October 21, 2003 to November 2, 2003. Fieldwork began in Colombo, where team members conducted four days of interviews. Deployment teams were then sent to the four regions of the country to understand and represent regional perspectives on the civil conflict and prospects for peace. The deployment teams visited the following towns:

Central: Kandy, Hatton, Anuradhapura, and Puttalam

South: Galle, Matara and Hambantota

East: Trincomalee, Valachchenai, and Batticaloa

North: Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Pt. Pedro, Chavakacheri, Valvettithurai, Vavuniya

Researchers interviewed approximately 350 individuals representing various sectors, including: Government officials and military officers, members of the diplomatic community, and representatives of bilateral aid agencies, multilateral organizations, non-Governmental organizations (NGOs), and community based organizations (CBOs). Through interviews and focus groups, researchers also solicited the input of a broad range of Sri Lankan citizens, including business leaders, human rights activists, students, university professors, fishermen, laborers, and villagers. [See the end of the document for a list of official persons consulted through the course of field research.]

This method of expansive interviewing allowed the research team to consider a vast amount of evidence and variety of perspectives on the political conflict, ethnic, class and religious tensions, economic circumstances, security concerns, and communications means. The insights gained from listening to such diverse voices cannot be learned through previous books, reports and articles. The representation of these voices and the recommendations reasoned thereby are the value that this report adds to the search for peace in Sri Lanka.

A WAR RAVAGED COUNTRY: THE STATISTICS

Population

Total Population	19,742,439	Religion	
Ethnicity		% Buddhist	69.3
% Sinhalese	74	% Hindu	15.5
% Tamil	18	% Muslim	7.5
% Moor	7	% Christian	6.9
% Other (Malay, Burgher)	1	% Other	0.8

Losses and Damage as a Result of Civil War

Number of lives lost in the civil war over past 18 years	65,000+
Number of lives LTTE claims to have lost in the same number of years (as of 2002)	17,637
Years since independence from Britain	56
Years in civil war	21
Duration of ceasefire in years	2
Number of IDPs from North-East as a result of the conflict	800,000+
% Tamil IDPs	78
% Muslim IDPs	13
% Sinhalese IDPs	8
% of administrative buildings destroyed or damaged since 1982	60

Rebuilding & Reconstruction

% Growth in fish catch in North-East between 2000 - 2002	93
% Growth in paddy production in North-East between 2000 - 2002	476
Billions of dollars (U.S) committed during Tokyo Donors Conference (June 2003) to aid peace process	4.5

Voting

% Margin of UNF victory over PA in 2001 General Elections	8
% Votes and number of Parliamentary seats secured by the UNP in 2001 General Elections	45 (N=109)
% Votes and number of Parliamentary seats secured by the PA in 2001 General Elections	37 (N=77)
% Votes and number of Parliamentary seats secured by the UPFA in April 2004 General Elections (out of 225 total seats)	46 (N=105)
% Votes and number of Parliamentary seats secured by the UNP in April 2004	38 (N=82)
% Parliamentary seats secured by the Tamil National Alliance in April 2004	7 (N=22)
% Parliamentary seats secured by the by National Heritage Party (Buddhist) in April 2004	6 (N=9)
Majority vote of Parliament needed to amend Constitution	2/3
Number of electoral districts won by UNFPA in April 2004	14 (out of 22)

Corruption

% of Sri Lankan citizens who feel that the police is the most corrupt public department	40
% of Sri Lankan citizens who feel bribery is a normal way of doing things	70
% of Sri Lankan citizens who think the public sector is more corrupt than private	8

Military and Defense

Number of Army troops	120,000
Estimated number of deserters from the army	28,000
% Growth in Armed Forces between 1985 – 2001 (UNDP, Human Development Report, 2003)	731
Number of LTTE troops	6,000 – 10,000
Children abducted by the LTTE everyday (reported October 14, 2003)	2
Estimated number of deaths inflicted during JVP uprisings against Go SL	40,000
Number of complaints about family members who disappeared in Jaffna after arrests made by the Sri Lankan Army (1996)	2621
Number of disappearance cases established by the Defense Ministry's Board of Investigation	765
Number of these cases that the Attorney General actually filed in court	14
Number of countries that supply arms to the Sri Lankan Government	10

% of Sri Lanka's navy coastal crafts destroyed by LTTE Sea Tigers	30 – 50
Heads of State assassinated by LTTE	2
Number of Tamil politicians killed by LTTE since February 2002 ceasefire	22
Millions of illegal weapons owned by civilians (according to Small Arms Survey)	1.9

Budget and Military Expenditures

GDP (USD) in billions	16.4
GDP per capita (USD)	848
Defense spending per capita, 1998 (USD) (*Sri Lanka, Recapturing Missed Opportunities*, World Bank, 2000)	51
% Government Expenditures spent on the military (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, IMF, 1999).	17
Military expenditures since 1992 (USD) in billions	6
Military expenditures as % of GDP in 2001 (UNDP, Human Development Report, 2003)	3.9
Debt Service as % of GDP in 2001 (Country Strategy & Program Update, Asian Development Bank, 2003)	10
Years of 1996 GDP that have been spent on armed conflict (*The Economic Costs of the War in Sri Lanka, Institute of Policy Studies*, Colombo, 2000).	2
Years of 1996 GDP lost in foregone investment due to armed conflict (*The Economics Cost of the War in Sri Lanka*, Institute of Policy Studies, Colombo, 2000).	.71

Standard of Living

% of Sri Lankans living below poverty line	25
% Unemployment (nationwide)	~10
% Unemployment (North-East)	25
% of Households with access to sanitation (nationwide)	72
% of Households with access to sanitation (North-East)	25
Years without a road to Jaffna	12

Sri Lanka's peace process is slow moving and fitful. Direct negotiations were effectively suspended in April 2003, yet there was progress. On November 4, 2003, with then Prime Minister Ranil Wickramasinghe in the United States to meet President Bush, President Chandrika Kumaratunga dismissed three key cabinet ministers, prorogued Parliament, and declared a state of emergency in the capital city of Colombo. The move surprised both the country and the international community, who supported the Government's efforts to reach a final peace settlement with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). On April 24, 2004 in her first post-election televised speech, Kumaratunga once again appealed for peace, asking the Norwegian Government to resume all party talks.

Since February 2002 there has been a ceasefire agreement (CFA) with the LTTE, an agreement that marked the end of the conflict that has lasted two decades, claimed over 65,000 lives and displaced more than 800,000 people.

In 1983 the LTTE began fighting against the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL). Their conflict is an extension of Tamil protests in response to nationalization policies of the 1956 Sinhalese-dominated Government that sought to reverse what was perceived to be a disproportionate Tamil influence in the country. The disputes escalated into a serious armed conflict in the early 1980s. The war drew in outside parties, and from 1987 to 1990 the Indian Government made an unsuccessful military intervention that led, among other outcomes, to the assassination of the Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Armed conflict continued in the 1990s, interrupted by a series of failed ceasefires. Each side, unable to win the war, eventually began to soften their positions. The GoSL in 2000 proposed to amend the constitution to allow greater autonomy in Tamil-dominated areas. The LTTE, in turn, gave up their demands for independence and agreed, in principle, to a federalist solution. This paved the way for Norwegian-brokered peace talks, which resulted in the latest ceasefire.

Entering into further peace negotiations with the LTTE, the Prime Minister took responsibility for moving the peace process forward. On October 31, 2003, the LTTE delivered their proposal for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka. The proposal allows the LTTE to hold a super-majority in the ISGA, which would be responsible for justice, security, taxation, land administration, and dispersal of the US$ 4.5 billion largely reserved for reconstruction of the North-East, promised at the June 2003 Tokyo Donor's Conference.

Differing answers to questions regarding the ISGA, and sharply different approaches to dealing with the Tamil Tigers, are a part of the standoff between the President and the former Prime Minister. Their political impasse puts the peace process at risk since the LTTE expects political stability for the talks to continue. LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran has said he will revive demands for a separate state if peace talks remain stalled.

However, there is little indication that the crisis in Colombo will end. With the President's party, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), joining the pro-Sinhalese Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party in a now ruling alliance termed the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), the prospects for political stability in the near future are unclear. The United National Party (UNP), which has dominated Sri Lanka's politics over the past 55 years, lost their slim majority in Parliament to the UPFA. The supporting member of the UPFA, the JVP, has never been part of the majority coalition in Parliament and has traditionally opposed anything more than modest administrative concessions to the LTTE. Furthermore, President Kumaratunga recently extended her Presidential term an additional year until 2006, ensuring that political rivalries will dominate the capital. Little progress toward peace is likely without a break in the political paralysis.

To ensure that the current ceasefire holds and that appropriate steps are taken toward a permanent resolution of Sri Lanka's civil conflict, domestic and international actors must identify the right set of priorities to be addressed in the immediate future. In this section, we analyze the context of the four destabilizing factors that present the most serious threats to the peace negotiations:

- The political power struggle in the Sri Lankan Government
- A pervasive culture of fear amongst the public
- Entrenched ethnic polarization
- A shallow peace constituency

In addition, we include in this section a discussion of the importance of the Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA) because, while it is not yet an existing condition within Sri Lanka, its development and implementation will be a key factor in either exacerbating or deflating the problems noted above. Indeed, if all of these underlying issues are not resolved in the long-term it would be extremely difficult for lasting peace to be achieved in the country. More importantly, if they are not addressed in the short-term, destabilizing forces could easily become spoilers of the current peace process.

POLITICAL POWER STRUGGLE IN THE SRI LANKAN GOVERNMENT

For years the SLFP and the UNP have vied for control of the Government. Under the recent system of cohabitation, the propensity for political gridlock has been even higher than in the past, and the political power struggle at the top levels of Government has become a serious threat to the peace process. Indeed, while the violent civil war between the GoSL and the LTTE has dominated headlines for the past two decades, an intense *intra*-ethnic political conflict between the two main Sinhalese parties has undoubtedly prolonged the *inter*-ethnic armed conflict. Although both parties see peace as desirable, political opportunism has triumphed over the creation of a unified plan to peace and negotiations with the LTTE. Political leaders who are unable to separate peace from political gain plague Sri Lanka.

Prime Minister Wickremesinghe led the peace talks that began nearly two years ago, and the Prime Minister's UNP party solicited and received the support of many of Sri Lanka's business elites based on its pro-peace policies. Security is clearly the foundation for continued economic growth and increased foreign investment and is therefore highly desirable for the UNP. President Kumaratunga has also consistently identified peace as a key issue on her national agenda. It was the President who initiated a previous round of peace talks during her first term and made public statements in support of a peaceful resolution to the country's violent civil war. However, the President was sidelined in her attempts at peace since Wickremisnghe took control of Parliament in 2001.

Competition for political power in Sri Lanka has made cooperation in pursuit of peace impossible. Either party's peace initiatives are part of a zero-sum game that involves statesmanlike prestige and nationalist appeals.

There are several constituencies that contribute to this protracted power struggle by feeding politicians' fears. The most obvious of these is the nationalist wing of the still influential Buddhist clergy, which insists that a united Sri Lanka is the only way to maintain a true Sinhalese "identity." There are also significant pockets of resistance to peace among Sinhalese populations in the South, where many accuse the Government of conceding too much to the LTTE and channeling too many resources to the North. At the same time, the Sri Lankan Muslim Congress (SLMC), as the "swing vote" in party politics, continues to pressure both sides to appease Muslim concerns or lose their support. As long as political leaders find that stalling the peace process helps build support among skeptical constituencies, there will be little progress toward peace. The governing alliance of the President's party and the JVP is expected to further complicate the peace process, though both the UNP and the UPFA ran on a pro-peace platform during the April 2, 2004 General Elections.

For the time being, Colombo politics is not defined by competition between the President and the Prime Minister, rather by a more fractured arrangement influenced by the JVP, National Heritage Party, and the Tamil National Alliance.

A PERVASIVE CULTURE OF FEAR

Despite drastic improvements in quality of life since the cessation of hostilities, a pervasive culture of fear still exists in Sri Lanka, particularly in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. This culture of fear can best be understood as a collective traumatization resulting from 20 years of civilian atrocities and human rights abuses perpetuated by the Sri Lankan Army, the LTTE and other armed groups. These violent acts, many of which continue today, have restricted basic freedoms and created an atmosphere of suspicion and fear. We have identified three conditions that characterize this culture of fear and threaten to impede the achievement of a lasting peace.

▪ **People lack both physical and emotional security**

First, despite the ceasefire, security is still the preeminent concern. The Sri Lankan Army continues to occupy high-security zones (HSZ), harass ethnic minorities, restrict their movements, and is seen by many people as an occupying force that has never accounted for its past atrocities. The LTTE openly recruits child soldiers, extorts money and goods from the populace, and intimidates or assassinates those who oppose it.

At the same time, many Sri Lankans are unwilling to report abuses for fear of reprisal, do not trust the police to protect their safety, and will not share their views with others because they are wary of Government and/or LTTE informants. As one Sri Lankan citizen whispered nervously over dinner, "we don't know who is watching us right now." Thus, while the ceasefire agreement has ended open hostilities, it has done little to address a lack of effective institutional protections for people's basic security needs. As

a result, many citizens have resorted to extremist positions to get the safety assurances they need.

- **Violence is the most effective agent of change**

Second, violence is still the most effective mechanism available to hold the ruling elites, political institutions, and armed forces accountable for their actions. Some analysts have suggested that the people of Sri Lanka are passive and disinterested in mobilizing for change.[1] It is more accurate to say, however, that Sri Lankans do not have a secure outlet for promoting reform. In many areas in the North - East, the LTTE does not allow for the free expression of ideas or political opposition and will not permit civic organizations to assemble except under LTTE supervision. Similarly, the central Government has a weak record of demonstrating accountability to the needs of its citizens. It has repeatedly undermined reform efforts, such as the Human Rights and Bribery Commissions, and has allowed and even encouraged political extremists to intimidate proponents of positive change.

Many Tamils believe that the only effective change agent in Sri Lanka has been 20 years of armed struggle. With no other alternatives for holding their political leaders accountable, many citizens resort to supporting extremist groups in hopes of having their interests represented. Indeed, many Sri Lankans attribute the growing violence between Tamils and Muslims in part to the Tamil perception that Muslims are exploiting their unique power as the "swing vote" in state politics for material gain. Unless democratic outlets for change can be developed, violence will continue to be a common form of civic participation.

- **Authentic political participation and dialogue is not possible**

The culture of fear among the population restricts the exchange of ideas and diversity of participation that will be critical to the credibility and durability of a peace agreement. The current atmosphere of intimidation, fueled in part by the fear of political assassinations by the LTTE, discourages alternative political parties from critiquing either the Colombo Government or the LTTE. One of the least recognized divides in Sri Lanka may be between Tamils who do not feel represented by the LTTE—but are too fearful to speak out against them due to past experiences of LTTE brutality—and Tamils who continue to place genuine faith in the LTTE as an organization.

The reluctance of average citizens to express their political views is allowing those in power to shape new political and social arrangements for the country that few might have chosen if they had an opportunity to participate in an environment of security. As long as moderate groups and individuals are silenced by fear, extremist positions will hijack the peace process, and the negotiating parties will have little incentive to compromise. In a best case scenario, this will likely result in a peace agreement that does not represent the perspective of the majority of the Sri Lankan population. In a worst-case scenario, the predominance of extremist views could cause the peace process to collapse.

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[1] Orjulea, C. (2003). Building Peace in Sri Lanka: A Role for Civil Society? *Journal of Peace Research*: 195-212.

ENTRENCHED ETHNIC POLARIZATION

The protracted civil war in Sri Lanka has left a legacy of resentment and mistrust between the country's ethnic groups. Decades of Sinhalese state-sponsored institutional discrimination against the Tamil minority polarized the two major communities and created inequalities that persist to this day. However, in the 20 years since the beginning of armed conflict, many of the initial grievances of the Tamil population have evolved, and bloodshed on both sides has led to increasing polarization.

Entrenched divisions represent both a short- and long-term threat to the peace process, as it prevents the construction of a sense of national unity to help cement the peace. However, most Sri Lankans insist that the Tamil-Sinhalese conflict is primarily political, and that the recent Tamil-Muslim conflict is more economic than ethnic. It is clear that ethnic differences are often exploited for political gain. If increased polarization is the result of misinformation rather than inherent animosity, it is by no means inevitable. With a majority of the population now favoring the peace process, the current period should be characterized by confidence building and reconciliation measures not mistrust and blame. We have identified below several key factors that are undermining attempts at reconciliation.

- **Lack of bridging mechanisms and institutions**

In many areas of the country, opportunities for positive interaction between members of different ethnic groups have dwindled. To a certain extent, Sri Lanka's population was geographically distributed along ethnic lines prior to the civil war. However, 20 years of armed conflict has seriously compounded this trend. Colombo and the Eastern Province are the only areas where large numbers of Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese continue to live in close proximity. And while the three populations coexist and interact relatively peacefully in Colombo, this has not been the case in several parts of the East, where recent ethnic tensions, particularly between Muslims and Tamils, have degenerated to violence.

One clear impediment to building mutual understanding among members of different ethnic groups is a lack of community-level "connectors" that would help bring different groups together. These "connectors" exist to a greater degree in Colombo, where civic and business groups, as well as schools, are more integrated and thus provide regular opportunities for structured interaction between groups. In other areas of the country, such opportunities do not exist, as ethnic communities are highly segregated and insular. In the North, the only contact Tamils have with Sinhalese comes through interactions with feared authority figures representing the Government, the police or the armed forces. In the East, where Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese are evenly represented, the result of closer proximity has been sporadic inter-ethnic violence rather than enhanced understanding. This result is not surprising given the lack of positive community-level interaction between the three ethnic groups. Although communities may live side by side, they tend to gravitate toward their "own" neighborhoods, markets, schools, and associations rather than intermingling with other groups.

- **Perception of continued institutional discrimination**

Many citizens in the Eastern Province do not feel represented by their local Government or protected by their local law enforcement officials. This is particularly the case for the Tamil and Muslim populations, who perceive a continued political hegemony on the part of the Sinhalese. Furthermore, many Tamils express concern that the persistence of institutional discrimination compromises their rights as equal citizens before the law. While many forms of discrimination may no longer be state-sponsored, the perception of restricted access to agricultural land or fishing waters exacerbates the grievances of minority populations and undermines their faith in Government. Any attempt to reduce ethnic tensions and build national unity will be largely ineffective as long as members of certain ethnic groups do not believe they are being treated as equal citizens before the law.

- **Silence and distortions regarding the past**

Many Southerners are not aware of the massive damage inflicted by the war in the North-East, where entire towns were destroyed and neighborhoods abandoned due to intense shelling. In many cases, they do not understand the intensity of the fear and intimidation that characterize LTTE-controlled areas and that left many Tamils with little option but to cooperate with the LTTE. Meanwhile, the Tamil population in the North is largely uninformed about the low levels of economic development experienced by many in the South. In fact, many Northerners are skeptical that the South suffered any negative repercussions at all due to the war, given that most of the fighting took place in the North. The reality is that the huge military expenditures of the war years depleted social and infrastructure spending throughout the country, leaving many areas of the South impoverished and underdeveloped.

If diverse populations had a broader perspective on the trauma and poverty inflicted throughout the country by the civil war, they would likely feel greater empathy toward other groups, have a deeper appreciation of the drastic lifestyle improvements throughout the country since the ceasefire, and give increased support to the peace process.

- **Lack of nationwide, impartial news coverage**

The lack of a bilingual and ethnic-blind print media and the dearth of Tamil newspapers results in serious inconsistencies in the nature and quality of information received by various ethnic groups. With different groups making assumptions and forming their political views based on biased information, it is not surprising that there are strong differences of opinion regarding the political situation and the ongoing peace negotiations. If Sri Lankan citizens had access to impartial media or integrative news coverage that expressed a variety of viewpoints, this would contribute immeasurably to promoting mutual understanding and a clearer sense of national unity.

A SHALLOW PEACE CONSTITUENCY

Popular support for the peace process is broad, but shallow. Economic neglect and misperceptions about devolution undermine a strong public commitment to peace. Since the ceasefire in 2002, the Government has not chosen to broadcast the clear dividends of peace. Likewise, the peace negotiations have proceeded with few attempts to inform the public of the details and significance of the decisions being made. Devolution of power has already occurred for much of the Northern Province, yet throughout the South citizens express concern about "giving away the North" in the negotiations. Confusion abounds regarding federalism and its potential forms.

Although the Prime Minister has pursued foreign investments for long-term development, the Government has not addressed immediate needs or begun significant initiatives in many marginalized regions of the country. Citizens whose access to economic opportunity was stifled during the conflict have not seen evidence of efforts to re-integrate them into the economic mainstream. These citizens watch Colombo prosper while their economic situations stagnate or deteriorate.

After interviews with hundreds of Sri Lankans, it is clear that without economic gain and a clear understanding of power devolution, citizens throughout the country will continue to be drawn toward more radical positions that could undermine the peace process. How is underdevelopment directly linked to the peace process, and what are the messages reaching citizens as they grapple with a new vision of their country?

▪ **Underdevelopment fuels political antagonism**

For the past 20 years, the GoSL has neglected the development of substantial portions of the country, instead expending resources on maintaining and expanding defense. For example, in 2002, about 6 percent of GDP was spent on defense compared to 4.8 percent for health and education combined. In addition, the Government has created large fiscal deficits to support defense spending and has maintained a constant level of social service provision for its citizens. The Government's spending patterns have left economic development largely ignored outside of Colombo and a few other major cities.

The most pressing economic needs are in infrastructure and structural unemployment. Scarcity of water and power and the lack of adequate infrastructure for transportation have left many regions unattractive to private businesses and Government service provision. In part due to this lack of infrastructure, joblessness is very high throughout much of Sri Lanka. Countless people in the Southern Province cited unemployment as their primary concern. Youths face tough prospects for finding employment despite high enrollment rates in secondary education and technical training. Farming is becoming more difficult to sustain as crop prices fall and open trade with India will further challenge agriculture.

Unemployment leaves citizens searching for political alternatives that promise improved social and economic welfare. One of the most active voices focusing on daily needs of citizens is the JVP, a political party opposed to the current peace negotiations. The JVP finds most of its support within the Hambantota and Thissamaharama districts, which are

the most economically depressed areas of the Southern Province. The JVP is the leading party in the Thissamaharama Pradeshiya Sabha (local governing council), which is being used as a model to increase the JVP's support base.

- **Absence of clear peace dividends perpetuates frustration**

The GoSL has taken only minimal steps to ensure short-term economic gains and has had a weak voice in articulating actual and potential dividends of peace. The LTTE's rhetoric indicates concern for improving the economic welfare of Tamils, thereby securing the backing of those who may not otherwise support them. Without connecting the peace process to tangible benefits for individual citizens, Sri Lankans will continue to feel frustrated by stagnant economic growth and may become disillusioned with the peace process. In places where ethnic violence persists, such as the Eastern Province, the competition for scarce jobs will likely fuel further ethnic tensions.

- **Confusion about devolution undermines acceptability of solution**

The terms of the current peace negotiations and scenarios for possible outcomes are not clear to most citizens. The debate in the South revolves around preserving Sri Lanka as a nation and the Sinhalese as a people, as well as the impending "loss" of the Northern and Eastern parts of the island to the Tamils and the LTTE. This debate overlooks the fact that a large degree of devolution has already been achieved for the North, and that devolution does not imply a complete cessation of GoSL control of that region. At this point, the two parties are negotiating the *degree of LTTE control*, not absolute control by either the LTTE or GoSL. However, the public is generally in denial of this reality due to confusing and inconsistent messages from its political leaders, or in many cases a total lack of information.

One of the most organized and influential voices in Sri Lankan society - the Buddhist clergy - remains committed to, and vocally promotes, the idea of a united Sri Lanka. It believes Sri Lankan nationalism will be compromised by the creation of a federalist state. The message from the Buddhist clergy to the people of the South is clear: the ruling of Sri Lanka should be done by one central Government. With few alternative messages to counteract this perspective, it remains a centerpiece of Sinhalese views on federalism. The failure of political elites to proactively support federalism and acknowledge the current state of de facto devolution enables misinformation and nationalistic perspectives to predominate.

INTERIM SELF-GOVERNING AUTHORITY

From the LTTE and GoSL proposals, it can be expected that the ISGA will rule until a final peace agreement is signed or for five years, whichever comes first. Thus, it is highly likely that the ISGA agreement will establish the laws and governing structure of the critical North-East region, including its relationship to the central Government and its place in the greater Sri Lankan state, for the short- and medium-term. Furthermore, the powers devolved and institutions established in the ISGA are likely to become the status quo for the region in an eventual peace agreement, thereby defining the body's nature and

relationship to the GoSL for the foreseeable future. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the arrangement of the ISGA is such that it fosters both short- and long-term peace and stability in Sri Lanka.

From the standpoint of durable peace, why is it so important to establish an ISGA that works from the start?

- Granting maximum devolution for the North-East as requested in the LTTE's ISGA proposal creates a *de facto* separate state, which is certain to fan Sinhalese nationalist resentment and create a political incentive for Sinhalese leaders to crack down on autonomy or even return to the use of force.

- Allowing the LTTE unchecked power in the region could alienate resident minorities, who themselves may agitate for greater rights or autonomy. The LTTE might well crack down on dissenters, giving Sinhalese and/or Muslims in the rest of Sri Lanka the desire to see the central Government intervene. This could destabilize the region and the center-periphery relationship.

- A lack of democracy in the region—that is, absolute LTTE political authority— essentially holds residents hostage if the LTTE does not become an accountable, responsive political party. Residents could either flee to other parts of Sri Lanka or agitate for change within.

- Sri Lankans will expect to have the right to live wherever in their country they choose. If following a peace deal, Sinhalese and Muslims feel they cannot move to the North and East with a reasonable expectation of safety and civil rights, they could charge that the region is indeed a separate state and push the central Government to "regain" the lost territory.

- Stability of the entire post-conflict arrangement depends on citizens experiencing the benefits of peace. If the North-East region does not provide increased safety, transparency, mobility, and respect for human rights, the economic peace dividend will be seriously undermined and people may decide that they need to return to armed conflict.

- Other regions are likely to want increased authorities, as national fairness becomes an issue. Making sure that there is a positive precedent in the North – East region is essential for future political development.

In sum, regarding certain administrative duties, the North and East should function just like any other province and in these ways may serve as a model for devolution for the rest of Sri Lanka. However, as the interim administration will involve a greater level of devolution than has already occurred in other provinces, increased attention needs to be paid to every aspect of devolution to prevent unnecessary and potentially dangerous mistakes.

This section provides recommendations for an action strategy to be implemented by key domestic and international actors in order to catalyze further actions toward a durable peace in Sri Lanka. The recommended measures address the immediate need of keeping the peace process on-track as well as steps that will be necessary to bring peace to fruition after a resolution. A series of broad long-term recommendations that will help sustain lasting peace are offered at the end of the piece.

Briefly, the recommendations are as follows:
- Expand and mobilize the political constituency for peace
- Negotiate and clarify roles that the ruling and opposition party leaders should play throughout the life of the peace process
- Improve physical security in volatile areas
- Build an ISGA that promotes future stability
- Remove the most explicit barriers to equality and national reconciliation

RECOMMENDATION 1: EXPAND AND MOBILIZE THE POLITICAL CONSTITUENCY FOR PEACE

Recognizing that political alliances and control will continue to shift throughout the duration of the peace process, *increasing the political constituency for peace is an essential measure to prohibit any political party from gaining ground through an anti-conciliatory platform.* An expanded peace constituency—and consequently a smaller bloc of spoilers—is the strongest incentive for parties to unite surrounding peace negotiations.

Execute two major bilingual public information campaigns, one promoting the peace dividend and the other explaining federalism in the Sri Lankan context.

The growth of a broader constituency for peace depends on greater recognition of economic peace dividends and a clearer understanding of federalist solutions to power-sharing. As the peace dividend continues to develop and expand in Sri Lanka, an information campaign must be launched to ensure that the people clearly understand the link between economic benefits and peace. Similarly, information about federalism's rationale, advantages, and possible forms must be spread throughout the country. This pertains particularly to the South, where citizens tend to equate a federalist settlement with "losing" a part of Sri Lanka.

Create a non-partisan Campaign for Peace.

The international community—led by Japan, Norway, and the United States—should facilitate the establishment of an inclusive, non-partisan quasi-Governmental campaign to educate the public about the benefits of a peaceful federal solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka. The GoSL, the international community, and business sponsors can finance the

campaign's activities. The campaign's board should be composed of civil society actors, media and advertising professionals, businesspeople, representatives of the major political parties, and representatives of donor countries and institutions. Media/advertising professionals and outreach experts from the civil society sector should staff the campaign, with a special emphasis on non-Colombo outreach expertise. The campaign should strive to be endorsed by both the President and the Prime Minister, as it depends on the cooperation of the Ministry of Mass Communication. Efforts should be made to have domestic leaders manage the campaign. However, if it seems impossible to find a Sri Lankan campaign director acceptable to both major parties, the campaign should consider an international executive director, as the critical elements are competence and lack of bias.

Use state media for campaign-related programs and advertisements.

The Sri Lanka Government's influence over broadcast media can be seized as a benefit by using it to support the campaign. The Ministry of Mass Communication, Information, and Telecommunications should ask state media directors to devote airtime to the campaigns; however, the Ministry should strictly refrain from generating content, leaving that to the non-partisan campaign directorate.

Convince private media owners to participate.

Outdoor advertising (e.g. billboards) and private print media outlets are excellent vehicles for delivering these messages. The campaign should approach major owners, publishers, and editors and ask for a commitment to run campaign messages free of charge or at deep discounts. The campaign can devise many innovative campaign strategies involving private firms, such as asking Sri Lanka wireless providers like Mobitel to use free mass text-messaging to communicate campaign themes to mobile phone users.

RECOMMENDATION 2: NEGOTIATE AND CLARIFY ROLES THAT THE RULING AND OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS SHOULD PLAY THROUGHOUT THE LIFE OF THE PEACE PROCESS.

Defining roles for the ruling and opposition party leaders will be crucial to taming political competition and keeping the peace process on track. Both Wickremesinghe's refusal to include or define a role for the President in the peace process and Kumaratunga's reactionary use of executive control in calling for the April 2, 2004 re-elections destabilized the country and dampened prospects for peace. A structured approach to the roles of the top political leaders is needed to overcome entrenched political rivalry and reaction.

It is essential that the President and the UPFA engage the UNP in the continuing peace process. The UNP has developed a degree of trust with the LTTE and may be more warmly received by the LTTE.

Formally declare key roles for the ruling and opposition party leaders in the peace process.

The following roles in the peace process and beyond should be assigned to the ruling party leaders:

- Create a timeline for negotiations;
- Lead the effort to implement various aspects of a peace deal, e.g. dismantling the HSZ, and demobilizing and disarming GoSL soldiers;
- Construct sub-committees, which reflect the party proportions in Parliament, to handle specific matters in negotiations, such as the Negotiating Sub-Committee on Policing.

The following roles in the peace process and beyond should be assigned to the opposition party leaders:

- Advise leading negotiators on the peace process;
- Serve on Sub-Committees;
- Sign the peace deal

The following roles in the peace process and beyond should be assigned to the President:

- Serve as the primary salesperson for Sri Lanka and its peace to investors and foreign Governments to deliver concrete peace dividends;
- Chair a national dialogue on reconciliation.

The ruling and opposition parties should have public roles in the peace process, including signing the final peace deal.

Equalize treatment of political leaders that move peace forward.

Additionally, in keeping with the important roles played by both the ruling and opposition parties in the peace process, the international community must act immediately to equalize its relationships with both leaders in order to diffuse political tension. In the recent past, the Prime Minister has received valuable attention from the donor community and from the United States in particular. The President must be afforded the same degree of international attention and engagement.

RECOMMENDATION 3: IMPROVE PHYSICAL SECURITY IN VOLATILE AREAS

The security situation in Sri Lanka remains unstable. As long as such insecurity persists, authentic political and civilian participation and the ability to peacefully challenge the LTTE and the GoSL will continue to be minimal. Steps must be taken to ensure that security concerns do not undermine the ceasefire agreement or the ISGA negotiations. On the one hand, the destabilizing influences of two large and opposing security apparatuses must be reduced. On the other, institutions and mechanisms must be

developed to improve rule of law and restore public confidence in security forces and the courts.

Halt the recruitment of child soldiers and the use of intimidation, extortion, assassination, and other forms of violence.

As a major step toward confidence building, the LTTE must demonstrate a commitment to human rights and the rule of law. The LTTE should aim to become a mainstream political party that is respected both domestically and internationally so as to gain credibility as a governing authority of the ISGA.

Commit to a two-year timeframe for dismantling the High Security Zones (HSZ) and closing new military bases in the North and East Provinces.

As a sign of goodwill and confidence-building, the GoSL should close bases not recognized in the ceasefire agreement and begin a two-year process for dismantling the current HSZ arrangement. Specific steps within the time frame for dismantling and military withdrawal should be built around mutual military concessions between the GoSL and the LTTE. Negotiations to dismantle HSZ should serve as an incentive for the LTTE to dismantle their own HSZ, desist from recruitment of child soldiers, demonstrate greater commitment to human rights and the rule of law, and stop the use of intimidation, extortion, assassination and other forms of violence.

Reduce the GoSL's formal military presence in the North and East Provinces by one-third over the next two years.

The central Government has a right and a responsibility to maintain a military presence in these two provinces, but the extent of the current deployment is itself a security concern for many residents. The GoSL has an estimated 100,000-110,000 active duty soldiers and the LTTE 6,000-10,000. Both figures, but especially the Government's force, should be reduced by at least one-third as part of the peace dividend. Gradually downsizing the military presence would be a logical extension of the current ceasefire and would generate mutual confidence in the peace process between the GoSL and the Tamil majority of the region.

Convene a joint advisory group on demobilization and security integration.

Sri Lanka cannot simultaneously retain two separate militaries and secure a lasting peace. Therefore, as part of the peace talks, the parties should convene a joint GoSL and LTTE advisory group to generate a concrete proposal for future disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of soldiers.

The first priority of the advisory group should be for all combatants to acknowledge the mutual benefit of reducing troop levels, by at least one-third. Reduction in troops needs

to be followed by gradual integration of LTTE forces into the GoSL. Integration should begin within one year's time of convening the joint advisory group and should follow a concrete plan to which the LTTE and the GoSL could be held accountable. Without integrating these two forces will continue to oppose each other and maintain the threat of violence.

As part of the integration strategy, the joint advisory group should advise the GoSL on strengthening the capacity of future military and police forces. Skill building is especially required for more Tamil-friendly forces, possibly through continued language promotion, retention of a given proportion of Tamil soldiers and police from the LTTE forces, and targeted recruitment of Muslim soldiers and police.

Establish a UN-sponsored police training and monitoring mission in the North and East based on the UN International Police Task Force in Bosnia.

Noncompliance with rule of law in Sri Lanka has had especially repressive repercussions in the North and East. In order for peace to reach fruition, UN trainers and monitors must be deployed to both LTTE and GoSL police stations in those regions. The trainers will be tasked with improving the professionalism and capabilities of the local police force. Monitors will review complaints, accompany police on patrols and investigations, and report to their own headquarters on police performance. These reports should be publicly available to encourage police and elected officials accountability to the public and to international donors. The presence of international police monitors will serve as a deterrent to unfair law enforcement; boost assurance of the freedom of movement, assembly, and expression; and create a more stable atmosphere for commerce, study, and social activity.

The mission, in consultation with local police leadership, should also actively contribute to the work of the joint advisory group on matters pertaining to security reform. Specifically, they should propose strategies for the integration of police forces, promotion of minority representation and recruitment, and skill building (particularly language training).

Develop a fast-track within the court system for the trial of future human rights cases in order to encourage accountability during the interim period.

It is critical to combating the culture of fear, invigorating democratic participation, and thus solidifying peace that citizens feel a new freedom from repression and intimidation. Police and soldiers need to be more fair and vigilant. Current human rights abuses need to be investigated. Most important, perpetrators of future human rights abuses need to be prosecuted. Sri Lankans—both potential victims and perpetrators—need to see that such crimes cannot be committed with impunity in a peaceful Sri Lanka. This is not the current environment.

The GoSL and the LTTE need to agree to the establishment of a fast-track for human rights trials within their existing court systems. At present, justice is likely to be delayed

and denied. Eligible crimes will be defined in the context of existing Sri Lankan law, but will focus on intimidation and violence related to political, religious, linguistic, ethnic, or regional association. Appointment of judges for fast-track cases will be agreed to by both sides, with strong encouragement from the international community, in order to increase mutual and public confidence in both court systems. Seeing even a few of these cases prosecuted will serve as a deterrent for potential perpetrators and a liberating force for those repressed by the GoSL, LTTE, or other parties.

RECOMMENDATION 4: BUILD AN ISGA THAT PROMOTES FUTURE STABILITY

Recognize the right of non-LTTE actors to have a formal role in the region's political sphere.

The LTTE must prevent intimidation of peaceful non-LTTE political movements and in no way discourage opposition parties from participating in the political process. This means all citizens should have freedom of expression and peaceful assembly that is protected by the regional police and courts. The ISGA should include direct political representation of Tamils not affiliated with the LTTE and of non-Tamil groups.

Invest in the development of non-LTTE political parties and media and insist that the ISGA's ruling charter provide for fair representation of non-Tamils in political institutions.

The LTTE currently represses all opposition political parties in their area of operation. The international community—led by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives and NGOs like the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, the International Republican Institute, and the Open Society Institute—needs to make a significant investment in the cultivation and training of political parties other than the LTTE and in independent media. Furthermore, the LTTE's current ISGA proposal allows for minority representation, but no special rights (e.g. veto) for minorities, even on issues that affect places exclusively populated by minorities. The international community—through diplomatic pressure and aid conditionality—should insist that this provision be changed. The international community should actively promote political pluralism and minority rights in all parties.

Engage the LTTE in the international sphere.

The LTTE, at least partially and in the short term, is going to govern the North-East region. The international community's constructive engagement of the LTTE—as opposed to isolation—will give the international players a more productive role in promoting peace, development, fair representation and human rights, which will be key to keeping residents satisfied and the central Government from interfering. This means

more openness and transparency in providing aid to LTTE-controlled areas, more formal bilateral and multilateral contacts and partnerships between the LTTE leadership and key international players, and open recognition that the LTTE is the political leadership of the ISGA.

LTTE engagement by the international community is critical to facilitating the flow of aid and commerce that people need to see as peace dividends in the areas they control. In addition, the LTTE leadership is more likely to become moderate if its members are exposed to the rest of the world.

The United States should use removal of the LTTE from its list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations—a condition that makes fundraising, diplomatic relations, and official travel difficult for them—as a carrot for getting the group to comply with various requests.

Provide a guarantee of meaningful LTTE/Tamil representation in the central Government via seats in Parliament and possibly a position in the Government.

The GoSL needs to bring the LTTE into the mainstream of democratic decision-making in order to insure their interest in the functioning of the Sri Lankan state. The LTTE's current ISGA proposal defines the jurisdiction of the proposed province, but does not explicitly delineate the ISGA's duties and roles in the central Government. The LTTE must offer a vision for its political participation in the GoSL after the ISGA.

RECOMMENDATION 5: REMOVE THE MOST EXPLICIT BARRIERS TO EQUALITY AND NATIONAL RECONCILLIATION

Remove ethnicity labeling on National Identity Cards.

Every Sri Lankan over the age of 18 must carry an identity card, which is presented at checkpoints and elsewhere. The presence of ethnicity on the card serves no positive purpose and symbolizes an institutional segregation based on ethnicity that inhibits desirable steps toward social cohesion. The GoSL should terminate this practice right away.

Emphasize development projects that 'connect' ethnic groups.

Certain aid organizations, including Oxfam and USAID, have been investing in much-needed community development projects that bring together at a local level the major ethnic and religious groups. The explicit purpose of such projects is to build a school or install an irrigation system, but an additional outcome is trust-building among groups that have developed a serious mistrust and misunderstanding of each other over the last two decades. As aid organizations set their priorities, they should seek to facilitate community-level reconciliation through such "connector" models.

Improve equal access to employment and public services, particularly access to higher education.

The GoSL, led by the Minister of Public Administration, Management, and Reforms, and the LTTE should convene a task force on ethnic balance in public sector employment. Tamils complain of systematic exclusion from Government work, as do Muslims in the East. The two sides should work together to assess the problem and develop a plan for mitigating the imbalance, at all levels of the Government.

The GoSL's Ministry of Tertiary Education and Training should further its efforts to address serious weaknesses in the University system. In particular, institutions should pursue an ethnically mixed student population through equal opportunity policies and merit-based admission processes.

Inequitable distribution of educational resources between schools and across regions, and inadequate teacher deployment, especially to poor areas and those most affected by the conflict, must be addressed and resolved. Efforts to teach English as a bridging language should be continued and expanded.

While the previous recommendations serve to help the GoSL, NGOs, and the international community focus on key problems that could impede negotiations and side rail the peace process, certain issues need to be considered and addressed in order to preserve a long-lasting peace.

RECOMMENDATION 1: PLAN FOR EQUAL AND STABILIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic dividends that have already surfaced due to increased stability are likely to continue. These dividends, however, need to be spread throughout the island and specifically targeted at under-developed areas such as the North-Central Hill Country and the Southern Province. As the former Prime Minister told Time Magazine, "Only through [development] can we consolidate the peace process. People in both the North and South want a peace dividend. They want reconstruction, schools, and employment. I do not think a legal document is going to be enough to satisfy the people."[2]

Investments in basic infrastructure including roads, transportation, sanitation, water supply, and seaports are absolutely necessary to reduce inequality between Colombo and other regions. The GoSL and NGOs must also expand and increase locally owned businesses – through measures such as micro financing and risk insurance – to insulate the country from the vicissitudes of the global marketplace.

Similarly, the GoSL and the international community must help the Sri Lankan workforce effectively respond to structural-adjustment policies implemented by international financial institutions such as the World Bank. As certain sectors of the economy become less central, employees in those sectors must be trained and prepared for new types work. University curricula should also be adapted to meet the needs of the changing economy. Allowing a longer time for economic adjustment policies to be fully implemented would further ease the strain of these policies on vulnerable segments of the population.

RECOMMENDATION 2: CREATE BILINGUAL SERVICE PROVISON

In the long run, citizens of Sri Lanka should feel that their needs are met regardless of where in the country they reside. The lack of available services and opportunities for citizens who speak a minority language in the region perpetuates ethnic segregation. Therefore, the Government should take the measures that will enable Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim citizens to live, work and travel throughout the country without unnecessary burdens due to language barriers. As such, key Government functions should be

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[2] Alex Perry, Interview of Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, *Time* Magazine, available at http://www.time.com/time/asia/features/srilanka/interview.html.

available in both Sinhalese and Tamil regardless of the population distribution in a region, not only in law but in practice as well.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ESTABLISH A NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON RECONCILIATION

It is too early to prescribe a transitional justice and reconciliation mechanism for Sri Lanka. At this point, the GoSL and the LTTE should agree to establish through international facilitation a national working group on reconciliation comprised of one each of their own representatives, at least three from Sri Lankan civil society (including representatives of minority groups), one from the business community, and one international member. The working group should study transitional justice and reconciliation mechanisms in other post-conflict countries and make a recommendation to the parties to the negotiation no more than 12 months after commencing operations. In the process, it should consult with organizations such as the International Center for Transitional Justice that has already begun exploring the post-conflict justice issue in Sri Lanka.

The prospects for peace in Sri Lanka are promising, but the hard-won gains of the last year could be lost without courageous choices by the Sri Lankan political leadership and increased engagement by the international community. The bloody 20-year conflict has traumatized the island's citizenry, inhibited their access to the last decade's burst of global economic growth, and kept the political situation chronically unstable. There have been massive strides toward peace and stability in the last 12-18 months and all parties should push hard to cross this marathon's finish line: to fail would be irresponsible of Sri Lankan leaders and catastrophic for the Sri Lankan people.

In our view, resolution of the Sinhalese political party struggle is the top priority. This conflict—whatever the merits of the arguments—is selfish in the short-term and self-defeating in the long-term. The country is ready for peace. The LTTE is ready to continue negotiations. The world cannot understand why Sri Lanka does not move ahead to peace. All parties need to seize this moment, honor their constituents' faith in them, and settle their dispute immediately. The critical next steps we explore in this report will go unaddressed if this issue is not resolved immediately.

In this report, we have offered recommendations to all stakeholders in Sri Lankan peace, with the hope that our ideas may help overcome the obstacles to immediate progress, address the most pernicious root causes of conflict, and create conditions for a durable peace. We have tried to offer recommendations that are bold but realistic. If we have erred to one side, it is to more dramatic fixes; the stakes in Sri Lanka are too high to deal in timid half-measures.

Colonialism and Independence[3]

1815	British become first European power to win control over Ceylon. Start bringing in Tamil laborers from southern India to work on plantations.
1833	English made official language.
1931	British grant the right to vote and introduce power sharing.
1948	Ceylon gains full independence.

Rise of Sinhala Nationalism

1949	Indian Tamil plantation workers disenfranchised.
1956	Solomon Bandaranaike elected on wave of Sinhalese nationalism. Sinhala made sole official language.
1959	Bandaranaike assassinated by Buddhist monk. Succeeded by widow, Srimavo, who continues nationalization program.
1965	Opposition United National Party wins elections and attempts to reverse nationalization measures.
1970	Srimavo returns to power; extends nationalization program.

Building Ethnic Tensions

1971	Sinhalese Marxist uprising led by students and activists.
1972	Ceylon changes its name to Sri Lanka and Buddhism given primary place as country's religion, further antagonizing Tamil minority.
1976	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) formed as tensions increase in Tamil-dominated areas of North and East.
1977	Separatist Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) party wins all seats in Tamil areas.
1983	13 soldiers killed in LTTE ambush, sparking anti-Tamil riots leading to the deaths of an estimated several hundred Tamils. Conflict develops in north of island between army and LTTE.

Civil War Intensifies

1985	First attempt at peace talks between Government and LTTE fails.
1987	Government forces push LTTE back into northern city of Jaffna. Government signs accords creating new councils for Tamil areas in North and East and reaches agreement with India on deployment of Indian peace-keeping force.
1988	Left-wing and nationalist Sinhalese JVP begins campaign against Indo-Sri Lankan agreement.
1990	Indian troops leave after getting bogged down in fighting in north. Violence between Sri Lankan army and separatists escalates.

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[3] Adpated from the BBC On-line Timeline: Sri Lanka.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/country_profiles/1166237.stm

War and Attempts for Peace

1993	President Premadasa killed in LTTE bomb attack.
1994	President Kumaratunga comes to power pledging to end war. Peace talks opened with LTTE.
1995	Peace talks collapse and LTTE resumes bombing campaign. Government launches major offensive, driving separatists out of Jaffna.
1996	State of emergency extended across the country after LTTE bombs Colombo.
1997	Another major Government offensive against LTTE.
1998	Tigers bomb Sri Lanka's holiest Buddhist site. Tigers capture key Northern town after intensive fighting.
1999	Kumaratunga is wounded in a bomb attack at an election rally. She is re-elected President.
2000	April. LTTE captures strategic Elephant Pass in north of island.
2000	October. Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) wins general elections.
2001	July. Kumaratunga suspends parliament for two months to save her minority Government from defeat in a no-confidence vote.
2001	October. Kumaratunga dissolves Parliament hours before a no-confidence vote, which her minority Government seemed likely to lose.
2001	December. New cabinet, led by Prime Minister Wickramasinghe, is sworn in after the opposition United National Party narrowly won the parliamentary election.

Peace Begins

2002	February. Government and Tamil Tiger rebels sign a permanent ceasefire agreement, paving the way for talks to end the long-running conflict. The peace initiative is sponsored by Norway.
2002	March-May. De-commissioning of weapons begins; the road linking the Jaffna peninsula with the rest of Sri Lanka reopens after 12 years.
2002	September. Government lifts ban on LTTE – a rebel demand. First round of talks begins. Both sides exchange prisoners of war for first time. Rebels drop demand for separate state.
2002	December. The Government and rebels agree to share power. Under the deal, minority Tamils would have autonomy in the North and East.
2003	February. Peace process talks get under way.
2003	April. Tamil Tigers suspend their participation in peace talks, saying they are being marginalized.
2003	November. LTTE offers the Government its proposal for the Interim Self-Governing Authority.

Political Crisis

2003	November. Kumaratunga dismisses three ministers, suspends Parliament. Parliament reopens after two weeks; negotiations with Tamil Tigers put on hold.

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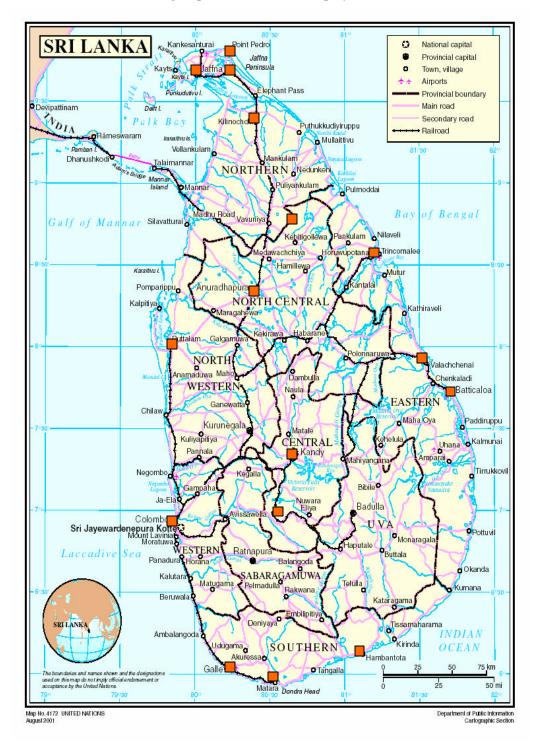
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