

Parallel Governments

-Living between terror and counter terror

in northern Lanka (1982-2009)

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Paper first presented at the conference, Globalizing Religions and Cultures in the Asia Pacific, University of Adelaide, 1–5 December 2008 and developed version published in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 45: 568-583, doi:10.1177/0021909610373899; <http://jas.sagepub.com/content/45/5/568.abstract>

Introduction

It was Thomas Hobbes (1651) who first pointed out that behind the veneer of states is the spectre of violence and threat of terror that is used to control and rule the subject populations; for example, through the police or, increasingly in the modern ‘security states’, through intelligence agencies and other covert operations. When this control and rule is challenged, comes under question or is weakened, the covert violence becomes more overt, manifesting as techniques of terror. When the power to rule is contested by other parties, they may vie for control, loyalty and legitimacy through terror and counter terror tactics on the populace.

The ongoing ethnic war in Lanka was a good example of the modern use of terror on a mass scale. All parties to the conflict have resorted to a ‘dirty war’ (Nordstrom, 1994) with the use of terror tactics in the bitter contest for power. The Sri Lankan state, the various Tamil militants, who for over two decades fought to create an independent state, the Sinhala Janatha Vimukthi Perumana (JVP), an ultra leftist militant group that made two attempts to violently overthrow the government, and India, during its short intervention in the north-east part of the island (1987–90) to impose peace, have all used mass terror to control the population, compel obedience and suppress dissent. But in the scale, duration, sheer numbers of victims and in the vast resources, national and international, available to it, it is the Lankan state that is most guilty of the misuse of power and the privileges that accrue to it as a state. Though critical at times, the international community (IC), its many organizations, diplomatic missions, the UN, and aid agencies giving technical support, military hardware, training and the global network of socioeconomic ties and mutual relationships that give covert recognition, legitimacy and tacit sanction, are also indirectly implicated in what is actually going on in countries like Lanka (Nordstrom, 2004). Some, like the former Australian Foreign Minister, Garret Evans (2007), have advocated through the International Crisis Group for the right and duty of the IC to intervene when the state fails to protect its citizens, a principle called Right to Protect (R2P). Between the terror and counter terror of the Lankan state, paramilitaries and the

Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) existed the shadow world (Nordstrom, 2004). This was the grey area beyond the legal, formal, overt world where civilians have to survive when the official government collapses around them.

An extraordinary situation has developed in the north-east where, since 1983, the writ of the official government no longer runs. Various Tamil militant groups have been contesting the state and between themselves in internecine fighting for power, control and the legitimacy to rule. For a period between 1987 and 1989, the Indians attempted to establish military and administrative control in the north-east but even then, the situation was muddled with the Lankan state, Indian proxy paramilitary group, Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and the LTTE contesting each other for different aspects of power. Among the Tamil militants from over 36 groups post-1983, the LTTE emerged as dominant, ruthlessly eliminating other contenders by 1986 (Hoole et al., 1988). However, the other militants have retained some power by aligning either with the states or the LTTE. The LTTE also managed to establish at different times, varying degrees of absolute military control over different territories, so called 'uncleared areas' by the Lankan state which continued to pay government salaries, provide rations and materials as well retain a modicum of administrative control. But the LTTE established a de facto government, a mini state, of its own with police, army, navy, air force, legal codes, courts, prisons, taxes, customs, immigration, administration, local government, planning, development programmes, social services, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), financial system, trades, shops, commercial ventures, medical services, educational services – trappings of a counter state in the uncleared areas. It also continued to have considerable control and power over the local population in state controlled, 'cleared areas', through sympathy, terror and infiltration of most institutions and organizations. The Lankan state managed to deliver a mortal blow to the LTTE by May 2009 following a long, brutal military campaign against the LTTE which tried to hold onto civilians as human shields, that left 20,000 civilians dead, perhaps 60,000 injured, and over 300,000 displaced, with many confined in internment camps (Philp, 2009; Philp and Evans, 2009; UTHR-J, 2009; Wax, 2009). Thus the power and control in the whole north-east was under intense, violent contest on a daily basis through terror and counter terror. Extra judicial revenge and reprisal killings, abductions, disappearances, torture, intimidation, threats, assaults, extortion and robberies are daily occurrences that the civil population faces. Often it is not clear who is responsible for what within an overall reign of terror. There were economic blockades, sanctions, embargoes, restrictions or quotas for essential and other goods, transport barriers, frontier closures, wholesale battles, curfews, hartals or strikes, hoarding, shortages, lack of food, water, electricity, shelter, exorbitant prices, multiple taxes, extortion, economic paralysis or poor quality services and chronic understaffing.

Counter Insurgency (CI)

It becomes somewhat easier to understand what was going on in the north and east of Lanka from a framework of counter insurgency strategy (Whitaker, 2007). Current CI doctrine start from the colonial masters' experience of administering their far-flung empires. Native populations often rebelled against the imperial powers using insurgent methods and they were met with counter insurgent techniques. According to Sivarami (Whitaker, 2007), the original CI manual was by Frank Kitson (1971, 1977) who had been the British army commander in charge of CI operations in Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus and Oman. Kitson described the use of penetration agents, the mounting of psychological operation (or psyops – i.e. propaganda, misinformation, PR), the making of fake political concessions to split the opposition, the wielding of army counter terror, the cordoning off of communities, the deployment of hooded informers,² and, somewhat less forthrightly, the rough interrogations and 'wetwork' (that is, the hooding, torture, 'turning', disposal, or dispatching of captives) that are being used in Lanka by the state in its CI operations (Whitaker, 2007). The most current and state-of-the-art CI manual is that of the US Army (2006) which is being 'successfully' implemented in Iraq by one of its authors, General Petraeus. After emphasizing the essentially politically component of CI, all these experts assert that CI when practised

properly is effective (Amato, 2002; Kitson, 1971, 1977; US Army, 2006; Vijayasiri, 1999; Whitaker, 2007). Malaya and Kenya are trumpeted as success stories in the practice of CI. However, apart from temporarily suppressing the immediate rebellion, it is not clear how far CI is effective in solving the underlying problems that are the source of the insurgency in the first place. As recent uprisings in Kenya and stirrings in Malayasia show, the underlying inequities are left simmering in the post colonial situations. Amato (2002) and Vijayasiri (1999) are quick to point out that CI was not carried out properly in Lanka and if used correctly it would be successful. They mention lack of clear political will or policy as the cause of failure of CI in Lanka but suggest how to improve the CI operations. Perhaps President Rajapakse with his brothers, advisors and General Sarath Fonseka took these admonitions to heart to mount a more successful CI campaign against the LTTE in 2007–09.

In the post 9/11 world with the consequent global war on terror, terrorism and counter terrorism have become very closely associated, if not synonymous, with counter insurgency discourse. Other similar terms are asymmetrical warfare where a less resourced and weaker force will use unconventional, guerrilla, or subversive techniques in the conflict with stronger and more established states and those helping them. Essentially it is a struggle for power, for legitimacy to rule from the target populations. Both parties will vie for the support and allegiance of the civilian population using whatever techniques they think will work. Thus, though officially denied, terror and counter terror become one of the accepted methods of the dirty war, of trying to win over, frighten or coerce the population to their side. Instead of the traditional violence, it is now thought more effective and efficient (cost-effective) in the long term to use the 'stick and carrot' method to psychologically win over the population. Sivaram reports a discussion with a retired Lankan army general who said

that a population targeted by C-I is actually like the body of a prisoner who has been taken under the Prevention of Terrorism Act ... So you treat the target population as a prisoner: break its will, reduce its expectations to bare minimum, so Tamils who set out to demand a separate state would end up just arguing for not being tortured. So your aspirations are depressed from separatism to being allowed to travel without being shot. And then the nice guys – the NGOs, the paramilitaries are the nice guys who come and talk to you and you start giving them intelligence and you become pliant. And you start learning the lesson of just being grateful for being alive. (Whitaker, 2007: 153)

Sivaram himself finally became a victim of covert CI operations, being eliminated extra-judicially in 2005, for his forthright writings.

Fundamentally, CI is aimed at re-establishing the legitimacy of the state while cutting of the target population's support and sympathy for the insurgents (US Army, 2006). According to Sivaram, ' ... Another aim of counter-insurgency is to induce war-weariness in the target population ... the state is always focused on destroying the political will of the target population, and the art and science of doing that is counter-insurgency' (Whitaker, 2007: 153) and the way it does that is:

Massacres and terror; Arrest, detention, torture, all indiscriminate, and interrogation to destroy the basis of civil society; Checkpoints, constant checks; Promote vigilante groups [who] create an atmosphere of terror and collapse the social fabric (Patricia Lawrence's thesis becomes important here [see Lawrence, 2000]): people lose their psychological moorings and so become unable to make any kind of politically cohesive statement, so the vigilante groups become a regime of terror within a regime of terror; Promotion of numerous political and interest groups from within the target population to dilute and obfuscate the basic issue in question that in the first place gave rise to the insurgency. (Whitaker, 2007: 150)

Massacres (see Table 1) of innocent civilians by all the parties to the conflict became relatively common. Apart from individual, targeted political abductions, disappearances and extra-judicial killings (Human Rights Watch, 2008), these mass executions can only be called crimes against humanity that keep the population in abject terror. They easily qualify for persecution under criteria set out for war

crimes by the International Criminal Court (2002). The various contending authorities, the state, paramilitaries, LTTE and even the Indian army for short periods, believed, against all the best advice of CI expertise (Kitson, 1971; US Army, 2006), that judicious use of these terror tactics would keep the population under their control and counter the appeal of the opposing party by winning over 'hearts and minds' through fear.

Table 1 War Crimes in Lanka - Civilian Massacres

Date	Place	killed	Description	Possible Perpetrator
July 1983	Welikade Prison	53	Tamil Detainees	State Officials, prisoners
24 July 1983	Jaffna	60	Tamil civilians	Lankan Army
April, 1984	Jaffna	70	Church (Our Lady of Refuge)	Lankan Army
20 Nov. 1984	Dollar and Kent Farm, Mullaithivu	62	Sinhala ex-convicts and settlers	LTTE
2 nd Dec 1984	Iraperiyakulam army camp, Vavuniya	100	Young Tamil men	Lankan Army
4 th Dec 1984	Mannar	107	Tamil civilians	Lankan State forces
May, 1985	Valvetithurai	70	Tamil Civilians and school boys	Lankan State forces
14 May 1985	Anuradhapura	146	Bus stand and Vihare	LTTE
May 1985	Thambiluvil, Eastern province	60-63	Tamil Youth	Lankan State forces
15 May 1985	Northern Seas off Delft	34	Passengers on Kumuthini (boat)	Lankan Navy
3 June 1985	Pankulam	85	Civilian bus passengers	
May 3, 1986	Katunayake Airport	16	Passengers with foreign tourists	Tamil militants

? May 1986	Central Telegraph Office	14	Civilians	Tamil militants
April 1987	Colombo	113	Car bomb, central bus station	LTTE
2 June 1987	Aranthalawa	31	Buddhist monks & civilians	LTTE
22 Oct. 1987	Jaffna Hospital	70	Patients, doctors, nurses and staff	Indian army (IPKF)
August 1987	Trincomalee	100	Sinhala villagers	LTTE
April 1989	Trincomalee	51	Car bomb	LTTE
2 August 1989	Valvittithurai	63	Tamil Youth and Boys	Indian army (IPKF)
1 August 1990	Akraipattu	14	Executions of Muslims	LTTE
4 August 1990	Kathankudi Mosque	103	Muslim men and children in Prayer	LTTE
18 Aug. 1990	Eravur	121	Muslim men, women and children	LTTE
05/09/1990	Vantharumoolai	158	Tamil Civilian refugees	Lankan State Forces
10/09/1990	Saththurukkondan	184	Tamil Civilian refugees	Lankan State Forces
12/06/1991	Kokkaddicholai	82	Tamil Civilians	Lankan State Forces
October, 1991	Palliyagodella	109	Muslim men, women and children	LTTE
09/08/1992	Mylanthanai, Batticaloa	32		Lankan State Forces

02/01/1993	Killaly Sea	52	Fleeing refugees	State navy
18/04/1995	Nachchikuda	30		Lankan State Forces
25 May 1995	Kallarawa	42		LTTE
October 1995	Border Villages in East	120	Hacked	LTTE
January 1996	Colombo	100	truck with explosives , Central Bank	LTTE
11/02/1996	Kumarapuram	24	Civilians	Lankan State Forces
20/04/1996	Killaly sea	42	Fleeing refugees	Lankan State Navy
24 July 1996	Dehiwala	56	Train bombing	LTTE
11/08/1997	Mullaitivu,(Manthuvil)	40	Tamil Civilians	Lankan State Forces
10/06/1998	Suthanthirapuram, Mullaitivu	32	Tamil Civilians	Lankan State Forces
17/9/1999	Gongala	52	Men, women and children hacked	LTTE
25/10/2000	Bindunuwewa	31	Surrendered child, youth soldiers	? Lankan Police, officials
15 June 2006	Kebethigollewa, Anuradapura	64	mine attack on a civilian bus	LTTE
7 August 2006	Muttur	17	French Action against hunger workers	Lankan State Forces
April 2, 2007	Ampara	16	Bombing of civilian bus	LTTE

Nov. 28, 2007	Colombo	18	Bombs	LTTE
Dec. 5, 2007	Anuradhapura	16	Bombing of civilian bus	LTTE
16 Jan. 2008	Buttala	27	Bus passengers	LTTE
29 Jan 2008	Palampiddi	20	School children	DPU
2 Feb. 2008	Dambulla	20	Bus passengers	LTTE
Jan -19 May,2009	Vanni	20000	Tamil Civilians	Lankan State Forces & LTTE

Table 2 War Crimes in Lanka - Mass Displacements

Date	Place	Numbers	Description	Possible Perpetrator	Comments
1956	Gal-Oya spread to other places	3000	widespread anti-Tamil violence	Mobs	Followed protests to Sinhala only Act
1958	Colombo, Outstations	35000	Mass displacement of Tamils following widespread anti-Tamil violence	Mobs	Followed Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam pact and its abrogation.
1977	Hill Country, Colombo	15000	Mass displacement of Tamils following widespread anti-Tamil violence	Mobs	Followed UNP winning 1977 elections
1983	Colombo, South	250000	Mass displacement of	Mobs and politicians	

	West, Central		Tamils following widespread anti-Tamil violence		
Post 1983	Abroad	500000 to 1,000,000	Mostly Tamils	Lankan State forces	Asylum abroad
August 1987			Sinhala villagers	LTTE	
October 1987	Jaffna	300,000	Indian army Pawan army operation	IPKF	
1988	North East	253000	IPKF operations	IPKF	
October 1990	North	100,000	Muslims ordered to leave	LTTE	Fear of the 5 th Column
October 1995	Jaffna	400,000	Advancing Lankan forces on Jaffna	LTTE	Engineered by LTTE
1996	North	335000	Lankan forces operations	Lankan forces	
1997	North	255000	Lankan forces operations	Lankan forces	
1999	North	51000	Lankan forces operations	Lankan forces	
2000	North	192000	Lankan forces operations		
2001	North	67000	Lankan forces operations	Lankan forces	

Dec. 2006	North and East	520000		Conflict	
April 2007	East	301,000		Conflict	
June, 2007	Colombo	376	Tamils	Lankan authorities	Deportation to Vavuniya
August 2007	Northeast	460,000		Conflict	
Jan. to May 2009	Vanni	300,000	Tamils	Military operations	Internment in camps

Sources: **Tamil Centre for Human Rights – TCHR** (www.tchr.net) http://www.sangam.org/2007/11/Killed_1956_2007.php?uid=2619

UNHCR <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=44523f134>

Internal

Displacement Monitoring Centre [http://www.internal-](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/53A197CF6F0A92E3C1257362002C1F9A/$file/Sri+Lanka+-September+2007.pdf)

[displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/53A197CF6F0A92E3C1257362002C1F9A/\\$file/Sri+Lanka+-September+2007.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/53A197CF6F0A92E3C1257362002C1F9A/$file/Sri+Lanka+-September+2007.pdf)

Table 1 gives a few, illustrative and representative examples of unambiguous cases of civilian massacres involving more than 15 civilians with a clear, planned intent carried out in a deliberate, organized way to cause terror or as a lesson. Disorganized mob killings or where soldiers have gone 'berserk' or where the action could be argued to be accidental, unintentional, or 'collateral damage' have been left out. Numbers injured have been left out (not available or reliable in most cases).

Sivaram had described 'levels of terror' during a lecture on CI at Palmerstone North, New Zealand in 1999 (Trawick, personal communication) as something that can be turned on and off, and increased or reduced as the situation necessitated. It would be like a fine tuning to keep the population under control, like the use of the friendly and 'bad' interrogator, where the population will start yearning for periods of less terror and do anything to avoid an increase in terror levels.

In relation to abductions and disappearances, a recent Human Rights Watch report (2008), gives a very clear description of what is happening:

Hundreds of enforced disappearances committed since 2006 have already placed Sri Lanka among the countries with the highest number of new cases in the world. The victims are primarily young ethnic Tamil men who 'disappear' – often after being picked up by government security forces in the country's embattled north and east, but also in the capital Colombo ... Most are feared dead. In the great majority of cases documented by Human Rights Watch and Sri Lankan groups, evidence indicates the involvement of government security forces – army, navy, or police. The involvement of the security forces in 'disappearances' is facilitated by Sri Lanka's emergency laws, which grant sweeping powers to the army along with broad immunity from prosecution ... Also implicated in abductions and 'disappearances' are pro-government Tamil armed groups acting either independently or in conjunction with the security forces ... The LTTE has been implicated in abductions in conflict areas under the government's control.

As part of the CI and counter CI, the various authorities vying for the loyalty and subservience of the community have ruthlessly eliminated what they have perceived as obstruction to their power and control. Apart from the abductions, disappearances and extra-judicial killings by the state and its allied paramilitary forces, the internecine warfare among various Tamil militant organizations competing for the loyalty of the community have resulted in the elimination of many of its own ethnic, more able, civilians – a process of self-destruction, auto genocide (Hoole, 2001). Those with leadership qualities, those willing to challenge and argue, the intellectuals, the dissenters and those with social motivation have been weeded out (*'Pullu Kalaitthal'* or *weeding* – those eliminated are labelled as 'anti social elements' or 'traitors'). They have either been intimidated into leaving, killed or coerced into silence. At critical nodal shifts in power, recriminations, false accusations, revenge and retribution were very common. It happened in 1987 (IPKF, the Indian intervention); in 1990 (LTTE takeover), in 1996 (SLA control), after 2005 with the collapse of the ceasefire, and is happening from May 2009 with another shift in the power balance. The loss of leadership and the talented, skilful, resourceful persons, the professionals, technocrats and entrepreneurs, from the community has had devastating consequences. Many left over the years due to increasing difficulties, traumatic experiences and social pressure from family and colleagues, the so-called 'brain drain'. Those who remained have been targeted by those aspiring to rule the community.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) warns of the destructive consequences to a society which experiences the systematic degrading and debilitation of its richly talented members. This is the loss of vital resources (Hobfoll, 1998), the destruction of social capital, the nodal points of vibrant relationships and essential networks which is a prominent cause of 'collective trauma' (Somasundaram, 2007). Without leadership and organization, vital networks and functioning relationships have collapsed, leaving the community easy prey to competing propaganda, authoritarian control and suppression. Many have observed that ordinary people in Jaffna have become passive and submissive. These qualities have become part of the survival strategy passed on through the socialization process, where children are taught to keep quiet, not to question or challenge, and to accept the situation, as assertive behaviour carries considerable risk. The creative spirit, the vital capacity to rebuild and recover is being suppressed.

Torture was used as a routine CI procedure carried out on Tamil detainees (Doney, 1998; Somasundaram, 2008). Apart from in the attempt to obtain information, it was used to break the individual personalities of those who tried to resist, as well as an encompassing method to coerce a community into submission. Many individuals did not survive torture, but those who did were released in a broken condition; or when dead, their maimed bodies were conspicuously exhibited to act as a warning to others. It became one aspect of institutionalized violence and laws were passed which legitimized the use of torture and death in custody (Amnesty International, 1986). Thus torture became institutionalized as an aspect of state terror. It was similarly used by the militants but without the legal veneer. The Istanbul Protocol for the Investigation and Documentation of Torture Project team speak of community trauma by the creation of a 'repressive ecology' based on imminent, pervasive threat, terror and inhibition that causes a state of generalized insecurity, terror and rupture of the social fabric (Baykai et al., 2004).

Another CI technique was mass displacement of people from their habitat and home environment (Table 2) as a way of cutting off support for the insurgents but also cutting the sustaining roots of resident populations. Displacement from familiar surroundings cause a fundamental disruption in life and relationships, a disorganization and confusion that breaks the cohesiveness and spirit of communities. There had been mass displacement of Tamils after each episode of the anti-Tamil violence in the south, that is in 1956, 1958, 1977, 1981 and 1983. During the war, people belonging to all three ethnic communities, Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim, have been displaced. However, the overwhelming majority of those displaced have been Tamils. Over a million have fled abroad through precarious and devious routes as refugees to India, Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and other countries, seeking asylum there and forming a worldwide diaspora. The current population of the Jaffna peninsula in the north is 400,000, while the projected population for 2004 was 1,200,000. This indicates the level of depopulation of one of the areas. Similarly, all the outlying villages in Trincomalee, 52 in all, have been emptied of their Tamil inhabitants by the security forces. A similar fate awaited the *Manal aru* Tamils in 1985 (UTHR-J, 1994). The 2009 military campaign displaced the whole Vanni population of over 400,000, many of whom had already been displaced several times.

It seems to be a Lanka army strategy to empty an area of its inhabitants before launching an attack, perhaps to reduce civilian casualties and make it easier for military action where it becomes more difficult for the guerrillas to merge and hide within the civilian population. However, once the area has been secured, the CI strategy appears to be a long-term policy of denying a base for the LTTE and preventing infiltration by having large Tamil civilian no-go High Security Zones (and eventual colonization with Sinhala settlers), saturating the area with army camps, posts (the Indian army had a post every hundred yards or so!) and 'points', establishing a detailed list of residents, with entry and exit procedures, ID papers, frequent checking, arrests, assaults, detentions, disappearances and paramilitary and home guard surveillance, along with the simultaneous promotion of hearts and minds operations by distributing relief items, settlement programmes and other activities aimed at winning over the people. Exactly this CI strategy is currently being enacted in the east (UTHR-J, 2007) and is being planned for the Vanni with international funding.

The mass exodus of 1995 engineered by the LTTE as a counter CI strategy was another type of experience (UTHR-J, 1995). Apart from the forced breaking of the bonds with their homes and village, the trek of over 400,000 people in the middle of the night through rain and shelling effected great change in people.

They left in terror and not by choice, with few possessions, roads clogged with crowds moving slowly, step by step, the less able, the elderly, falling by the wayside; and finally arriving in makeshift, inadequate accommodation with very poor facilities or none at all. People lost their identity, pride, dignity and hope. (Somasesundaram, 2007)

The total eviction of nearly 100,000 Muslims from their traditional homes in the north in 1990 by the LTTE, ostensibly as a counter CI exercise to eliminate an alleged fifth column in their areas for which there was scant evidence, is an example of ethnic cleansing (Clarance, 2007). Many of these Muslims still languish in refugee camps, a forgotten and rejected people. When the frequent mass displacement of people from their natural habitat is looked at from the CI perspective, it appears to be a strategy to remove the support base, the sustenance, information and assistance given to the opposite forces. It would also appear to be a policy designed as a method of punishment for aiding and abetting the 'enemy', inducing weariness, hopelessness, helplessness, rootlessness and despair that would make people ready to accept any conditions and break their cohesion and fighting spirit – a form of pacification. It is a destruction of the vital resources of a community, their homes, property, traditional way of life, occupation, employment, earnings and source of livelihood so they become completely dependent on handouts, at the mercy of authorities and under their power and control. It is also about ethnically-based territoriality, seen for example, in an Israeli CI strategy to retain land under one ethnic group by driving out another or creating resettlements under tight military controls, as was done in *Manal aru* (UTHR-J, 1994) and is being done in the east (UTHR-J, 2007) and planned for the newly 'conquered' Vanni.

A consequence of ongoing CI security operations was the complete militarization of every part of ordinary life. Armed uniformed men with all the paraphernalia of war were everywhere: terse, intimidating, with foreign verbal and body language. Mass arrests, assaults, executed bodies in public places, being searched, humiliated and pushed around were normal. Females constantly faced sexual harassment, abuse and violation. There were spies, informers, intelligence agents, paramilitaries in civilian clothes, unscrupulous elements and constant surveillance. In Jaffna, the atmosphere created a feeling of entrapment, of being besieged. The conditions were compared to being in an 'open prison' by some of the community leaders, the Bishop of Jaffna (Savundaranayagam, 2006) and Surgeon of the Jaffna Hospital, Dr Thayalan Ambalavanar (Partners, 1999) among them. There was also the more pervasive 'counter-control' by the Tamil militants through social pressure, intimidation, killings, abductions and internal terror, trapping the civil population between the two forces. This atmosphere and tense situation created a sense of apprehension, a constant state of alertness, a 'low intensity panic', a pervasive background of terror that did not allow people to relax and go about their ordinary life. Despite all this, people learnt to manage their terror and life went on in the surreal atmosphere so well described by Trawick (2007). On the one hand there would be massive killings, disappearances, 'encounters', search operations, while at the same time there would be school with children in uniforms, festivals, weddings, celebrations, village markets, entertainment, sports meets.

In the war zones violence and militarization gradually permeated all aspects of daily life and family and community processes (de Mel, 2007). It was not certain a person going out to work, would return in the evening. A home could be suddenly searched, someone brutally killed, a mother raped or father taken away. A shell could land anywhere destroying everything around. Sounds of gun shots, machine-gun fire, exploding shells, diving planes and rounding helicopters were ever present. People had to adapt to frequent checks, getting down from bikes, showing ID cards, waiting while the military looked you over, body searches, the pushing and slaps, intimidation, women taking the sexual overtones and harassment as part of their daily ordeal, all in the atmosphere of possible arrest. This kind of pervasive atmosphere of

violence, rather than breaking down the resistance and spirit of the population, in time creates resistance and defiance (Nordstrom, 1994), particularly in the youth. There is also the daily experience of profound humiliation during the searches, arrests, detention and beatings. Thus within each breast would grow, small at first, a rage, a hate which could be transformed into a militant and suicidal cadres (Hassan, 2008). Thus these kinds of CI policies and strategies would spawn a whole generation of rebellious youth.

People were caught between multiple powers competing for legitimacy and their obedience, allegiance. It became a risky, nuanced game of going through the motions and play acting for the benefit of each side. When one side called for a hartal or strike, the other side would want the shops open and transport operating. Shopkeepers would compromise by keeping one door open, or sometimes loosely closed which could be pushed open. When the state wanted their Independence Day or the LTTE their Heroes Day observed, people would comply by hanging out flags or cleaning their compound.

Sarvananthan (2006) estimates that the informal economy formed 30 per cent of the Provincial GDP of the north-east. The PGDP for the north is the lowest in the country (the east being also low) due to lack of economical activity, but compensated by the informal economy. Thus, as Nordstrom (2004) maintains, the informal economy is vital to sustain a civilian population during hard times in war zones. It is estimated that due to fighting and the collapse of most traditional occupations and income, people in the north-east have become dependent on outside remittances. In the north, it has also been migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Western countries sending back part of their earnings or meager welfare payments through 'hawala' that have kept the home fires burning. It is said that each family has at least one member, if not more, abroad who then supports their family back home. For asylum seekers their families would have sacrificed considerable finances in payments to human smugglers, unscrupulous agents (transactions where they are easily cheated), and to meet the expenses involved in complicated passages through inhospitable routes to get their family member to safety.

A dominant part of the informal economy of the north and east was the LTTE's financial empire. Although it is difficult to estimate the extent of their finances, Jane's Intelligence Review (2007) and Sarvananthan (2006) have estimated the LTTE generated around US\$200–300,000,000 per year through their earnings in Lanka, both uncleared and cleared areas including Colombo, and abroad. Locally the LTTE earned through numerous direct and indirect taxes, commercial ventures, extortion, siphoning from GO and NGO sectors, and various other sources and means. In the formal economy of Lanka the north-east is allocated the lowest regional amount while the defense budget has been soaring, reaching 166.4bn rupees (\$1.48bn) annually. However, this is but the tip of the actual expenditure. Defense spending is often done under other headings and votes. There are no large-scale development programmes comparable to the south, no industrial or economic investments, infrastructure development, market access or circulation of money. The economy of Jaffna has been in a frozen state except for the remittances from abroad. Thus the Jaffna population is a deprived area from the state economic point of view and people learn to survive on low or absent incomes.

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