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Philosophy of Neutrality and Proxy War Playground (Vithusa)

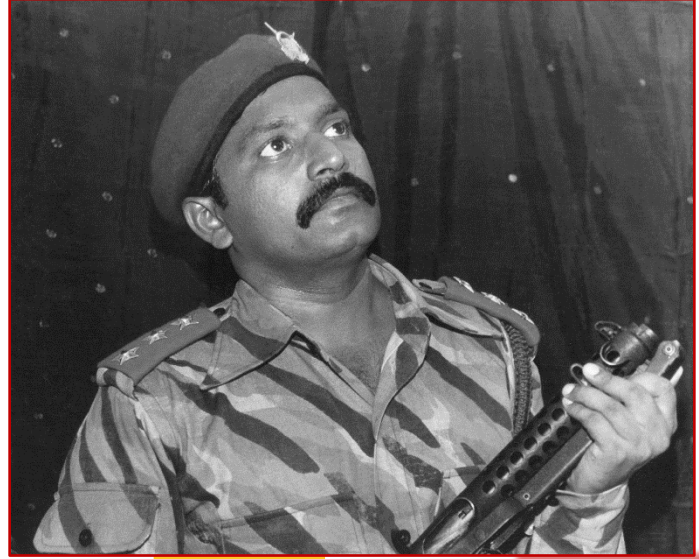
By maintaining a philosophy of neutrality, Sri Lanka gains immense foreign aid and fosters unique lateral relationships with global superpowers. As investment into the island intensifies, the question remains, does Sri Lanka see the course it has set for a proxy war on the island?

Proceed to page 03 for more.

Democracies in Deadlock – a Deformed Dimension

Where the flawed cycle of democracies and crises influx raise the question of which state system of governance remains a critical solution for progression and development, how to progress a liberation struggle within a tentatively crumbling global governance system remains temperamental in navigating repetitive cycles of history.

Proceed to page 16 for more.



"ஒரு பலம் வாய்ந்த சர்வதேச
சக்தியாக அணிதிரண்டு, எமது
மக்களின் விடிவுக்காக உலக
தமிழினம் உரிமைக்குரல்
எழுப்பவேண்டும்."

National Leader of Tamil Eelam

Philosophy of Neutrality and Proxy War Playground

VITHUSA

After World War II (WWII) came to an end, major countries around the world were divided in power relationships leading to a tense global Cold War that lasted from 1949 to 1991 between the Western Bloc nations and the Eastern Bloc nations. The Western Bloc, reflecting the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) led by the US, was supported by Great Britain, France and their allied nations. The Eastern Bloc which reflected the Warsaw Pact was led by the USSR and backed by Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Hungary, Poland, Romania and its respective allied nations. The Cold War plays grave significance to the current political climate in the Indo-Pacific Region as it relates to Sri Lanka.

Roots of the Cold War

The Cold War was an offshoot of post WWII disagreements between the blocs as it related to the world. It was a war in which the US and the USSR engaged in proxy warfare across various nations. The goal of the Western Bloc was to open free trade, promote economic stability and develop a strong European region. Contesting this, the Eastern Blocs preferred securitisation of the region as economic growth and stability would move Europe towards a developed nation through dependency on Western players.

The atmosphere of tension has been present since WWI when the Russian Revolution led to the withdrawal of Bolsheviks from the conflict. The Bolsheviks - with the latter support of Stalin, adhered to a communist-socialist ideology that challenged capitalist global markets. Notably, Joseph Stalin has mentioned that, "the present capitalist encirclement is replaced by a socialist encirclement". It is worthy to note that the ideologies have extended to the Indo-Sri Lankan regions following the return of WWII soldiers. In Europe however, the persistence of this tension and the Yalta Conference held between 04.02.1945 - 11.02.1945 led to the major disagreements between the two blocs. The Western Bloc feared the threat of the Red Army (USSR) and communist ideals coming to power in Europe, as it would evidently dismantle the capitalist frameworks as proposed by the Western allied nations.

Significant Strategies Reapplied

The Berlin Wall's erection, the implementation of the Marshall Plan and the Berlin Blockade prompted both sides to engage in a Cold War. During this time, specific strategies were utilised to oppose the others' strides. The use of espionage, foreign aid, alliances, propaganda and proxy wars led to gains on intelligence and economic fronts for both sides. The same strides have been undertaken by the Government of Sri Lanka

and has been implemented within its framework of securitising the nation and advancing state capital.

As Sri Lanka moves towards authoritative rule over the island, it has effectively played its card in a manner which has sought to secure the nation's benefits whilst, simultaneously maintaining neutral positionality as it relates to collaborating nations. In an attempt to secure the Indo-Pacific region, the US and its now allied nations, India, Australia and Japan have brokered close ties with Sri Lanka. It is critical to note that during the Cold War, India sided with the Eastern Bloc, however, has since shifted to align itself with the US following more recent collaborations with the state. India specifically has used the 13th Amendment covertly as a means to engage in discussions with the government of Sri Lanka. With full knowledge that the separation of the Tamil homeland from the island would never happen, India has raised discussions on the Tamil cause as a means to enter Sri Lanka's economic market. To counter the US and its allies' attempts, China has infiltrated Sri Lanka's economic market. Yet, Sri Lanka remains neutral over the situation.

Over the last few months, Sri Lanka has engaged in multiple bilateral talks with US and allied nations while benefiting off the financial aid provided by China. The US and allied nations have in turn, bent backwards for Sri Lanka offering various avenues of global prosperity. From Sri Lanka's end, there is clear evidence of the country's *take what is given lip service* policy.

Notably, this neutrality can be seen in the distribution of the three major ports, two of which are situated in occupied Tamil Eelam. Sri Lanka upholding its non-partisan role has leased the two historically Tamil ports of Trincomalee to the US and Kankesanthurai which is in its survey stage, to India. China has also been provided access to the Hambantota Port for 99 years. The division of ports is telling of Sri Lanka's ingrained racism and calculated perpetuation of violence. Ultimately, all ports do remain in the custody of Sri Lanka, however, withdrawal by Sri Lanka in this lease agreement could pose serious and deadly ramifications for the country.

Failing Teeter-Totter

Whether Sri Lanka cares or not, by undertaking a neutral stance in the conflict between US and China, the government is putting the Tamil homeland at direct risk once again. With the geographical location of the Trincomalee and Kankesanthurai ports and the growing tensions between the US and China - it clears the way for the two countries and its allies to carry out proxy war on the island. It is critical to remember that proxy wars are a common practice - even within the 21st Century.

Routinely, global nations participate in proxy wars as a means to showcase their might to the other nations. Unfortunately, the civilian toll and impact on communal loss is rarely addressed. An example of this can be seen during the Syrian conflict as the US vs Russia and Iran vs Saudi Arabia carried out routine proxy wars in Syria under the guise of fighting anti-government forces.

As pressure intensifies between the US and China, the people on the ground will begin to see the foreign alliances and aid. Such ties will no longer reflect "Sri Lankan" ideology and will in turn be American or Chinese. Tensions through this witnessing will push the Sinhalese community to add pressure on the Government of Sri Lanka. This could force Sri Lanka to withdraw from bilateral agreements with dominating foreign states. This withdrawal of agreements will plunge the country into its already sinking debt.

Alternatively, the failure and consistent oppression as it relates to minority issues, will set the precedent for civil unrest across the island. In every situation a scapegoat is required. In this case, we currently see the intensified racism towards Muslims on the island in addition to the Tamils. As resistance efforts on the island increase, curfews and state of emergency will be announced as a means to hinder mobilisation. COVID-19 will also be used as a means to isolate and detain individuals within communities. The state will name the civil unrest as anti-state sentiments and conflict will ensue. Thus, setting the ideal playground for superpowers to engage in proxy wars to eradicate anti-government forces and or persons in Sri Lanka as tensions brew. The philosophy of neutrality the Government of Sri Lanka holds, is one of proxy war violence.

International News

01.12.2020: **Mercenaries** - London Police have confirmed the ongoing probe into war crimes in SL and noted that this was the first time the Keenie Meenie group had been investigated, reports the Colombo Gazette. The probe comes following the release of Phil Miller's work on the Keenie Meenie's involvement in SL.

01.12.2020: **Lobbying** - According to reports by the Associated Press Imaad Zuberi, a US political fundraiser, pleaded guilty to making illegal donations to US candidates on behalf of foreign nationals. Zuberi confirms he has facilitated donations from foreign agents and further confirmed unregistered lobbying for SL. Zuberi is expected to receive a 10-year sentence. It is also reported that he is expected to pay USD

10 million in fines and USD 16 million to the Internal Revenue Service, reports the Colombo Gazette.

02.12.2020: **Malaysia** - Malaysian Police announced during a press meet that they have launched a search for an individual who allegedly claimed to be the commander-in-chief of the LTTE and warned of attacks in SL. According to reports by the Colombo Gazette, the suspect in question reported that he will attack Bukit Aman Police headquarters and the Defence Ministry. At present the suspect has not been named.

07.12.2020: **EU** - According to Economy Next, an EU diplomat, Thorsten Bargfrede, the Deputy Head of Mission at the delegation of the EU in Colombo had criticised Sri Lanka's protectionism during

a business forum in Colombo. The diplomat mentioned that during the COVID-19 pandemic, global trade must be open and import controls were not acceptable. The EU was also reported to have mentioned that SL had enjoyed preferential access with the GSP+ program, Economy Next reports.

15.12.2020: **OIC** - The Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) expressed concerns over the cremation of Muslim COVID-19 victims by SL authorities, reports Colombo Gazette. The OIC noted that cremations are against Islamic practices and has called on SL to respect burial rituals of the faith.

21.12.2020: **Oppression** - SL expatriates in Toronto held protests and a vehicle parade on 20.12.2020 against the forced cremation of Muslim COVID-19 victims in Sri Lanka. Similar protests were also held in France, New York, London and Geneva. Further reports from Economy Next indicate that former SL President, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga had mentioned that Tamils in Colombo, had joined the LTTE and started a civil war due to LTTE oppression.

23.12.2020: **Human rights** - SL has been deemed a country with human rights concerns by the UK Minister of State at the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon reported to the Colombo Gazette. Concerns included:

- ◆ harassment of civil society
- ◆ militarisation of civil functions
- ◆ GoSL's withdrawal of support for the UNHRC

Ahmad further shared these concerns have been raised to Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena on a call made on 04.11.2020 and 05.11.2020.

26.12.2020: **Cremation** - The Global Tamil Forum (GTF) has backed the Muslim community in their protests against SL's enforced cremation of Muslim COVID-19 victims, reports Colombo Gazette. GTF states the regressive nature of the country highlight the potential for intercommunal conflict. Reports from Colombo Gazette on 31.12.2020 further indicate that the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) plans to launch legal action against SL for the enforced cremation of Muslim COVID-19 victims. According to Colombo Gazette, the MCB and its established taskforce of legal and medical professionals have written to SL's Foreign Secretary and High Commissioner urging the reversal of the cremation policy which impacts both Muslim and Christian communities stating legal action would be undertaken to end the violation of human rights.

27.12.2020: **US** - According to Economy Next, the US had indicated that they would support SL with about USD 15 million as SL struggles to assert its sovereignty against the influence of China. Earlier reports from Colombo Page on 15.12.2020 indicate that the Ambassador to SL in the US Ravinatha Aryasinha had also called on Overseas Sri Lankans (OSLs) in America to support the economic growth of the country and further strengthen advocacy of Sri Lanka.

31.12.2020: **India** - During the 4th virtual meeting of the India-SL Joint Working Group on fisheries, India called on SL to

release Indian fishermen and their boats with no clear indication of a release date by Sri Lanka, reports Colombo Gazette.

Bilateral Discussions

01.12.2020: **Navy** - According to Navy LK, the outgoing Defence Adviser at the Australian High Commission in SL, Group Captain Sean Unwin and his successor Captain Ian Cain had called on the Commander of the SL Navy, Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne at SL's Navy Headquarters on 01.12.2020

02.12.2020: **France** - Ambassador of France to SL, Eric Lavertu, met with SL's Eastern Naval Commander, Rear Admiral Ruwan Perera, at SL's Eastern Naval Command Headquarters in Trincomalee on 01.12.2020, reports Navy LK.

08.12.2020: **India** – In a meeting with Dinesh Gunawardena and Douglas Devananda, India's High Commissioner to SL, Baglay had responded that further expansive research regarding SL's requests for the joint management of Paakku Neerina and the Gulf of Mannar should be conducted. According to Virakesari, further topics of discussion during the meeting which occurred at SL's Foreign Ministry include:

- ◆ Naval security
- ◆ Terrorism
- ◆ Fundamentalism
- ◆ The fishermen issue between the 2 countries

14.12.2020: **Thailand** - Thai envoys and SL Foreign Minister hold free trade talks. They hope that the negotiation process will be completed soon to reap the benefits for enhanced economic cooperation, reports Economy Next.

18.12.2020: **India** - According to Daily Mirror, reports from NDTC indicated that India had mentioned during an online briefing on 17.12.2020, that it is in close touch with the GoSL to ensure consular access and facilitate the early release of the fishermen and their boats. It is notable that according to reports from Navy LK, special operations carried out by the SL Navy and Coast Guard in several naval areas of the island on 15.12.2020 led to the apprehension of 36 Indian nationals along with 5 fishing trawlers and fishing accessories, for poaching in SL waters.

23.12.2020: **Turkey** – Dinesh Gunawardena met with the Ambassador of the Netherlands, Tanja Gonggrip and Ambassador of Turkey, R. Demet Sekercioglu to discuss further bilateral projects and proposed to build a stronger relationship with Turkey at an international level, reports Colombo Gazette.

31.12.2020: **DMK** - India's DMK party leader, T.R. Baalu has urged Modi to oppose SL's proposal to give up the devolution of the provincial councils,

reports the Colombo Gazette. The devolution of the provincial council is in direct conflict with the countries' 13th Amendment to SL's Constitution, the

Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 and the commitment to the Tamil people of the island.

Military News

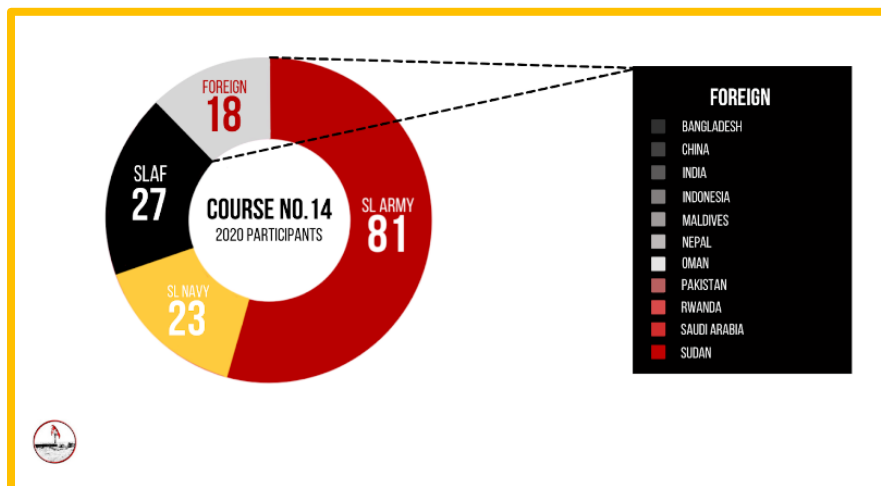
01.12.2020: **Warships** - 3 Russian warships and an anti-submarine arrived at eports Colombo Gazette. The ships arrived for due rest and are set to continue their journey on 03.12.2020 following a Passage Exercise with the SL Navy Ship 'Sayura'.

06.12.2020: **Port** - Hambantota International Port is constructing a port police station for the SL police due to the significance of maritime security, reports Economy Next.

10.12.2020: **70th Anniversary** - According to Navy LK, the SL Navy celebrated its 70th Anniversary on 09.12.2020 with several foreign Navy Chiefs and Defence Attachés at embassies in Colombo. Colombo Gazette's reports from 09.12.2020 further indicate the promotion

Trincomalee Port on 30.11.2020 and was guided by the SL Navy, r of over 1,790 sailors to the rank of naval personnel in light of the anniversary. 66 of these officers were commissioned naval officers.

12.12.2020: **Ceremony** - According to Navy LK, the graduation ceremony of the Defence Services Command and Staff College (DSCSC), Sapugaskanda Course No.14 was held at Nelum Pokuna Mahinda Rajapaksa Theatre on 11.12.2020. Kamal Gunaratne was the Chief Guest of this event, where the Commander of SL's Navy was also in attendance. Course No.14 was conducted between 06.01.2020 - 11.12.2020. A total of 149 officers had completed this year's course. Participants include:



12.12.2020: **Trincomalee** - SL Commander of the Navy, Vice Admiral Nishantha Ulugetenne had declared open a new Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV) Stores and Workshop Complex at the Naval Dockyard in Trincomalee, reports Navy LK.

22.12.2020: **HQ** - According to Army LK, SL's 59th Division Headquarters of the Security Force Headquarters - Mullaitivu marked its 13th anniversary on 13.12.2020. The occupational troops provided dry rations, lunch and school accessories to inmates at Palimakaliri kids' orphanage which houses 20 children to mark the occasion.

23.12.2020: **Sniper firing competition** - According to Navy LK, The Inaugural Naval Sniper Firing Competition - 2020 was organised by the SL navy at the Naval Dockyard in Trincomalee. Qualified snipers from the Naval Infantry branch, Special Boat Squadron (SBS) and Marine Battalion participated in the competition. In addition, the SL Navy also expects to develop the confidence of naval snipers, SBS and Marines engaging in Maritime Operations, Visit, Board, Search and Seizure (VBSS) Operations and Military Operations in Urban Terrains (MOUT), through such competitions.

26.12.2020: **WHAM** - According to Army LK, 643 Brigade's Troops of the 64th Division under the Security Force HQ-Mullaitivu provided a stock of beds and mattresses to needy families and residents around the Muthiyankaddu tank's left bank – most of whom were affected by the recent floods, in Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM) attempts. 45 selected students in

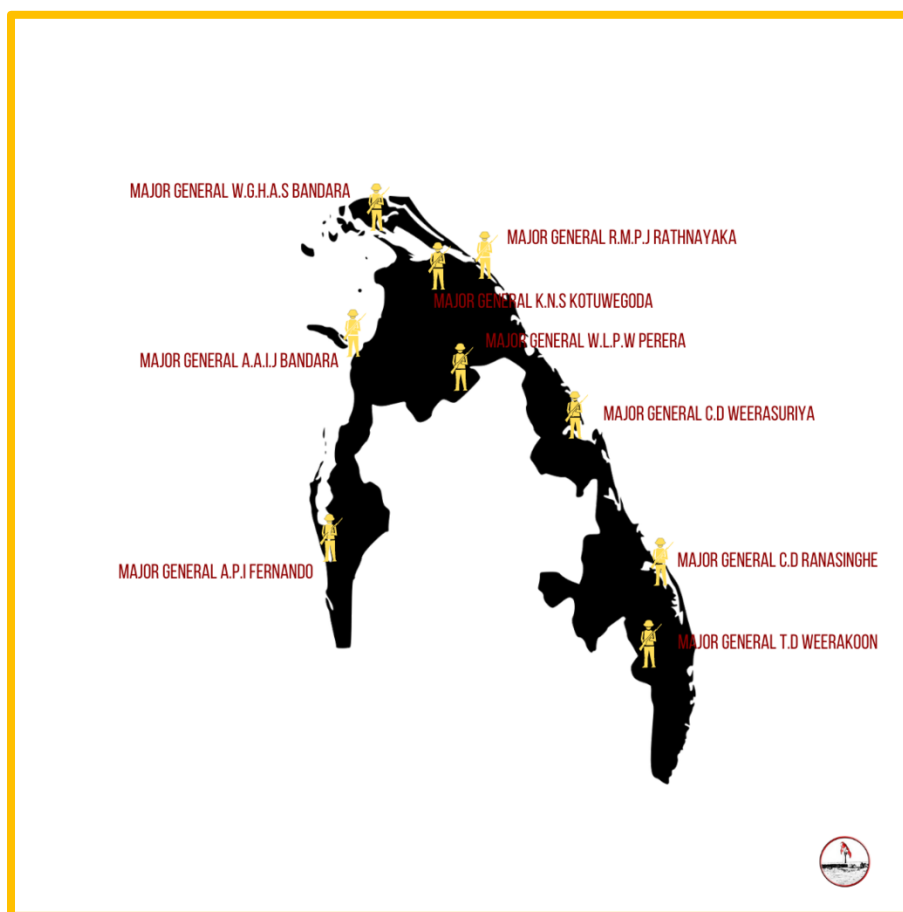
Kattakaragaukuduiruppu Roman Catholic Tamil Mixed School in the general area of Pesalei were also gifted schoolbooks and other essential items (shoes, school bags, first aid kit). Army LK's earlier reports from 18.12.2020 indicate the extension of WHAM efforts where due to an absence of the public's blood donations for urgent surgeries of seriously ill patients, more than 50 Officers and Other Ranks of SL's Security Force HQ -Wanni (SFHQ-Wanni) volunteered to donate their blood to patients at the District General Hospital of Vavuniya. 10 SL Light Infantry (10 SLLI) and 3 Commando Regiment (3 CR) troops of the 652nd Brigade of the 65th Division under the Security Forces - Wanni (SFHQ-W) on 19.12.2020 evening visited Vavunikulam tank area in the general area of Mallavi and rescued one civilian and recovered three dead bodies of the same family, reports Army LK.



28.12.2020: **Promotion** – According to Colombo Gazette and Army LK, SL's Defence Secretary Major General (Retd) G.D.H. Kamal Gunaratne and Army Commander Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva have been promoted to the rank of General by Gotabaya Rajapaksa according to the Colombo Gazette.

31.12.2020: **Appointment** – Brigadier Jayantha Patabendige of SL Signal Corps (SLSC) assumed office as the 5th Director of the Army Research Analysis, Projection and Development Branch on 17.12.2020 at his office in the Army Cantonment at Panagoda, reports Army LK. According to further reports from Colombo Gazette and Army LK, SL's

Presidential Secretariat with recommendations from war criminal Shavendra Silva has appointed 25 Army Officers to monitor and contain the COVID19 situation in all districts effective 01.01.2021 reports the Colombo Gazette. The following individuals have been assigned to the Tamil homeland:



Domestic News

Tamil Eelam

02.12.2020: **Flooding** - The Colombo Gazette reported flooding in the Tamil homeland due to the passage of

Cyclone Burevi with reports indicating that SL's military had been placed as first responders in the region. SL's Disaster

Management Center (DMC) had reported that a number of individuals had been evacuated and five homes in Trincomalee have been damaged as a result of the cyclone. Further reports from Colombo Page indicate that 65 boats had been swept away in Pesalai, Mannar and 150 fishing huts and a church had also been destroyed.

04.12.2020: **Gajendrakumar** - According to Daily Mirror, an allegation made by Tamil National People's Front (TNPf) MP, Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam that the SL government had rejected the offer made by the LTTE to release over 100,000 Tamil civilians who remained trapped during the final stage of the war, caused an uproar in SL Parliament on 04.12.2020.

07.12.2020: **Mannar** - UN in SL and the Australian High Commission have been reported to be working towards the prevention of sexual violence and gender-based violence in the Mannar district, reports Colombo Gazette. The AUD 1 million program is reported to be implemented by UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women between 2020 - 2022 by offering income generating activities to improve the familial conditions of these women.

11.12.2020: **Demining** - Germany has allocated an additional EUR 1 Million towards the HALO Trust's demining process in addition to the EUR 2 Million provided in 2019, reports Colombo Gazette. As a result, 500 000 square metres of land the North has been reported to be demined since 01.01.2019. Further reports from Daily Mirror indicate that Japan had also provided a sum of USD 636, 262 to the

Mines Advisory Group (MAG) for demining activities.

16.12.2020: **Agriculture** - United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) provide seeds to 54,000 farmers to boost food production. Economy Next reports that rural farming families in the districts of Moneragala, Batticaloa, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Matale are to be supported.

29.12.2020: **Salt pans** - SL will establish a state-owned company called the National Salt Company to operate all of the salterns in the Northern Province under a single management structure as it is expected to be an administrative and economic advantage. The existing Elephant Salterns in the North will also be brought into the vending company and renamed "National Salt Company".

30.12.2020: **Former TNPf** - According to Daily Mirror, a member of the TNPf, V. Manivannan had been elected as the new Mayor of the Jaffna Municipal Council.

30.12.2020: **COVID-19** - According to Defence LK, a group of 159 civilians repatriated from India, Turkey, Qatar and Abu Dhabi who were quarantined at the Sri Lanka Air Force (SLAF) quarantine centre in Iranamadu had left for their homes on 29.12.2020 on completion of the stipulated quarantine period. A group of 63 civilians repatriated from Dubai and Abu Dhabi who were quarantined at the SLAF quarantine centre in Palaly were also reported to have left for their homes on 28.12.2020

following completion of the stipulated quarantine period.

Exclusive Coverage: Nainativu Youth Incident

Two youths suspected of being involved in a break and enter of a local shop in Nainativu on the 13th/14th of December 2020, have been detained by occupational police and taken to Kayts Police Station. The youth were accused by police officials of another incident of the theft of a *thali kodi* on the island earlier in the month. The detained children aged 14 and 15 were physically beaten in custody with visible indication of the assault evident and yet have been in detention for over a week with no access to legal counsel. Locals have claimed that the children have been threatened by the police officials to plead guilty to the theft of the *thali* in exchange for LKR 2 lakhs. It is notable that the relatives of the detained children were also physically abused by Kayts authorities. Locals further claim that substances have been imposed upon the children by the police officials which has caused them to become incoherent. The children were released into the custody of the parents by 21.12.2020.

Locals described that the occupational police are involved in unprofessional behaviour, threats of abuse, bribery, indulgence of substances, impartiality and have actively promoted tensions on the island. Notably Officers Nagendram and Perera who have had polarising effects within the community due to favouritism and other contributing factors. Claims from locals indicate that Officer Nagendram often trespassed into houses in a drunken state and abused local inhabitants. The frustration and discontent of the locals has been further heightened due to these recent events.

Sri Lanka

02.12.2020: **Travel ban** – SL's Gampaha High Court has lifted the overseas travel ban imposed on B. Rajapaksa, reports Colombo Gazette. Sarath Fonseka has further been reported to have mentioned in SL Parliament, on 03.12.2020, that 51 high-ranking officers in the security forces are facing a travel ban from countries such as the US and that it is necessary for the SL government to have the travel ban lifted by

permanently through resolving the human rights issues, reported Daily Mirror.

07.12.2020: **Death row** – According to the SL government, prisoners on death row will be released following the completion of 20 years in detainment, reports Colombo Gazette. Additionally, SL's State Minister of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation, Lohan Ratwatte

noted that a proposal had been presented by SL's Ministry of Justice to SL Cabinet to reduce the death sentence to 20 years in detention.

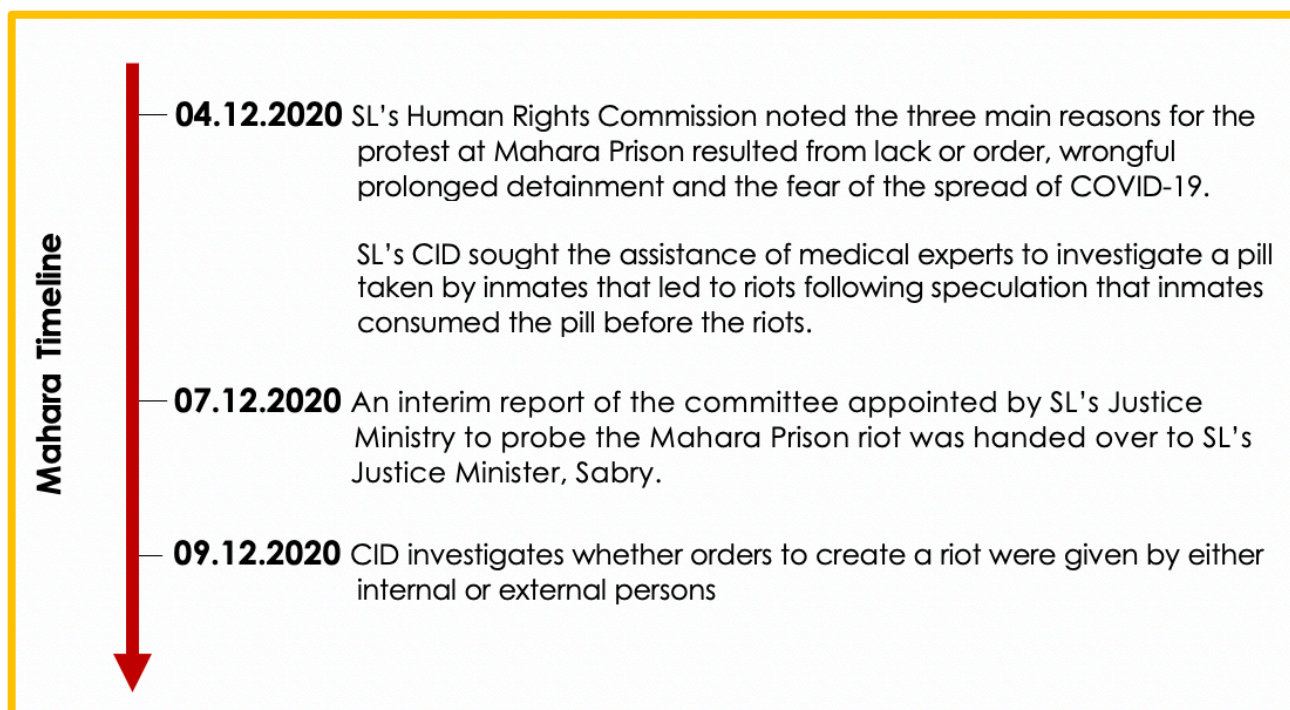
08.12.2020: Political victimisation – According to Colombo Gazette, SL's Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCol) released their probe into political victimisation to G. Rajapaksa. SL's PCol was responsible for investigating the political victimisation of Maithiripala Sirisena and Ranil Wickremesinghe between 08.01.2015 -16.11.2019.

08.12.2020: Journalist - A complaint has been lodged with SL's CID to investigate claims by SJB that journalists continue to mysteriously die in SL, reports Colombo Page. SJB leaders noted in the complaint made on 25.11.2020 that these deaths come following the appointment of the present SL Government and President. The complaint for an investigation was

launched on 08.12.2020 by the Lake House Progress Employees Union's President, Chandana Bandara and its Secretary, Tissa Dhammika who further alleged the concerns raised by SJB were false and were being shared through social media outlets.

09.12.2020: CMC - Following advice from the GoSL regarding the cremation of 19 unclaimed COVID-19 victims on 08.12.2020, Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) has moved towards the cremation of those bodies, reports Colombo Gazette. The cremations will be at the expense of the CMC with some of those bodies already cremated. Following the request of advice by the SL Government to AG Dappula de Livera, the AG has subsequently informed SL's Health Ministry that in accordance with Quarantine Regulations, cremation was suitable at present from unclaimed bodies.

Mahara Timeline



09.12.2020: **TID** - Former Deputy Inspector General of SL's TID, Nalaka de Silva informed the Presidential Commission of Inquiry on 08.12.2020 that the Easter Attack investigation was obstructed due to political pressure and SL's CID, reports Colombo Page. De Silva noted that there was an expectation by Yahapalana to conduct the investigation similar to that of the CID and noted that between 2005 - 2015, G. Rajapaksa who was the former Defence Secretary, permitted the TID to act freely in relation to a 2008 gang incident and went on to praise the dedicated nature of such officers in the department.

Appointments - According to PMD News, SL State Minister, Lohan Ratwatte had been appointed as SL's State Minister of Prison Management and Prisoners' Rehabilitation and was sworn in by G.Rajapaksa at SL's Presidential Secretariat on 02.12.2020. Nimal Punchihewa had also been appointed as SL's Election's Commission Chairman on recommendations from G. Rajapaksa on 03.12.2020, reports Colombo Gazette. Following the 20th Amendment to SL's Constitution, SL's Election's Commission will comprise five members rather than the initial three. Major General Jagath Alwis has also been appointed as SL's Secretary to the Ministry of Public Security on 10.12.2020 which was established on 22.11.2020 reports the Colombo Gazette. Presently, Alwis is the Esquire Chief of the National Intelligence Service and is a current member of SL's Presidential Task Force appointed by G. Rajapaksa. M. Rajapaksa has also instructed the National Elections Commission to hold the Provincial Council elections at the next available date during a meeting at

his residence in Colombo 07 reports the Colombo Gazette. He has further instructed the Election Commission to begin legal proceedings with regards to this.

15.12.2020: **High Court** - According to Virakesari, a fire broke out at the compound of the High Court in Colombo. It is noteworthy that SL's Justice Ministry had released a report, where they mentioned that more than 8 lakhs of cases were pending in the SL justice system. In response, reports indicate that suggestions had been made for the cases to be moved from the High court to the World Trade Centre in Colombo.

18.12.2020: **IORA** - SL has been endorsed as the Vice Chair of the Indian Ocean Rim Association Council (IORA) of Ministers following a virtual meeting hosted by the UAE Foreign Ministry, reports Colombo Gazette. Subsequently, SL will take over the Chair between 2023 - 2025. This endorsement occurred following highlights of SL's commitment to the IORA Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security through the promotion of knowledge and experiential sharing.

21.12.2020: **Cyber tracking** - On 20.12.2020, SL's Media Minister, Keheliya Rambukwella informed reporters that his ministry is considering the introduction of a registration system for those utilising social media platforms which include Facebook users. He cited that this would curb the sharing of misinformation, reports Colombo Gazette. However, at present, the GoSL is undecided and reported that there is no present move to

register social media users in SL. Rambukwella further clarified the goal is not to register users but rather to "control foreign digital operators". He further cited that this was a global concern for many

governments adding that such social media sources are limiting SL's local business capacity through the occupation of data.

Economic News

SL's Economic Profile – December 2020

GDP	2 nd quarter of 2020	↓ 16.3%
Inflation	November 2020	5.2%
	Target	4 - 6%
SL Prosperity Index (SLPI)	2018 – 2019	0.811 – 0.802
Fitch Credit Rating	CCC	
Moody's Credit Rating	Caa1	
Standard & Poor's sovereign rating	B- → CCC+	
FOREX Reserves (USD millions)	Oct – Nov 2020	5,855.7 → 5,549
Interest rates	↓ due to money printing	
FOREX market	Purchases	USD 7.4 million
	Sales	USD 5.0 million
LKR Selling Rate	21.12.2020	190.37
	23.12.2020	193.05



01.12.2020: **Monetary policy** - Economy Next reports on 01.12.2020 that Sri Lanka wants to roll over external debt into domestic debt. This is based on Modern Monetary Theory, which says that if you borrow in your own currency, you cannot default. Therefore, money is printed to pay the debts.

06.12.2020: **Plantation wages** – SL's Minister of Labor, Nimal Siripala de Silva reported that a program would be implemented by the SL Government to ensure that the daily wage of LKR 1,000 is given to plantation workers, reports Colombo Page. He further shared that an Act would be introduced to appropriate estates that have not been able to increase production or had not

been adequately maintained. Further reports from Economy Next indicate that regional plantation companies have also proposed a new wage model established upon performance-based rewards that can increase production and provide more income to workers.

07.12.2020: **Tourism** - SL plans to reopen the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) in 2021 for the arrival of tourists following the introduction of the bubble system. The travel bubble permits travel directly to a city from the airport upon arrival with no external travel within the country, reports Colombo Gazette.

US - The US launched LKR 3.6 billion in funds to support small businesses in SL. The funding is reportedly sourced from the Private Sector Development Project, which is funded through the US Agency for International Development, reports Colombo Gazette. Further reports by Colombo Page from 11.12.2020 indicate that the GoSL has allocated LKR 7 billion for a project directed at building a bridge between the Ratnapura and Kegalle districts. SL's Sabaragamuwa Province's Governor, Rikiri Kobbekaduwa further noted the loan assistance for this project was provided by the US.

According to reports by Economy Next from 17.12.2020, the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) had terminated the 480 million development grant to SL due to a lack of commitment from SL.

Further, reports from Colombo Gazette indicate that US President Donald Trump had signed a USD 2.3 trillion spending legislation on 27.12.2020 which included

funding for SL. The conditional funding reportedly requires SL to assure sovereignty from China's influence on the island and is available for democracy and economic development in addition to post-conflict recovery. It further calls on SL to ensure transparency and accountability in governance and the promotion of reconciliation amidst ethnic and religious groups. Funding will also encompass:

- ◆ humanitarian assistance and disaster relief
- ◆ protection of human rights
- ◆ location and identification of missing persons
- ◆ assistance for victims of torture and trauma
- ◆ promotion of justice, accountability, and reconciliation
- ◆ enhancement of maritime security and domain awareness
- ◆ promotion of fiscal transparency and sovereignty
- ◆ International Military Education and Training
- ◆ refurbishment of high endurance cutter and training for Sri Lanka's Navy and Coast Guards

10.12.2020: **Budget 2021** – SL's budget for 2021 was passed with 151 votes for and 54 votes against the budget were registered in the counting, reports Virakesari.

16.12.2020: **Direct investment** - SL is targeting \$2.5 billion in foreign direct investment in 2021. According to Economy Next this is a realistic target as the tyre industry would invest 175 million and a pharmaceutical zone would receive 200 million dollars.

17.12.2020: **WHO** - The WHO office in SL has provided EUR 2 million from the EU to improve SL's COVID-19 emergency response, reports Colombo Gazette. The funding will be applied towards the expansion of digital technology for strengthening the continuous learning of COVID-19.

19.12.2020: **MoU** - India's High Commissioner to SL and SL's Secretary, State Ministry of Rural Housing and Construction and Building Materials Industries' Promotion, Keerthi Ranjith Abesiriwardhana signed 4 MoUs for implementation mechanisms to support the Model Village and 3 Gram Shakthi Housing Projects, reports Colombo Gazette. A total of 2,400 houses island wide are set to be built ranging at LKR 1.2 Billion. USD 3.5 Billion has also been invested by India with USD 560 Million in grants to support other development initiatives across the island.

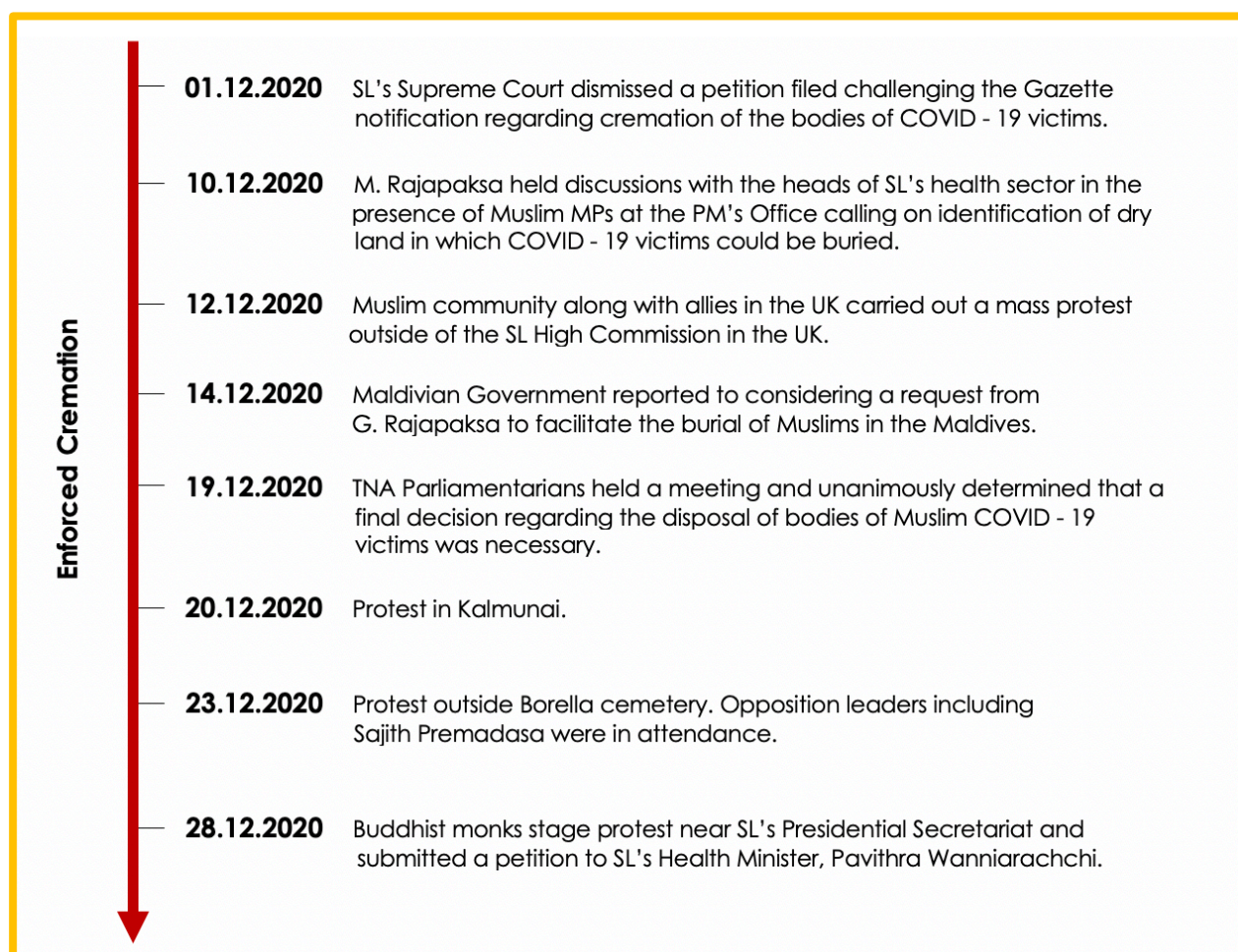
24.12.2020: **Colombo Harbour** - According to reports from Virakesari on 15.12.2020, the Colombo Harbour Issue, where the East Terminal would be transferred to India, would be decided based on reports from two committees. These two committees have been established to research the further use of the Eastern Terminal of the Colombo harbour and foreign investments. General Daya Ratnanayake, the Chairman of SL port authorities mentioned that the former good-governance government had plans to reach agreements with India and Japan to maintain the terminal together. However, the current government's policies are to not sell the terminal.

29.12.2020: **Station** - Germany's DW relay station in Trincomalee will be sold to UK-based Encompass Digital Media Services in London. This company aims to transmit shortwave and medium wave programmes from the station, reports Economy Next.

China - A Chinese company, MCC (China Metallurgical Group Corporation), agreed to establish a loan with Sri Lanka that delayed them for over 4.5 years. MCC was responsible for the first segment of SL's expressway project. The delay was deliberate and, according to reports on 08.12.2020, came about only after more land was compensated, Economy Next reports. Colombo Gazette reported SL is in bilateral talks with China regarding the building of a maximum-security prison built on 250 acres of land approved by the Urban Development Authority. The location of the land is yet to be identified. Browns Investments and China Harbour Engineering have also signed a contract for a mixed-use development project worth \$450 million. Economy Next reported on 17.12.2020 that the project is the construction of Port City towers. Further, the Chinese tyre factory at Hambantota Port is granted tax relief by SL and according to Economy Next, is the largest investment by China. Moreover, Sri Lanka and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed an agreement for a loan worth USD 400 million. The ADB is a long-term partner reported to assist in the modernisation of SL's education sector.

News about Oppression & Resistance

Enforced Cremation



04.12.2020: **LTTE** - Two former LTTE cadre couples were detained on a bus on 02.12.2020 with a claymore mine and their child following plans to carry out an attack in the occupied Tamil homeland, reports Colombo Page. SL Police HQ noted that the LTTE network was active in Switzerland and highlighted this to be the 15th such attempt to be conducted by the "diaspora LTTE network".

12.12.2020: **Tamil political prisoners** – SL Government and Opposition Tamil Parliamentarians signed a letter which was sent to G. Rajapaksa calling for the release of 80 Tamils who have been imprisoned in 1994 under the PTA and Emergency Act, reports Colombo Page. The letter was also sent to M. Rajapaksa and SL's Justice Minister, Ali Sabry. Further reports from 08.12.2020 indicate that during a media briefing by SL Cabinet Co-Spokesman, Minister Udaya

Gammanpila announced that the GoSL states that there are no political prisoners in SL, reports Colombo Gazette. He further went onto note that those arrested in the Tamil homeland were all detained under the PTA and thus does not make them political prisoners. This statement was made following the SL Ministry of Justice's plans on 07.12.2020 to release those who have been detained for over 20 years. According to further reports from Virakesari on 28.12.2020, a protest for the release of Tamil political prisoners had been organised with many several Tamil parliamentarians, religious figures, party members and civilians joining the protest.

10.12.2020: **Valikaamam North Pradeshiya Saba** - Locals from the village of Achchelu have conducted a demonstration in front of the Valikaamam North Pradeshiya Saba. The demonstration was conducted to express discontent against caste-thinking and party-politics, which are hindering the development of that village, reports Virakesari.

13.12.2020: **Vedukkunaari** – According to Virakesari, worship at the Vedukkunaari Temple in Nedunkerni had been hindered by members of the occupational police and SL's Presidential Taskforce to protect archaeological sites. It is also notable that the officials had filed a case at Vavuniya's Court regarding legal provisions regarding archeological artifacts which had been opened for investigation last October. Subsequently, an arrest warrant had been issued by the court to arrest the management of the temple.

15.12.2020: **Protest** - According to Virakesari, fisherman from Mullaitivu conducted a protest against the border-crossing of Tamil fishermen from Tamil Nadu. In solidarity with the fisherman, stores under Mullaitivu's chamber of commerce and the marketplace staged a shutdown of businesses. Other fishermen from the Northern province had also joined in solidarity with the fishermen from Mullaitivu. The SL police hindered the protesters however, former NPC politician, Ravikaran and Pradeshiya Sabha member, Thombapillai joined the protests. Further reports indicate that on 14.12.2020, Ravikaran met the leader of ITAK. There, Ravikaran was connected via phone to a high-ranking Indian official, who promised to solve the problem. It is noteworthy that on that same day, 27 fishermen from Tamil Nadu were arrested by the SL navy for border crossing.

19.12.2020: **OMP** - According to Virakesari, Upali Abeyratne had been appointed as the chairperson of the OMP by G. Rajapaksa. Upali Abeyratne is a former justice, who was also the former chairperson of the Presidential Commission on Political Victimisation. During this time, he was accused to have actively colluded with perpetrators of enforced disappearances.

23.12.2020: **Iranaitivu** - Residents from Iranaitivu conducted a protest in Poonakeri, reports Virakesari. The residents are reported to be facing hardships under the SL navy. According to the protestors, the SLN is preventing cement from being transported to Iranaitivu and are also not allowing women to enter the region.

26.12.2020: **Tsunami Remembrance** -

According to Virakesari people gathered at the Tsunami Memorial building to commemorate those deceased during the 2004 Tsunami. A similar event was also conducted in Batticaloa, Mannar, Vavuniya, Amparai and Malayakam.

30.12.2020: **Enforced disappearances** -

Relatives of forcibly disappeared persons from Batticaloa attempted to conduct a demonstration on 10.12.2020 to coincide with Human Rights Day, reports Virakesari. They were reportedly threatened by occupational Police and Intelligence officers and were put into 14 days of quarantine. On the same day, the relatives of disappeared persons from Mannar had also conducted a

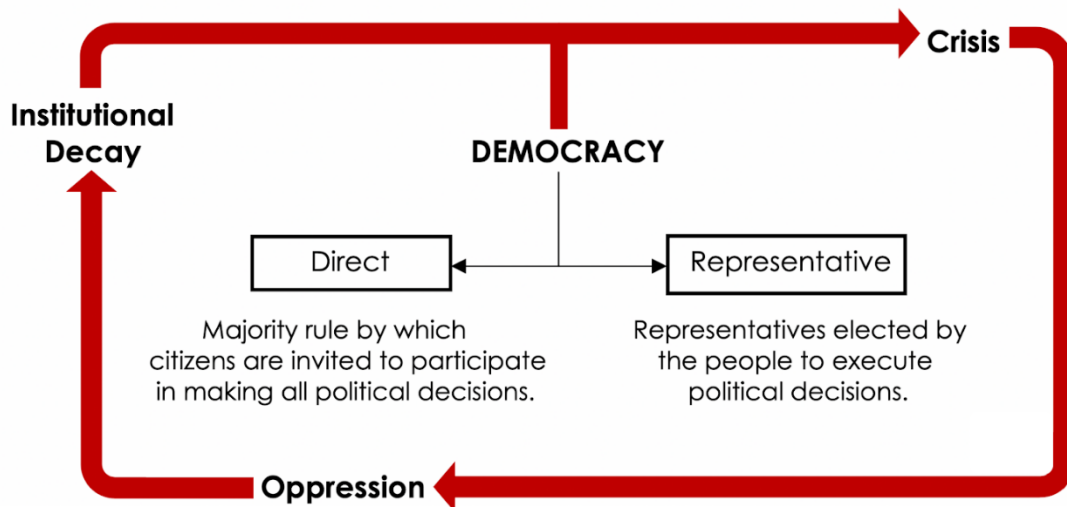
demonstration. According to Virakesari, a protest was organised by the relatives. During the protest on 30.12.2020, the chairman of the Mannar association of the relatives of the Forcibly Disappeared had mentioned to the media that they are requesting an international investigation. Similar protests were organised in Vavuniya and Kilinochchi. It is notable that the relatives of the Forcibly Disappeared had launched an online petition for the inclusion of monthly payments for the relatives of those who were subject to enforced disappearances, in SL's 2021 budget. It is notable that reparations are one of the four key components of transitional Justice.

Democracies in Deadlock – a Deformed Dimension

PHOENIX TNG

Democracies are often characterised as the ideal governance models of states to ensure security and social cohesion to be maintained. However, an examination of the fundamental shortcomings of democracies as established upon Western ideologies, are an indication of the deformed dimension of global governance which continues to exist throughout time. As a global crisis situation extends into a new year, the shortcomings of global order as one which favours oppressors become heightened through the disintegration of an already diminishing era of democratic governance. An examination of the theoretical and practical failures of democracy remains crucial in addressing concerns of safeguarding subjugated communities who stand to be further oppressed under a crumbling hegemonic governance system.

Theoretical Democracy



Historically, Western-influenced political landscapes suggest that the Ancient Greeks were the first to develop known democracy in Athens around 5 B.C.E. Theoretically, such espoused ideals of democracy have been established as a fluid and evolving form of participatory governance where citizens are permitted to assume varying degrees of an active role within its framework.

However, democracies often emerge as a solution to crises where former institutional decay leads to the generation of a new governance model as a said solution. Such solutions are often crucial in addressing the general public's grievances.

Yet, within the current global order, democracy and the preservation of it has faced many shortcomings. Often implemented in a tokenistic or extreme manner, democracy has two main implications which lead to social disintegration:

- I. Nurturing of state-sponsored oppression through the authoritative control of all citizens or minorities (usually with intended counterinsurgency)
- II. Fuelling the rise of extreme right powers

Crumbling Cycles

The consequences of democracies have historically resulted in constantly deteriorating societies. Whilst the current global pandemic has drastically weakened an already fragile global order, additional crises and social discontent are fuelled by varying degrees of democracy implemented within institutional governance. Yet feeble attempts to uphold an insufficient framework remains to be a reminder of historic failures and repercussions hence insistent upon the need for an immediate solution to efficiently counter such cycles.

The Fall of the Weimar Republic

The post-WWI Armistice saw the German government, known as the Weimar Republic's signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. Established following the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm which marked the end of rule by monarchies in Germany, the Weimar Republic promised a democratic form of government in response to the crises which emerged due to mutinies and social discontent due to German humiliation in WWI.

However, whilst partially due to individual failures, the fall of the Weimar Republic was due to its extreme democratic governance which snowballed into oppression. With a proportional representation voting system, many parties were elected to the republic which caused the formation of coalitions. Consequently, a multitude of disagreements emerged, hence preventing decisive governance.

The subsequent confusion facilitated constitutional totalitarianism to be developed through fascist influences. This was especially evident through the failure of the Weimar Constitution which allowed rule by decree and the suspension of constitutional rights during a national emergency. The instrumental "Enabling Act" which saw the constitutional transfer of law-making powers to Hitler, thus gave rise to Nazism under Hitler with the end of early democracy in Germany. Hence it becomes evident that the crisis-response nature of democracy in Germany not only failed in crisis-management, but essentially assisted the rise of extreme right powers through its own self-deseccration hence indicative of its inherent shortcomings.

Capital of Capitol

Today, the rapid rise of the right can be viewed as a consequence of democracies themselves. Democracies can be viewed as intrinsically dictatorial in nature where the extremity of dictatorial governance is merely accelerated by various trigger points as seen in Hitler's reign. A tendency to return to such cycles are clearly apparent in the current context.

An examination of Trump's administration through the lens of Che Guevara's notions of political economy will assist in decoding such patterns. Che asserts that democracy is not a compatible governance model with financial oligarchies. Within the current capitalist global order, financial oligarchy is an engrained feature of most state structures. Such factors are accelerated through neoliberal influences upon social frameworks. With a strong capitalist bias where on a surface-level all individuals possess identical rights, those who have increased resources have a more influential effect upon policymaking and governance. Due to this model, the subsequent effect upon the psyche of the general population is immense. Trump's undeniable business background will assist in this

deconstruction. As espoused by Che, democracies facilitate the generation of a ruling financial elite where it becomes apparent that,

“Democracy cannot consist solely of elections that are nearly always fictitious and managed by rich landowners and professional politicians.”

The reaction of a rising right in the US becomes noteworthy in this analysis. On 06.01.2021, Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol building in protest of the outcome of an election conducted within the frameworks of a democracy. This act in itself is symptomatic of the fall of democracy as implemented in a tokenistic manner within a capitalist system. However, it is also an indication of the very foundations of the current models of democracy where the thoughts of the ruler or ruling party are effectively diffused into the mindset of the general population rather than the other way around.

The Crises Conundrum

Through the cyclical trends in history, it becomes evident that whilst emerging as a solution in response to crises, democracies as an effective governance model are inherently flawed. Sivaram's postulations regarding the development of modern “counter-COIN antidotes” as implemented by the LTTE through the state of Tamil Eelam are an indication of the functional establishment of governance models apt in fostering social cohesion and development.

“The current Sri Lankan state was, in fact, and precisely because of its majoritarian democratic politics, structurally dependent upon the oppression of Tamil people; and that, hence, any real settlement of its conflict would require not only a radical restructuring of the state but also an equally fundamental reordering of the means of violence currently at its disposal.”

COVID – 19 Crisis Management

Despite rapid technological development and globalisation within recent years, both democratic and non-democratic governments alike have severely struggled with the management of the effects of COVID – 19. Whilst an already fragile health sector continues to be overstrained, all other sectors of governance and social welfare continue to be deprived and exploited due to each respective leadership's inability to crisis manage. This is especially due to the nature of current global order which is heavily dependent upon capitalist gains. Further, the failures of a democracy in facilitating the creation of social order in terms of the adherence of COVID-19 regulations have been flaunted across the global arena due to the general public's violation of it for the sake of rebelling against the status quo. However, it is due to the liberal tropes adopted by governments adhering to

Western tropes of democracy that such disregard for law and order emerges hence threatening the very foundations of social cohesion.

Constitutional Crises

As established by Sivaram, Western ideals of democracy are often a foundation to further oppressive regimes. This has been especially evident through the notion of “citizenship”. The definition of a citizen was temperamental in the operation of democracies as established in Ancient Greece. At that particular time, citizens who were allowed to participate in the democratic process were men and non-slaves. Consequently, women and other oppressed groups were categorised as sub-citizens and hence their rights were not considered as essential or of concern in governance or social order. Throughout history, such ideals continue to be implemented in governance through clauses in particular constitutions in an explicit or implicit manner where a disconnect between citizens and sub-citizens.

Within the context of “the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka”, the divide between citizens and sub-citizens has been apparent for decades. As a constitutional government which prioritises the “Sinhala – Buddhist identity” of the island, it becomes apparent that all those who do not fall under a Sinhala-Buddhist identity, automatically become sub-citizens. Further legal provisions which have been in place over the years such as the Sinhala Only Act (1956) and the PTA further emphasise the effect that democratic governance models have in facilitating genocidal programmes. Whilst many such acts continue to be conducted under the guise of protecting Sri Lanka’s democratic nature, the government’s inability to crisis-manage at instances of crises are an indication of the inherent flaws of democracy as a governance model which proposes to be a system which is introduced in response to crises. This is especially evident through SL’s constitutional crisis of 2018 where 2 prime ministers were in power on the island hence indicative of the exposure of transitional justice and reconciliation as a mere mirage constructed to blind-side Eelam Tamils from true solution to their grievances – a counter – COIN governance model.

Tsunami Crisis Management

Whilst the Tamil Eelam administration does not particularly fit into the Western tropes of a democracy per se, as a socialist democracy it proved to be efficient in administration, governance and especially crisis management. As an administration which functioned during an armed struggle, Tamil Eelam’s competence in crisis management was evident on a daily basis through its countless structural institutions which addressed the communal grievances of the citizens of Tamil Eelam. However, the efficiency of Tamil state governance in integrating its various sectors for crisis management during the 2004 Asian Tsunami proved to be exemplary in nature. Furthermore, the LTTE’s subsequent

establishment of a Weather Monitoring Centre (WMC) in Bharathipuram, Kilinochchi on 26.11.2005, was instrumental in functioning as a highly defensive mechanism in safeguarding the citizens of Tamil Eelam against natural disasters and was hence an indicator of foresight in facilitating short term and long-term crisis management. This remained crucial in reflecting the efficient protection of the livelihood of the citizens of Tamil Eelam.

Break or Bleak?

A global order dependent on fragile governance models such as democracies is crumbling in the face of crises. The fundamental question of whether an alternative efficient solution to governance exists remains intrinsic upon subjugated communities' ability to translate the efficiency of the Tamil Eelam governance model into current global context. A failure to do so, may cause the failures of history to suck humanity into a black hole, in a whirlpool of elitist dominance.

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