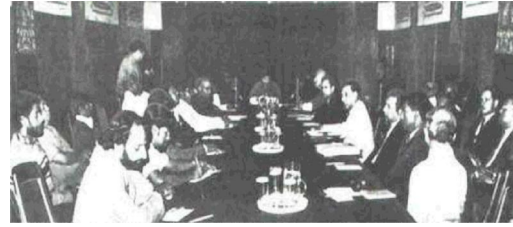
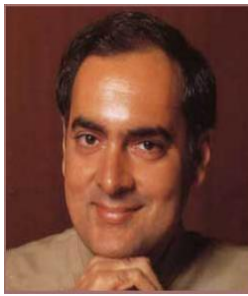


Peace attempts made by the Government of Sri Lanka (1985-2006)

◆ The first-ever peace talks between the Sri Lankan government, Tamil militants and Tamil political parties were held in the Bhutanese capital of Thimpu in **July 1985**. The talks were also the first and the most comprehensive meeting of a government delegation, militants and moderate Tamil politicians. The militant groups and Tamil parties agreed on a formula which urged the government to accept four principles including the right to self determination and the recognition of the north and east as the traditional Tamil homeland. However, the government rejected these demands. Analysts say that the LTTE and other Tamil militant groups came to the conference harboring the misconception that they would get the separate state of Eelam.



Thimpu talks



Rajeev Gandhi

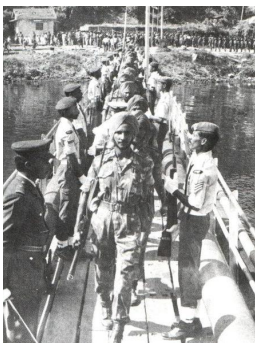
◆ Subsequently in **July 1987**, the then Indian Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J. R. Jayawardene signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Peace Accord in Colombo guaranteeing the rights of the Tamil minority and paving the way for the disarming of the Tamil militants in order for them to enter the democratic mainstream.



J.R. Jayawardene

-Apart from the LTTE, the several other militant groups formed democratic political parties and entered the mainstream to secure their aspirations.

-However, to establish itself as the only leader and the only representation of the Tamil people, the LTTE assassinated most of the Tamil leaders, militant groups, intellectuals who entered mainstream politics.



Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF)

-All groups except the LTTE demobilized; however, the LTTE resisted disarmament attempts by the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) resulting in the death of 1500 Indian soldiers and its eventual withdrawal in 1990.

-The LTTE in its characteristic of brutality and of violence, assassinated Indian Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi by a suicide attack in 21st May 1991 Prime Minister Rajeev Gandhi was proactive and was committed in bringing peace to Sri Lanka through negotiations.

◆ **April 1989 - June 1990**: The government engaged in direct communications with the LTTE leadership in seeking a peaceful settlement for the conflict. India withdrew the last of its forces from Sri Lanka in early 1990, and fighting between the LTTE and the government resumed as the government launched military operations. LTTE committed serious human rights violations, including abduction of children for recruitment.



Ranasinghe Premadasa

◆ **February 1990**: Formal peace talks between the government and the LTTE commenced at the Colombo Hilton. The peace talks failed due to mutual distrust and accusations that both sides arming themselves while talking peace. President Premadasa, who took initiative to solve the issue of north and east through negotiations in 1990s, was also assassinated by the LTTE suicide bomber in 01st May 1993. This assassination was followed by a string of assassinations of Sinhalese political leaders using suicide bombers.



Chandrika
Kumaratunga

◆ **October 1994**: Newly elected President Chandrika Kumaratunga, initiated peace talks with the LTTE. However, this effort did not bear fruit either.

◆ **January 1995**: The Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE agreed to a cessation of hostilities as a preliminary step to a government-initiated plan for peace negotiations. However, in April 1995, the LTTE unilaterally resumed hostilities with an attack on Trincomalee naval base in the east of the island.

-Proving the fact that the LTTE's intention of not seeking a solution through peaceful means, LTTE carried out an attempt to assassinate president Chandrika Kumaratunga as a LTTE suicide bomber blew herself at an election rally attended by the former President in 1999.

-The government then adopted a policy of military engagement with the Tigers, with government forces liberating Jaffna from LTTE control by mid-1995 and moving against LTTE positions in the northern Vanni district. An LTTE counteroffensive begun in October 1999 reversed most government gains and by May 2000 threatened to eliminate government forces in Jaffna. Heavy fighting continued until 2001.

◆ **December 2001**: Following the election of the new government, the LTTE and the government declared unilateral cease-fires.

◆ **February 2002**: The Government and the LTTE signed a Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) with Norwegian facilitation and peace talks began in December 2002. However, after three rounds, peace talks broke down on 21st April 2003 as the LTTE announced that they were suspending the talks due to their displeasure at the handling of some critical issues.

-Among the reasons the LTTE gave for this were their exclusion from reconstruction talks in Washington DC on 14th April 2003 and a more general perception that they were not receiving the full economic rewards of peace, the failure, as they saw it, of dividends in peace talks to transfer to security withdrawals on the ground and the disparity, as they saw it, between the relative calm of the government-held north-east and continuing violence in

Tiger-held areas. However the LTTE maintained that it was committed to a negotiated settlement to the two-decade conflict, but stated that progress had to be made on the ground before the settlement could be implemented. On 31st October 2003, the LTTE issued its own peace proposal, calling for an Interim Self-Governing Authority (ISGA). The ISGA would be controlled by the LTTE and would have broad powers in the north and east. However, the governments' coalition partners rejected this proposal, which they saw as sinister attempt to lay the ground works for a separate state.

-Meanwhile, the LTTE continued extortions both nationally and internationally and strengthened themselves militarily by smuggling in arms and ammunition, forcibly recruiting child soldiers, and engaging in the killings of government intelligence agents and members of rival Tamil groups. The latter were former militants who had entered the democratic process.

◆ The parliamentary elections, held on **8th April 2004**, resulted in victory for governing party and its alliance with the Marxist party, the JVP (People's Liberation Front), with Mahinda Rajapakse appointed as Prime Minister. Initial fears of a resumption of the conflict proved unfounded when the new government expressed its desire to continue the peace process and to find a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

-In the meantime, there was a major split between the northern and eastern wings of the LTTE. The eastern commander of the LTTE Vinayagamurthi Muralidharan, popularly known as Colonel Karuna, who was one of Prabhakaran's most trusted lieutenants broke off from the LTTE along with 5,000 eastern cadres, claiming that the Eastern Province Tamils were denied resources and power by the LTTE leadership. This was the biggest expression of dissension in the history of the LTTE and a civil war within the LTTE seemed imminent. After the parliamentary elections, brief fighting south of Trincomalee led to a rapid retreat and capitulation of Karuna's group, their leaders eventually going into hiding including Karuna himself. However, the "Karuna faction" maintains a significant presence in the east and continues to launch attacks against the LTTE.



LTTE soldiers

-The breakaway group subsequently formed a political party known as the Tamil Eelam Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP) hoping to contest in future elections. Meanwhile, the LTTE continued the killing political opponents and government intelligence officers, while the rebels accused the government of supporting paramilitary groups against them, especially the Karuna group. The ceasefire largely held through this turmoil, although the situation was complicated.

-On **26th December 2004**, the Indian Ocean tsunami hit Sri Lanka, killing more than 30,000 people, and leaving many hundreds more homeless. Aid poured in from around the world from both national and private donors, but disagreements arose over the modalities of aid distribution in the LTTE controlled areas. By 24th June 2005, the government and the LTTE agreed on the Post-Tsunami Operational Management Structure (P-TOMS), but it was denounced by the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the JVP. However, immediately following the tsunami there was a marked decrease in violence in the north.

-On **12th August 2005**, a LTTE sniper assassinated Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar who was an ethnic Tamil. He was highly respected internationally and his efforts had led to the proscription of the LTTE by several western states including the U.S and the UK. His assassination further marginalized the LTTE internationally.



Lakshman Kadirgamar

◆ During the **November 2005** presidential election, the LTTE enforced a voting prohibition in areas under its control. The presidential candidate of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) Mahinda Rajapakse was victorious and immediately offered to hold unconditional peace talks with the LTTE.



Mahinda Rajapakse

-Following the presidential election of November 2005, the LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran stated in his annual address that the Tigers would "renew their struggle" in 2006. Just days after Prabhakaran's speech, a new round of violence erupted. Beginning in December 2005, there was increased guerilla activity in the north-east, including claymore attacks (which killed 150 government troops), clashes between the Sea Tigers and the Sri Lanka Navy, and the killings of sympathizers of the government.

Peace Talks - Geneva 1

◆ The co-chairs of the Tokyo Donor conference called on both parties to return to the negotiating table. The United States in particular were heavily critical of the violence perpetrated by the LTTE. Both parties agreed on **7th February 2006** that new talks could be held in Geneva, Switzerland on 22nd -23rd February.



-The LTTE resumed attacks against the military on 10th April 2006 and called for a postponement of the Geneva talks until 24th-25th April 2006. On 20th April, the LTTE officially pulled out of peace talks indefinitely and continued their attacks in the north and the east: they attacked civilian targets, massacring six rice farmers on 23rd April and hacking a young mother to death and kidnapping her infant the next day.

29th May 2006: The European Union proscribed the LTTE. It resulted in the freezing of LTTE assets in EU member states.

June 2006: Further peace talks were scheduled in Oslo, Norway, between 8th -9th June but canceled when the LTTE refused to meet directly with the government delegation claiming its fighters were not been allowed safe passage to travel to the talks. Norwegian mediator Erik Solheim told journalists that the LTTE should take direct responsibility for the collapse of the talks.

◆ New talks were scheduled in Oslo to discuss the future of the Scandinavian-led Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM). The LTTE flew to Oslo but refused to participate in talks with the Government of Sri Lanka. They demanded that the SLMM remove any monitors from EU-member states. It resulted in the freezing of LTTE assets in EU member states, and put an end to its efforts to raise funds its terror campaign in Sri Lanka. In a statement, the European Parliament emphasized strongly the fact that the LTTE did not represent all the Tamils and

called on it to "allow for political pluralism and alternate democratic voices in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka".

◆ **8th-9th June 2006:**

-Further peace talks were scheduled in Oslo, Norway, between 8th-9th June but canceled when the LTTE refused to meet directly with the government delegation claiming its fighters had not been allowed safe passage to travel to the talks. They demanded that the SLMM remove any monitors from EU-member states. Norwegian mediator Solheim told journalists that the LTTE should take direct responsibility for the collapse of the talks.



Peace Talks - Geneva 2

15th June 2006

-The massacre of Kebithigollewa on 15th June in which the LTTE attacked a bus killing at least 64 Sinhalese civilians, which included mostly children.

21st July 2006

-The LTTE closed the sluice gates of the Mavil Aru reservoir and cut the water supply to 15,000 villagers in the Government controlled areas.

2nd August 2006

-The clashes erupted on 2nd August 2006; the LTTE attacked Muttur and then moved in gaining control of some parts of the town. The military retaliated.

6th August 2006

-17 persons working for the international French charity Action against Hunger (ACF) in Muttur, were found executed.

12th August 2006

-Assassination of Mr. Kethish Loganadan, a prominent and well respected Tamil human rights and peace activist, the former deputy secretary General of the Peace Secretariat. This Assassination mounted up to 30 assassinations of the Tamil intellectuals by the LTTE.

14th August 2006

-A claymore attack on the convoy carrying the Pakistani High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Bashir Wali Mohamed. Ambassador escaped unhurt but seven others were killed. The LTTE are strongly believed to have carried out the attack.

15th August 2006

-Eventually, following heavy fighting with the rebels, government troops gained full control of the Mavil Aru reservoir.

17th August 2006

-LTTE Sea Tiger cadres attacked the Dakshina naval base in the southern port city of Galle.

-Following the clashes in Mavil Aru and Muttur, the LTTE had intensified attacks targeting the naval base in Trincomalee.

21st August 2006

-In a speech on 21st August, the Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapakse made clear that the government intentions were to neutralize the LTTE threat from Sampur, which is located near the strategic naval base of Trincomalee.

28th August 2006

-The Sri Lankan military launched an assault on the LTTE camps in Sampur and the adjoining Kaddaiparichchan and Thoppur areas to retake the territory.

-LTTE declared that if the offensive continued, the cease-fire would be officially over.

◆ 28th -29th October 2006:

-Despite these incidents, both parties agreed to unconditionally attend peace talks in Geneva on 28th -29th October. However, the peace talks broke down due to disagreements over the reopening of the key A9 highway, which is the link between Jaffna and government controlled areas in the south.

-The government decided to drive out the LTTE out of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka and to free the 35,000 civilians who were used as human shields in the areas controlled by the LTTE.

-LTTE cadres carried out two bus bombings in the south of the country killing 21 civilians.

January 2007

-After months of heavy fighting, Vakarai, one of the eastern strongholds of the LTTE was liberated by the government troops.

-Tamil Tiger rebels launched their first-ever air attack, which targeted the Katunayake Air Force base adjacent to Bandaranike International Air Port by the end of January 2007.

1st April 2007:

-LTTE killed six Sinhalese tsunami aid workers in the eastern district of Batticaloa.

2nd April 2007

-Suspected LTTE cadres set off a bomb aboard a civilian bus in Ampara killing 17 people including children.

11th July 2007

-The Army's capture of the last eastern stronghold of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam at Thoppigala.

02nd September 2007

-Liberation of Arippu and Silavathurai areas located south of Mannar (in the Northern province) from the grip of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

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