

Peace Processes in Aceh and Sri Lanka: A Comparative Assessment

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The 2004 tsunami provided a catalyst for peace talks over the separatist conflict in Aceh, Indonesia, leading to its eventual resolution in 2005. As Aceh was going to peaceful elections in 2006, Sri Lanka, which had also been affected by the tsunami, appeared to be returning to full-scale separatist war. This article assesses some of the underlying similarities and differences between the conflicts in Aceh and Sri Lanka. Within this, it will touch upon claims to self-determination, human rights and political participation, representation, transparency and accountability, more commonly referred to as 'democracy'. In particular, it will acknowledge these values as both challenges to the (restrictive) state, and the means of securing (non-restrictive) state cohesion. Originating in the local and specific, these claims necessarily transcend the local and come to reflect elements of the normative global. In more concrete terms, the Aceh conflict was largely resolved by introducing greater local autonomy within a more democratic space. This paper similarly proposes that a resolution to the Sri Lanka conflict can only come about through the introduction of greater autonomy and democratic plurality. However, with conceptual and strategic hostility growing between Sri Lanka's conflicting parties, it appeared that such resolution was likely only after further protracted bloodshed.

On 24 December 2004, a massive earthquake in the Indian Ocean off the west coast of northern Sumatra triggered a tsunami that devastated much of the coastlines in the region. The two worst affected areas were the Indonesian province of Aceh in northern Sumatra, and the east and south coasts of Sri Lanka, predominantly ethnic Tamil areas. Both areas had for decades been involved in separatist conflict. In Aceh, the Free Aceh Movement (Gerakan Aceh Merdeka – GAM) declared independence from Indonesia in 1976,¹ and in late 2004 was fighting the most bitter campaign of the subsequent conflict. In Sri Lanka, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers, or LTTE), also founded in 1976,² were two years into a ceasefire with the Government of Sri Lanka. If the tsunami was not the reason for renewing peace talks over Aceh, it did provide considerable incentive to achieve a resolution to the conflict that was formally achieved on 15 August 2005. However, while Aceh was enjoying its first full year of peace, the security situation after the tsunami in Sri Lanka deteriorated despite a formal ceasefire agreement, and by the end of 2006 the country was again engaged in open war.

¹ H. Di Tiro, *The Price of Freedom: The Unfinished Diary by Hasan di Tiro*, Ontario, The Open Press, 1984.

² N. Swamy, *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas*, 7th ed, Colombo, Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2006, esp. chapter 3 regarding early Tamil militancy.

How to incorporate multiple ethnicities has probably been the most serious challenge facing post-colonial states. This raises the question of national identity, the success or otherwise of imposed national identities, and the correspondence between national identity and successful state management. It assumes that a 'nation' is a bonded political group, while the 'state' is a spatially defined set of continuing institutions, and 'country' describes the geographic quality of the state.

This article assesses the similarities and differences between the conflicts in Aceh and Sri Lanka, with emphasis on how peace was able to be achieved in one while the other moved away from relative peace towards open conflict. It then asks if peace was able to be achieved in Aceh in what were in some respects similar circumstances, what options might there be for peace in Sri Lanka.

Conceptions of Nation and State

The idea of 'nation' may be contested, especially in cases of ethnic separatism, but there is broad agreement around its key components. They correspond to a group of people that cohere around and define their political interests in common. The idea of nation generally manifests itself as support for the creation, continuation or strengthening of an idea of a common bonded identity, an assertion of independent unity and, usually, self-determination.³ These criteria can be seen to apply to both Aceh and the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka (referred to here as Eelam). Means of creating or attempting to create such a common political identity usually revolve around a common language, more broadly shared cultural values, world view (*weltanschauung*) or ideology, and sets of myths and history,⁴ often involving a common hero or heroes as the national archetype and, not infrequently, in response to a commonly perceived threat or struggle for liberation. These apply to Aceh and Eelam. Other qualities of nation can include having a reasonably compact territory, a capable and energetic intellectual class, all of which help but are not absolutely necessary.⁵

The state, as it is generally understood in the contemporary sense, refers to a specific and delineated area in which a government exercises political and judicial authority, and claims a monopoly over the legitimate use of force (potential or actual violence). In this, the spatial quality of the state 'is integral to its functions and agencies'.⁶ That is, the area of the state defines

³ See W. Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1994; B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, New York, Verso, 1991; A. Smith, 'State-making and Nation-building', in J. Hall (ed.), *States in History*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1986; A. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1986; A. Smith, *Chosen Peoples: Sacred Sources of National Identity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003; E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1983.

⁴ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, pp. 13-18; Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

⁵ Gellner, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁶ Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, p. 235.

the functional sovereign reach and integration of its embedded⁷ 'explicit, complex and formal' agencies;⁸ it defines the geographic material quality and quantity of the state. The establishment of borders implies a state's complete authority up to the limits of its borders. A 'state' may be confluent with, but is analytically distinct from, a 'nation'. Within a given territory, the state can be identified by the presence and activities of its institutions, which define the functional capacity of the state. Both Indonesia and Sri Lanka conform to these definitions of 'state', while Eelam and Aceh have claimed to also conform to such definitions, in contravention of the state claims of Sri Lanka and Indonesia, respectively.

In cases where there are self-conceptualizing and largely exclusive political communities ('nations') within the state, tensions may arise between the interests of such political communities and the interests that are asserted on behalf of the state. Such tensions arise in particular where there are claims to separate state status by political communities, which are in effect claims to national self-determination, such as in Eelam and Aceh. Here, the state is seen to be the logical manifestation of the nation as a functional political community within a given territory. However, it is possible for multi-national or multi-ethnic states to function with a relatively high degree of internal political harmony if they are able to fairly balance the claims of their constituent groups, and recognize the value of group members as more or less equal in terms of civic status and material opportunity.

Similarly, if ethnicity reflects a primordial interest and is accommodated to ensure a functional, viable state, then other interests should similarly be accommodated between specific interest groups. That is to say, common recognition of a plurality of interests and the accommodation of the most basic requirements of these interests are necessary to ensure a successful, cohesive state.⁹ In the case of Aceh and Eelam, a perceived lack of recognition of plurality has undermined the cohesion of Indonesia and Sri Lanka and fuelled claims to separatism.

The common problem with ethnic separateness within state borders is that where there is political organization, it tends to cohere around (usually linguistically defined) ethnic identity and thus causes vertical (geo-ethnic) political fault lines. Such vertical fault lines challenge the wider state-related sense of 'nation', supplanting it with a more specifically located sense of nation, implying the potential for localized nationalist (programmatically) assertion in relation to the relevant territory. That is, a particular ethnic group that identifies itself first and foremost in common in relation to a given territory could potentially establish a claim to that territory ('self-determination') based on its ethnic specificity. The implications of ethnic

⁷ P. Evans, *Embedded Autonomy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995.

⁸ L. Krader, *Dialectic of Civil Society*, New York, Prometheus Books, 1976, p 13.

⁹ See Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. B. Jowett, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1905, Book 2.

political organization rather than socio-economic political organization is that motivating factors have generally been reflected in systems of patronage and personal rule, embodying a chauvinist 'nationalist' sentiment, rather than leadership on the basis of accountability and transparency. In multi-ethnic states, in particular post-colonial states, this has led to the formation of political parties that reflect ethnic rather than economic coherence. Where one ethnic group is politically dominant, this often leads to specific ethnic domination of state institutions to the detriment of minority communities. Elements of this division along geo-ethnic lines can be seen to arise in both Indonesia and Sri Lanka, with ethnic Acehnese and Tamil reluctance to accept perceived or actual ethnic Javanese and Sinhalese domination of the state.

Both Sri Lanka and Indonesia have thus undergone significant internal political tensions over their incorporation of ethnic minorities into their respective states, both of which are unitary. In the Indonesian case, its early nationalists opted for the dual strategy of incorporating all Dutch East Indies territories while employing the regional language Bahasa Melayu (market Malay) as the national language (Bahasa Indonesia). The language issue in Indonesia was particularly sensitive given its dozen or so major ethnic groups and more than 300 minor groups. The language of the ethnic majority Javanese is both complex (with five distinct levels) and explicitly hierarchical, which did not suit the state's early egalitarian and inclusive tendencies. In Sri Lanka, the language issue became problematic when in 1956 English was replaced as the country's official language by Sinhalese, with Tamil having no official status, hence effectively excluding Tamils from official communication. This policy was nominally reversed in 1987, although Sri Lanka retains Sinhalese as the functionally dominant language for all ethnic groups.

A History of Two Conflicts

Claiming self-determination as a separate political entity, a de facto separate Tamil state ('Eelam') existed as a manifestation of Tamil political claims from 2002. A similar claim to separate statehood also existed in the Indonesian province of Aceh, which was resolved with an agreement to grant functional self-government (except in functions reserved to the Republic of Indonesia), despite Indonesia also having a unitary constitution. However, the claim to separate state status directly challenged the sovereign cohesion of the pre-existing states and thus led to reciprocal conflict over the last decades.

Aceh, or more properly Indonesia as a whole, and Sri Lanka share a history of colonialism and, prior to the colonial era, did not have a geo-spatial unity that has since come to describe the post-colonial states. Sri Lanka was briefly unified under various warring princes up until the 12th century but did

not enjoy a voluntary political unity and remained disunited after that time.¹⁰ It was colonized first by Portugal, then Holland and finally the United Kingdom. Large parts of what is now Indonesia, on the other hand, were briefly unified in the 14th century under the Majapahit Empire.¹¹ Indonesia was colonized by Holland, with Portugal, the United Kingdom and Spain coming to colonise other parts of the archipelago. The pre-colonial existence of both demonstrated no linguistic or successful political unity.

Aceh had been recognized as an independent sovereign state by the United Kingdom and the United States in the 19th century,¹² a position it claimed until invaded by the Netherlands in 1873. This invasion was resisted until 1912, although there was sporadic resistance until the Japanese invasion of 1942. Acehnese hereafter directly contributed to the 1945-49 war of independence against the Dutch, assuming being granted autonomy within a loose federated state. However, in 1950, Indonesia was reconstituted as a unitary state and Aceh was subsumed into the province of North Sumatra. In response, by 1953 Aceh had risen in revolt, declaring independence from Jakarta and joining the Darul Islam rebellion with West Java and South Sulawesi. While the Darul Islam rebellion is generally characterized as intended to change the nature of the state rather than to secede from it, Aceh's inclusion reflected a desire to return to at least autonomous status.

The Darul Islam rebellion ended in defeat in 1962, although with a promise of 'special administrative status' for Aceh. However, this was not meaningfully put into practice and deeply undermined after the rise of the New Order government from 1966. Following growing economic exploitation of Aceh by Jakarta, in 1976, a former Darul Islam leader, Hasan di Tiro, declared independence from Indonesia, thus beginning a separatist conflict only resolved in 2005.

As noted by Sitrapalam in relation to Sri Lanka, the development of nationalist sentiment during the colonial era was based

on the foundations of the society's traditional past. They saw the modern phase of nationalism, not as a novel, essentially different phenomenon, causing a break with the past, but rather as an extension of their past, a rebirth of the old society, its renaissance in a new form.¹³

¹⁰ N. Yogasundram, *A Comprehensive History of Sri Lanka: From Prehistory to Tsunami*, Colombo, Vijitha Yapa Publications, 2006.

¹¹ M. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since C. 1200*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2002, ch. 2; R. Cribb, *Historical Atlas of Indonesia*, London, Curzon, 2000, pp. 86-88.

¹² A. Reid, *The Contest for North Sumatra: Atjeh, the Netherlands and Britain, 1858-1898*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1969; A. Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra*, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1979; N. Sjamsuddin, *The Republican Revolt: A Study of the Acehnese Rebellion*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985.

¹³ S. Sitrapalam, *Nationalism, Historiography and Archeology in Sri Lanka – A Perspective*, Unpublished paper, Thirunelvely, University of Jaffna, undated..

'Traditional cultural nationalism' that had not yet developed as a civic identity led to an attempted hegemony by the majority ethnic Sinhalese over the Tamil and Muslim minorities, which in turn generated conflict as these minorities sought to resist such hegemony.¹⁴

In Sri Lanka, Tamil speaking people had been relatively privileged under British colonial administration, being generally better educated than the Sinhalese majority and employed in government administrative positions. As with other multi-ethnic colonial states that favoured an ethnic minority over a majority, such as Ruanda, Uganda, or Zimbabwe, when colonialism ended in 1949, the ethnic minority lost their privileged position. In 1956, Sri Lanka's administrative language was changed from English to Sinhalese, which alienated many Tamils and led to calls for the establishment of an autonomous Tamil region in the north and east of the country.

By 1972, radicalized Tamils resorted to violence in support of their claims, with the precursor group to the LTTE being formed. In 1978, LTTE attacks led to an anti-Tamil Sinhalese riot in which it is believed that up to 3,000 Tamils were killed. This swelled the ranks of the LTTE and, along with covert training from India and later consolidation of militant Tamil groups, led to the formation of a highly developed military organization. By the mid-1980s, the LTTE was engaged in full-scale conflict with the government of Sri Lanka, occupying the Jaffna Peninsula. Indian intervention in 1987 eventually led to conflict between the LTTE and the Indian army, concluding with the Indian army withdrawing in 1990. Conflict has continued, with pauses, since that time.

Similarities and Differences between Aceh and Eelam

While all states are different – such difference is implied in their geo-institutional separation – and all conflicts are specific to their own causes and circumstances, some states share commonalities and some conflicts do find points of common reference. Eelam and Aceh share a number of commonalities, specifically that they are both parts of colonial unities that did not reflect pre-colonial political conditions, that both survive within a unitary post-colonial structure, that both have substantial claims to pre-existing national identity aspiring to a separate state and which continued to manifest as post-colonial national identities, that both have been engaged in a seemingly intractable war for self-determination, and that both wars established a strategic stalemate.

Having noted such commonalities, the similarities between the Aceh and Eelam conflicts are much tested by their differences. The first main difference between the two is that the Aceh conflict, while reflecting more

¹⁴ N. Wickramasinghe, *Ethic Politics in Colonial Sri Lanka 1927-47*, New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, 1995.

conventional claims to nationalism, was motivated by Islamic principles. The Eelam conflict is similarly nationalist, but not clearly inspired by any particular religious preference, even though most Tamils are Hindu (a small minority are Christian). Following this, both movements adopted the interconnected universalist claims to and rhetoric of self-determination, democratisation (variously defined or misunderstood) and human rights. In practical terms, the claims to nationalist self-determination by both provided a more significant similarity between them than their different religious orientations might have implied. Following this, both movements also appeared to be driven by an adherence to principle and a sometimes fatalistic attitude towards dying for one's cause.

A more significant ideological difference between the two organizations was that while GAM practiced communal living in its liberated zones, the natural tendency of its senior members both in Aceh and abroad was to gravitate towards small business. Indeed, GAM's original leadership largely comprised of small businessmen, traders and professionals, and their rebellion can in part be seen as opposed to the imposed centralized corruption of Jakarta. However, the conflict quickly produced depredations against Acehnese as its principle motivating cause. Beyond a loose orientation towards small business, GAM completely lacked an official ideology, except for a relatively late and for some a superficial conversion to democracy,¹⁵ and was generally politically moderate. While technically hierarchical, its organizational structure was relatively flat and decentralised, with field commanders having a high level of operational autonomy, and with the reporting process to the political leadership in Stockholm being primarily advisory. The LTTE, on the other hand, had its roots in the student movements of the 1970s, was revolutionary and tended towards state socialism, although blended with a high proportion of small business activity and an in principle acceptance of free market capitalism.¹⁶ The LTTE was a distinctly hierarchical and highly centralised organization, which formally precluded democratic processes on the grounds that it could not afford internal dissent in times of war.¹⁷

A further significant difference between the two organizations was that, regardless of how one defines the term and whether or not it is a useful

¹⁵ GAM officially endorsed a 'democratic' platform in its 'Stavanger Declaration' (Aceh-Sumatra National Liberation Front (i. e. GAM), Stavanger, Norway, 21 July 2002), but had not worked out a mechanism for a democratic internal structure until a meeting in Stockholm in February 2005 (at which the author was present). GAM 'prime minister' Malik Mahmud thereafter subverted the agreement on the democratic internal selection of candidates for elections, in May 2005 moving to appoint candidates in opposition to candidates democratically selected by the organization just days before.

¹⁶ See C Stokke, *Tamil Eelam - a De Facto State: Building the Tamil Eelam State: Emerging State Institutions and Forms of Governance in LTTE-controlled Areas in Sri Lanka*, Oslo, Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, 2005.

¹⁷ Interview, head of the LTTE Peace Secretariat, Puledewan (one name), Kilinochche, May 11 2006.

descriptor or moral value judgment, the LTTE was widely and increasingly proscribed as a terrorist organization, whereas GAM never was. The implication of this was that being associated or working with the LTTE was a criminal act in many parts of the world, whereas being associated or working with GAM was not. This in turn had implications for travel, fund raising activities, the distribution of aid to sympathetic in-country organizations and a host of security-related matters. This distinction characterized different approaches to conflict by GAM and the LTTE. GAM was always careful not to engage in activities that could see it labelled as a terrorist organization, in particular the indiscriminate killing of civilians, the use of bombing to create a sense of terror, or operations outside its specific field of concern. The LTTE, by comparison, has engaged in indiscriminate attacks, has been credited with inventing suicide bombings as a means of specific targeting, and often engaged in attacks well outside its principle geographic area of concern. Its general justification has been that such attacks are a legitimate response to government attacks within its claimed homeland and that it cannot afford to limit its operational capacity by concerns about how it is externally viewed.

More importantly, and with serious implications for peace processes, GAM had significant guerrilla capacity but, with an overall ratio of around 40:1 (approximately 200,000:5,000)¹⁸, never enough to militarily defeat the Indonesian military (TNI). Indeed, GAM was generally only lightly armed and struggled to meet its own requirements for armaments and munitions. Its core fighters had been trained as specialist combatants in Libya,¹⁹ but most of its guerrillas were less well trained and equipped.²⁰ The LTTE, on the other hand, could field a conventional army of perhaps up to 25,000,²¹ was well trained, heavily armed, had a highly functional naval unit (Sea Tigers) and even had a small air wing,²² which it used to symbolic effect in an air strike on a military air base in Colombo in late March 2007. By comparison, the recently expanded Sri Lanka Armed Forces had perhaps 158,000 personnel whose training was generally no better and perhaps less

¹⁸ That is, the approximate size of the TNI-AD, or army, and a realistic guesstimate of GAM's strength, which was never officially disclosed to the author but which ranged between an 'official' figure of 3,000 (Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement, 15 August 2005 [quoted as MoU in the following], point 4.2) and various boasts of between 7,000 and 15,000 (different members of GAM commenting, in Stockholm and Helsinki, at different times between February and August 2005).

¹⁹ This was acknowledged to the author by then GAM spokesman Bakhtiar Abdullah, who had been in the first intake to Libya in 1986 and stayed for four years as a senior trainer (various discussions, February – August 2005).

²⁰ Based on discussions with US journalist William Nessen, who spent several weeks traveling with GAM, Kuala Lumpur, March 2006, and the limited experience of the author with GAM fighters in the field.

²¹ This number was hinted at by an LTTE cadre traveling with the author, but not confirmed. Other estimates have put the LTTE's numbers around 10,000, while Sri Lankan sources have quoted figures as low as 800 regular fighters and 2,000 militia (B. Balachandran, 'Lankan army hopes to clear East by March', *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), 3 January 2007.).

²² Acknowledged to the author by an LTTE captain, Kilinochche, 10 May 2006.

than that of the LTTE, which lacked motivation and, while better equipped with conventional weapons, ships and planes, did not enjoy a consistent advantage in conventional combat.²³

Related to the capacity or otherwise to field conventional military forces was the state capacity of the respective organisations. While neither GAM nor the LTTE could claim to represent a state that was externally regarded as legitimate, both did administer significant areas of territory, or 'liberated zones', and this thus implied some state capacity. GAM's 'state capacity' was limited to local administrative structures based on traditional village models,²⁴ limited educational facilities and rudimentary health facilities. When GAM fighters needed serious medical treatment, if possible they would pay a local doctor or transfer to Malaysia where there was a considerable Acehnese community.²⁵ Education, beyond most basic levels, was conducted through government funded schools and institutions, both inside and outside liberated zones.

Compared to this most basic level of organizational capacity, the LTTE virtually ran a state within a state, and indeed its intention was rather than to wait for a negotiated settlement, to establish a de facto independent state. Its status was enhanced by the 2002 ceasefire agreement and technical control lines which quickly morphed into 'borders', complete with immigration checks, visas and customs and tax.²⁶ The 'capital' of Eelam, Kilinochche, was the LTTE's administrative centre, and hosted a range of institutions such as police (including traffic police with speed detection radars – 50 km/h within towns and 80 km/h outside), three levels of courts and a detailed legal code.²⁷ Other signs of administration included departments of works, public transport and fuel, hospitals, asylums, clinics, children's homes, rehabilitation centres, primary and secondary schools and the construction of a proposed university.²⁸

Elements in Favour of Resolution in Aceh...

The resolution of conflict requires a real interest in achieving peace, the intention to do so, and having the capacity to control one's forces to ensure

²³ This observation is based on the Sri Lanka military's mixed record in battling the LTTE, leading to the establishment of the 'liberated zone' in the Vanni.

²⁴ D. Kingsbury, 'Islam, Democratisation and the Free Aceh Movement', *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, in press 2007; also D. Kingsbury, *Peace in Aceh: A Personal Account of the Aceh Peace Process*, Jakarta, Equinox, 2006, pp 184-5.

²⁵ Discussions with Mhd. Nur Djuli (later a member of the GAM negotiating team), Kuala Lumpur, 2001, 2002.

²⁶ Observed by the author, northern Vanni technical control line, 9 May 2006; see also Stokke, *op. cit.*; R. Gopalakrishnan, 'The Struggle for Tamil Eelam: Very little of Sri Lanka in Kilinochche', *Reuters*, 2 February 2006.

²⁷ LTTE, *The Judicial System of Tamil Eelam: Structure Function and Duties of Officials in Charge*, Kilinochche, ANBU Printing Press, 2004.

²⁸ Observed by the author, 9 – 14 May 2006.

that peace can be implemented and sustained. When considering the option of a negotiated peace in Aceh, GAM's political leadership was asked by the author whether it was prepared to accept anything less than full independence. This was predicated upon the first principle question of what independence was intended to achieve. Once having established what purpose independence was intended to serve, it was then possible to ask whether that purpose could be achieved by means other than independence.²⁹ Similarly, during the negotiations process, the author put the question to the Indonesian government that if the integrity of the state was its principle goal, could this be achieved by means other than imposing a constrained unitary state, which in this case only allowed political parties that had wide representation to participate in elections, precluding locally based parties.³⁰ This then went back to questions about the principle purpose of the state, and whether such constraints were necessary to maintain state unity. Finally, GAM was a significantly united organisation and while it could not claim demonstrated widespread representation within Aceh, it could claim a monopoly on the means of violence by pro-self determination forces.

There were also strategic considerations by both sides to be taken into account. The strategic reality for GAM in 2004 was that, as an organization, it had suffered serious reversals under a heavy renewed military campaign launched in May 2003³¹. While GAM's numbers were not seriously depleted, its access to sources of food, medicine and ammunition was constrained, damaging the morale of its fighters and their capacity to sustain their military claims, much less hold on territory.³² Similarly, with a population of a little over four million, Aceh comprised less than two per cent of the population of Indonesia (ca. 230 million). However, the strategic situation was not entirely in the government's favour. The TNI had shown that while it was capable of inflicting suffering on GAM, it did so primarily by inflicting suffering on the people of Aceh. This had the effect of driving more recruits into the arms of GAM, strengthening it at the time it was under heaviest attack. Similarly, the TNI had shown, over almost 30 years of conflict that its military approach was unable to end the guerrilla campaign. While it had damaged GAM, the organization was by no means defeated, and had demonstrated in the past great capacity to come back strongly from previous reversals. In this sense, while GAM survived it was in fact winning.

Having noted GAM's capacity to survive and to regenerate, by 2004 it had also become clear that GAM simply did not have the military capacity to win

²⁹ This is based on four days of discussion between the author and the GAM senior political leadership in Stockholm, 27-30 October 2004.

³⁰ Discussion between the author and head of the Indonesian negotiation team to the Helsinki peace talks, Justice Minister Hamid Awaluddin, Jakarta, 23 March 2005.

³¹ This was only acknowledged by senior GAM figures, and then still privately, to the author following the signing of the MoU.

³² Discussion with Nessen, *op. cit.*

independence outright through military means, and that there was no international support for Aceh's independence, which precluded any possible international settlement in that direction (e.g. as in East Timor). Balanced against this, the Indonesian government also needed to exercise control over the TNI. The TNI had long been a political and economic power in its own right, was engaged in widespread corrupt and illegal activity, and was only nominally under civil authority.³³ Statements made by President Yudhoyono indicated that civil authority over the TNI was one of the key objectives of his presidency.³⁴ To achieve that, he needed to separate the TNI from its sources of income in Aceh and to reduce the TNI's claim to being guardian of the state. Added to this was that, set against a tight budgetary environment, the cost of the Aceh campaign was believed to be unsustainable.³⁵ The conflict also had the effect of scaring off potential foreign investors, especially in hydrocarbon industries such as those in Aceh. This had the effect that Indonesia had gone from being a net oil exporter to becoming a net oil importer, at a time of world record high oil prices. Further, the lack of foreign direct investment approximated the gap between Indonesia's economic growth, at around 4.5 per cent, and population growth, meaning that per capita GDP was declining rather than growing which, based on relatively steady incomes, meant increased unemployment. Hence Yudhoyono needed a resolution to the Aceh conflict for a number of pressing reasons, as well as just showing that Indonesia could resolve its internal problems and make a stronger claim to being a nation as well as a state. In this, Yudhoyono could claim a popular mandate as Indonesia's first directly elected president and, through strategic alliances (including his vice-president, Jusuf Kalla, who was also head of Golkar, the largest party in the legislature), could rely on majority support within the Indonesian legislature.

GAM similarly faced economic difficulties, although of a different type. Apart from having reduced access to supplies, the local and expatriate community also had difficulty in funding GAM, while its use of *pajak nanggroe* (state tax) was resented by some and otherwise increasingly difficult to collect.³⁶ In all,

³³ M. Mietzner, 'Business as Usual? The Indonesian Armed Forces and Local Politics in the Post-Soeharto Era', in E. Aspinall and G. Fealy (eds.), *Local Power and Politics in Indonesia: Democratisation and Decentralisation*, Singapore, ISEAS, 2003; D. Kingsbury, *Power Politics and the Indonesian Military*, London, Routledge-Curzon, 2003, Chapter 5; D. Kingsbury and L. McCulloch, 'Military business in Aceh', in A. Reid (ed.), *Verandah of Violence*, Washington, University of Washington Press, 2006.

³⁴ Laksamana.net, 'TNI Polemic Shows Military's Political Clout', 6 November 2004, <<http://www.kabar-irian.com/pipermail/kabar-indonesia/2004-November/000895.html>> [Accessed 2 February 2007].

³⁵ Reliable figures for the cost of the campaign were unavailable, but it was known that the campaign had a budget for six months, which it exceeded when the campaign was not successful in that time. There were also unconfirmed accounts of the TNI levying other government departments to bolster its funds for Aceh.

³⁶ This frank admission was based on a discussion by the author with a GAM intelligence operative, May 2005.

GAM's economic circumstances were considerably reduced, which made continuing the conflict difficult, although far from impossible. Finally, the tsunami on 24 December 2004 that devastated most of low-lying Aceh, left around 180,000 people dead or missing and many more homeless provided significant impetus to a decision by GAM made two days prior to accept an invitation to attend talks in Helsinki.

In the first instance, the tsunami opened the province, which had been closed to outsiders since the May 2003, allowing in large numbers of media as well as foreign militaries and large numbers of aid organisations. This had the effect of highlighting both the conflict (GAM declared a unilateral ceasefire immediately following the tsunami, although the TNI continued its operations) and the necessity of ending it to allow relief work to go ahead unhindered. While the TNI was initially reluctant to allow in foreigners, the extent of the disaster was such that the Indonesian government was unable to cope and quickly gave in to foreign pressure. Similarly, while a TNI function was supposed to be development and emergency relief, it was overwhelmed by the scope of the disaster and, according to some aid agency reports,³⁷ even slowed down the shipment of supplies to disaster areas and imposed 'taxes' on goods being shipped (consistent with its common 'revenue' raising methods).

If both sides wished to see an end to the conflict, they had been trapped by their own absolutist rhetoric and the intensity of the conflict. The tsunami acted as a circuit-breaker to these impediments, and allowed them to assume the high moral ground in seeking peace (despite the TNI continuing its offensive campaign throughout the peace process). On the part of GAM, too, there was also a sense that 'the people of Aceh have suffered enough'.³⁸ Finally, once the attention of the international community was turned to Aceh, not least through media access, there was a view that both sides should compromise to reach a negotiated settlement.³⁹

In peace processes there are usually elements that militate against a resolution, which might undermine the process itself or could undermine any resolution that is achieved. In Aceh, the main problem following the signing of the peace agreement in August 2005 was that the enabling legislation was passed four months after the agreed date, in July 2006, and that it compromised a number of elements, in particular removing the Acehese legislature's power of veto on state legislation concerning Aceh, the method

³⁷ This comment is based on first-hand reports to the author by aid workers in Aceh at this time. Also, 'The Americans brought equipment, the Germans brought medical supplies, the Australians brought clean water but the TNI only brought guns', Ed Aspinall, Center for Southeast Asian Studies seminar on 'Post-tsunami Aceh', Monash University, 27 April 2005.

³⁸ This increasingly common phrase was frequently stated, in front of the author, by various members of the GAM negotiating delegation, especially during the early period of the peace talks.

³⁹ See Kingsbury, *Peace in Aceh: A Personal Account of the Aceh Peace Process*, p. 34.

of allocation of income from natural resources, and other issues of central control.⁴⁰ However, sufficient of the original agreement remained, in particular a freeing of local political opportunity, to allow GAM to continue with the peace process. While the incomplete implementation of the peace agreement (Memorandum of Understanding - MoU) was problematic, more so was the continuing presence of what were claimed by GAM⁴¹ to be an unnecessarily high number of TNI and police. 14,700 troops and 9,100 police were to remain stationed in Aceh,⁴² which was around double the usual number for a military command area or a province.⁴³ Further, both TNI and police had trouble in accepting the changing circumstances, and both continued to engage in illegal activity in the province, to the detriment of local people.⁴⁴ Associated with this was a lingering sense of bureaucratic-authoritarianism on the part of the Indonesian government, if not on the part of the executive branch then certainly in elements of the legislature and the bureaucracy.⁴⁵ Finally, while the MoU did allow Aceh some degree of political autonomy, questions remained as to how adequately this addressed the underlying sense of Acehnese national identity, and the relationship between such an identity, self-determination and claims for an independent state.⁴⁶ While this did not appear to be likely to undermine the peace in Aceh,⁴⁷ it did provide a continuing backdrop of nationalist assertion that had the capacity to again test the relationship between Aceh and Jakarta in the future.

... and Elements Militating against Resolution in Elam

By way of comparison, in Sri Lanka the issues of interest, intention and capacity were and remain more complex. Indonesia was constructed of dozens of significant minorities (along with hundreds of small minorities and one majority) and hence incorporating minority concerns (even if that has been incomplete) is critical to state success. In Sri Lanka, however, there is one large majority—Sinhalese (ca. 70 per cent)—and two significant minorities, one being Muslim (ca. seven per cent) and the other Tamil (ca.

⁴⁰ Tempo, 'Bones of Contention', *Tempo*, no. 46/VI, 18-24 July 2006.

⁴¹ This is based on discussions with members of GAM's political leadership, in particular in Helsinki, 16 July 2005 and 13 August 2005.

⁴² MoU, point 4.5.

⁴³ The size of various Kodam varies according to the security environment and the extent of its geographic reach, but 7-8,000 personnel is common for a non-combat zone.

⁴⁴ This is based on personal discussions on this issue with members of the Aceh Monitoring Mission between October 2005 and December 2006, as well as comments made by various members of GAM over this period.

⁴⁵ Tempo, 'Passed ... Imperfect', *Tempo*, no. 46/VI, 18-24 July 2006.

⁴⁶ See E. Aspinall, 'The Helsinki Agreement: A More Promising basis for Peace in Aceh?', *Policy Studies*, no. 20, Washington, East-West Center, 2005; International Crisis Group, *Aceh: A New Chance for Peace Asia*, Briefing, no. 40, 15 August 2005.

⁴⁷ This was especially the case after Aceh's administrative elections in December 2006, in which (unofficial) GAM and GAM supported candidates won about 80 per cent of all positions, including that of governor and vice-governor.

15 per cent.⁴⁸ Within the Sinhalese majority there was a tendency towards a national chauvinism,⁴⁹ underpinned by the dominant religion of Buddhism, which occupies the state's 'foremost place'. While some Buddhist clergy and leaders have worked for peace efforts, others from its monastic order have been religiously assertive and in some cases combative. In this, the view is that the country of Sri Lanka is a global repository of Buddhist values and hence must be maintained as wholly Buddhist. Within this world view, Hindu Tamils and Muslims (also mostly Tamil) are an unwanted intrusion and should preferably convert to Buddhism or otherwise subsume their sense of difference. Although geographic proximity worked against the LTTE—with the exception of the Jaffna Peninsula, most Tamil areas are easily accessible from the rest of Sri Lanka—the relative size of the Tamil population and its concentration, especially in the north and to a lesser extent the east—created a viable state alternative to the Sinhalese dominated Sri Lankan state. Similarly, the LTTE had a monopoly on the use of violence, and hence imposed unity upon the claims to Tamil self-determination.

Finally, while the 2004 tsunami had a serious impact on Sri Lanka, with some 30,000 being killed, it did not draw in foreigners relative to local population to the extent of Aceh, nor did it act as a catalyst for peace. Rather, the tsunami and the aid flows associated with its relief acted to further entrench divisions within the state, especially over the allocation and control of the flow of aid.

The impediments to a negotiated resolution in Sri Lanka were thus more profound. From the perspective of the LTTE, there was a clear lack of trust in the intentions of the Sri Lanka government to genuinely pursue peace.⁵⁰ This was supported by escalating attacks by Government forces over 2006, in particular from May. These attacks were formalised by the announcement at the beginning of January that the Government of Sri Lanka intended to seek a military solution to the LTTE issue.⁵¹ Moreover, while Indonesia had been moving towards an increasingly democratic system, Sri Lanka appeared to be moving away from open democratic processes and towards a type of bureaucratic authoritarianism.⁵² While an outcome that promoted

⁴⁸ M. Gunasingham, *Primary Sources for History of the Sri Lanka Tamils: World-Wide Search*, Chullora, NSW, MV Publications, 2005, pp. 12-32.

⁴⁹ N. De Votta, 'Chauvinism and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka', BASAS Annual Workshop, University of Bristol, 13 November 2004.

⁵⁰ This observation is based on discussions by the author with senior members of the LTTE international branch, in particular in 2006, a time in which there was also a marked breakdown in the 2002 'Cease Fire Agreement'. These views were supported in particular by interview with head of the LTTE Peace Secretariat, Pulidevan (single name attrib.), 10 and 12 May 2006, the head of the LTTE International secretariat, Castro (nom de guerre) on 11 May 2006, and with the political head of the LTTE, Suppiah Paramu Tamilchelvan, on 13 May 2006.

⁵¹ Balachandran, *op. cit.*

⁵² Sri Lanka shifted from a parliamentary to a presidential-led system (akin to the French model) in 1978. Since then, executive authority has been increasingly located in the hands of the

democratization and political devolution could work in Aceh, it appeared to have little real hope in Sri Lanka, due to the extensive powers of the executive president who was, almost by default, an ethnic Sinhalese.⁵³

Related to the LTTE's state capacity was its military capacity, which challenged that of the Sri Lanka military in various military operations. That is to say, while it seemed unlikely that the LTTE could win a war outright against the Sri Lanka government (it has not done so to date), it did appear to have the capacity to take and hold significant territories, and that if the LTTE felt pressure, then it was pressure of a similar type felt by the Sri Lanka Government and its military. In this, the relatively even matching of the two sides, if not in numbers then in capacities, did not introduce the disequilibrium that pushed one side into a position of seeking a negotiated settlement.⁵⁴

While there have been expressions of interest within the Sri Lankan government in a negotiated settlement, entering genuine negotiations—those that will fundamentally alter the nature of the Sri Lankan state—is exceptionally difficult in Colombo. Sri Lanka's legislature has been controlled by a series of coalitions around one of two major parties. Although the two major, almost exclusively Sinhalese parties (United National Party and Sri Lanka Freedom Party) dominate, neither is able to command an absolute majority in its own right, and hence both are vulnerable to losing the legislative majority. Further, both have tended to try to 'outbid' each other with nationalist Sinhalese rhetoric. Any government that goes down the path of compromise with the LTTE thereby opens itself to attack by opposition parties, or indeed by minor coalition partners, and hence is likely to be undermined in office. This then acts as a structural political impediment to the legislature pursuing or accepting a negotiated settlement. Similarly, while Sri Lanka has an executive president, he or she must still rely on the legislature for the passage of enabling legislation and may similarly be undermined in office, assuming a prior intention to

president, who appoints ministers as well as the Supreme Court judges who decide on constitutional issues. The role of the prime minister has since become increasingly ceremonial. The president appoints, among others, the defence minister, who was from late 2005 an army brigadier-general and brother of the president. Parliamentary politics continues in Sri Lanka, although the use of army-linked death squads (see Human Rights Watch, *Complicit in Crime: State Collusion in Abductions and Child recruitment by the Karuna Group*, 24 January 2007), torture and denial of *habeus corpus*, contribute to an increasingly constrained political climate. (USAID Mission in Sri Lanka, Democracy and Governance Program, *Democracy and Governance Program Initiative*, 2006).

⁵³ The organization of Sri Lanka's political parties and the voting patterns of its citizens have ensured that ethnic Sinhalese parties dominate the parliament, if not always in mutual agreement, and that the executive president has, to date, been Sinhalese.

⁵⁴ The LTTE had offered a negotiated settlement, around a federated state model, but this was not engaged with by the Government of Sri Lanka. In 2006, this offer was effectively withdrawn as intended talks collapsed or failed to start.

compromise. The change in Sri Lanka's constitution to a powerful executive presidency occurred only in 1978 and despite the previous president, Chandrika Kumaratunga, promising a return to a Westminster system, she did not push such constitutional change and her successor, Mahinda Rajapaksa, has also not expressed interest in doing so.

Since December 2005, the Sri Lanka government has taken a significantly more belligerent attitude towards the LTTE, escalating its attacks via proxy 'militia' (including the so-called Karuna faction)⁵⁵ and engaging in direct kidnappings, murders and assaults. Somewhat in contrast to this more belligerent approach, in early 2006, President Rajapaksa also formed an 'all party' conference (but not including the LTTE) to try to develop a political formula that could be used as a basis for negotiations with the LTTE. The work of this conference was continuing at the time of writing, although with little advance. Both sides have, since the ceasefire of 2002, also upgraded and stockpiled weapons ahead of a new round of fighting, with both sides exhibiting a more belligerent attitude, both in rhetoric and action.

The Sri Lanka government has sought to again control all of the territory of the state prior to negotiations. Its claims to continuing support for the 2002 ceasefire have been rendered meaningless by events in 2006, and comments by influential figures in Colombo appear to confirm that it no longer seeks a genuinely negotiated settlement, but rather that it wishes to impose its own interpretation of what constitutes a settlement. Similarly, the LTTE has in 2006 sought to expand its territorial control⁵⁶, especially to areas claimed as Tamil homeland, to be able to negotiate its claims from a position of relative strength.⁵⁷ That is, both sides have resumed and escalated the conflict and both are seeking an effective military victory, or to be able to negotiate from a position of strength.

Further impediments to a successfully negotiated peace included the historical memory (or myth) of pre-colonial status or separation, distinct 'national' identities, and the relative artificiality of the post-colonial state. That Sri Lanka was constructed as a unitary state, when a federal state would have more usefully accommodated its different national interests, was fairly clearly an error of late colonial administration. However, attempts to move away from a unitary model have, to date, foundered on the requirement to change the constitution and the implications this would have

⁵⁵ The 'Karuna Faction' is led by the LTTE's eastern districts commander, Col. Karuna, who split with the LTTE in 2004. Given the LTTE's continuing military capacity in the eastern districts, it seems likely that LTTE claims are correct that most of his troops (numbering up to 5,000) returned to the LTTE after his defection. However, it does appear that Karuna continues to lead a militia in the Batticaloa district, and that this might be comprised of either Sri Lanka army troops, mercenaries or local Sinhalese or disaffected Tamils.

⁵⁶ LTTE attacks near Trincomalee and in the southern Jaffna area support this view.

⁵⁷ This view was unofficially supported by a number of LTTE cadres (date and place of discussions not noted for ethical reasons).

for a common Sinhalese desire for geographic unity. Finally, resolution was only available through negotiation, and the capacity of the LTTE to negotiate was severely limited by the serious illness (and, in December 2006, death) of its chief negotiator, Anton Balasingham. It was his illness and inability to attend negotiations in 2006 aimed at de-escalating violence that could in significant part be held responsible for their failure.

Conclusions

Both the conflicts in Aceh and Sri Lanka showed that where the state was perceived to have failed in its civic responsibility towards an ethnically distinct and geographically coherent minority, that minority could retreat to or create more localized conceptions of nation. In turn, this 'nation' could seek territorial independence, that is a state, through which to represent its political claims. This then created a separatist agenda which, as a challenge to the pre-existing state's sovereign authority, led to conflict. Resolution to such conflict in part rested on partially acknowledging the evolved legitimacy of such a separatist claim and, by way of compromise, allowing for some of that claim to be manifested in practice as autonomy or federation. Such compromise implicitly recognised the government's obligation to manifest its civic responsibilities not just as a sovereign authority but as a civic guarantor. In cases where the state has a poor civic record, external monitors can help ensure compliance with such a process.

In the above respect, the Aceh conflict was resolved by the government of Indonesia agreeing to allocate to the people of Aceh a degree of genuine (as opposed to the previously offered nominal) political autonomy, within what was becoming a loose unitary structure. In particular, the Indonesian government agreed to allow for the creation of local political parties and accepted local independent candidates for political office in Aceh. These potentially gave substance to other claims of autonomy,⁵⁸ by advocating and representing local political wishes as opposed to being a branch office of a Jakarta-based party. This was the key to achieving peace in Aceh, and while other elements of the MoU were important, the whole agreement would have succeeded or failed on this single issue. Indeed, it was the last matter to be negotiated by the two teams at the peace talks and prior to its conclusion appeared to be the one issue that would result in the negotiations failing.⁵⁹

There were two further elements which helped secure the Aceh peace. The first was international promises of support and supervision of the peace process, in particular through the European Union-led Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM). While there were numerous criticisms of the performance of

⁵⁸ Notably the 2001 autonomy law on Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (Peaceful State of Aceh), No 18, 2001, Republic of Indonesia.

⁵⁹ GAM, 'Clarity Needed To Reach Peace Agreement', media statement, Norsborg, Sweden, 15 July 2005.

the AMM,⁶⁰ it did generally fulfil its main functions, not least of which was supervising GAM's disarmament. The second was the relative success of Indonesia's shift from procedural to increasingly substantive democracy, the scope within this for local democratic outcomes, and the dedication of then recently elected President Yudhoyono to what might be described as a civic national project, as opposed to the imposed 'nationalism' of his predecessors.⁶¹

By the end of 2006, when the people of Aceh were going to the polls for the first time in three decades in a state of peace and, for the first time ever, able to elect a locally constituted candidate, the ceasefire that had endured in Sri Lanka from 2002 no longer functionally existed and the country was plunged back into an undeclared war. The LTTE's offer of a federal solution, based on unified northern and eastern provinces, was withdrawn at this time as it again called for a completely independent state.⁶² Where the AMM had been relatively successful in its mission, Sri Lanka had the experience of the intervention of the Indian Peace Keeping Force, which resulted in it battling the LTTE and eventually and somewhat ignominiously withdrawing. The current (at time of writing), very much smaller and unarmed Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), established to oversee the 2002 Cease Fire Agreement, was unable to prevent Sri Lanka's slide back into conflict. While all such agreements require the active support of all combatant parties,⁶³ the SLMM lacked the resources or political capacity to impose its will on the combatant parties. Any future monitoring mission would, like the AMM, require the explicit support of a major international body, such as the European Union, prepared to impose its will (e.g. through economic sanctions) should parties to an agreement break it.⁶⁴

Beyond this considerable problem with monitoring and safeguarding a peace, there was little doubt that even if the LTTE could be militarily

⁶⁰ Criticisms and expressions of concern from GAM and supporting groups were directly expressed to the author from relatively early in the mission, primarily over the somewhat arbitrary decision making by the AMM's head, Pieter Feith, and the variance between his decisions and aspects of the MoU. Significant concern was expressed, for example over the failure of the re-integration of GAM fighters, and the perceived misallocation of reintegration funds to non-GAM individuals (i. e. members of TNI sponsored militias).

⁶¹ A number of commentators have noted that the 'nationalist' claims of Yudhoyono's predecessor, Megawati Sukarnoputri, and her lack of policies or other political talents, meant that Indonesia's political 'reform' process actually reversed during her tenure as president.

⁶² V. Pirapaharan, 'Sinhala leaders' duplicity of war and peace has left Tamils with no choice but political independence', Annual Heroes' Day Statement, Kilinochche, Sri Lanka, 27 November 2006.

⁶³ This was explicitly stated by Pieter Feith in discussions with GAM, at which the author was present.

⁶⁴ The Aceh agreement was largely driven by internal considerations, and the EU may not have been prepared to enact its threat to impose economic sanctions, at least beyond withholding tsunami relief aid, should the agreement have failed. By comparison, in Sri Lanka there appeared less obvious internal economic motivation for reaching a settlement so external sanctions, if applied, could play a larger role.

defeated, which has not happened to date, there would continue to be a less organized but still deadly Tamil resistance and that Sri Lanka would not experience peace without giving substantive recognition to the separate political identity of its Tamil people. To that end, and despite the constitutional and political impediments, there needed to be an acceptance by all parties in Colombo that any meaningful answer to Sri Lanka's conflict lay in acceptance of a compromise, including the broad principles of self-determination, which in application implied a version of a two-state policy, in which the people of the north and east voted on unity of their provinces ahead of an interim administration. This would create the possibility of a further vote on simple federalism or confederation under a limited uniting structure within the context of agreement on establishing a pluralistic democratic framework in Sinhala Sri Lanka and Tamil Eelam. Such an overarching structure would have responsibility for immigration, customs, external affairs and key infrastructure, but devolve authority in most other areas to self-governing states. The question of defence would, of course, need to be carefully handled, probably on the basis of separate forces for an interim period and only later a united force based on recognition of its separate origins.

None of this would be likely, or possible, without significant international pressure to adopt such measures and support for them once adopted. This would imply, among other measures, a more substantial version of the existing SLMM, the promise of extra aid and the threat of sanctions on either party should they break the agreement. Equally important, Sri Lanka needed to return to being a more substantive democracy, working gradually back towards a notion of civic nationalism in which equity under rule of law rather than ethnicity was the effective basis for a sense of inclusion and participation. After perhaps generations, a sense of normalcy and unity might return to Sri Lanka, but not before and not without deep and far reaching changes. At the time of writing, such an outcome appeared to be further away than ever, and even starting down such a path appeared littered with almost insurmountable obstacles. But the LTTE had previously made official its agreement, in principle, to accept some version of a federal solution as opposed to complete independence, while there were practical limits to Sri Lanka's continuing capacity to pursue a conflict it could not possibly hope to win.

In a practical sense, the LTTE's creation of a state within a state was a concrete step towards the realization of its aims, and its functional acceptance by the Sri Lanka government via the 2002 ceasefire agreement confirmed there was a starting point for compromise. But perhaps, more than anything, the events of 2006 and into 2007 demonstrated that there was little taste for compromise in Sri Lanka, and both sides appeared quite willing to shed much more blood before they would, exhausted and depleted, return to the negotiating table.

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