

TAIL OF THE DRAGON: SRI LANKAN EFFORTS TO SUBDUE THE
LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM

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by

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ABSTRACT

TAIL OF THE DRAGON: SRI LANKAN EFFORTS TO SUBDUE THE LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM, by MAJ Edward J. Amato, 118 pages.

This operational-level analysis, focused on campaign-planning issues, identifies shortcomings in the counterinsurgency efforts of the government of Sri Lanka (GSL), as it continues its conflict against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Despite foreign military and economic assistance, the GSL's concerted efforts for nearly twenty years have failed to either defeat the LTTE or achieve a peaceful settlement. The LTTE continues to function effectively, if not thrive. The framework provided by JP 5-00.1 *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* has been used to analyze three GSL campaigns: Operation Riviresa in 1995, Operation Jaya Sikurui in 1996, and Operation Kinihira in 2000. US principles of Internal Defense and Development and Foreign Internal Defense have also been utilized in assessing these campaigns. The thesis concludes that the GSL's violation of several campaign-planning fundamentals significantly contributed to poor operational and counterinsurgency performance. Operations were compromised by insufficient political-military synchronization and poor tactical preparedness. The thesis validates the use of JP 5-00.1 as an effective methodology for analyzing situations other than war, and advocates the publication of principles concerning tactics, techniques, and procedures as a supplement to current US counterinsurgency doctrine.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACTC	All Ceylon Tamil Congress
COG	Center of Gravity
DoD	Department of Defense
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FP	Federal Party
GSL	Government of Sri Lanka
IDAD	Internal Defense and Development
IPKF	Indian Peacekeeping Force
JP	Joint Publication
JVP	People's Liberation Front
LSSP	Lanka Sama Samaja Party
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MSR	Main Supply Route
PA	People's Alliance Party
PLOTE	People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
SLA	Sri Lankan Army
SLFP	Sri Lanka Freedom Party
SLMC	Sri Lankan Muslim Congress
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization
TULF	Tamil United Liberation Front
UNP	United National Party

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The conventional army loses if it does not win, the guerrilla wins if he does not lose.¹

Henry Kissinger

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the shortcomings of the counterinsurgency effort the GSL continues to wage against the LTTE. There is relatively little historical analysis on this counterinsurgency, which is unfortunate; despite concerted military and political efforts on the part of the GSL for over twenty years, the LTTE continues to function effectively, if not thrive. External assistance from various nations, including Great Britain and the United States, has similarly failed to enable the GSL to militarily defeat or reach a peaceful settlement with the LTTE. One British diplomat compared the LTTE--and its Tamil lineage--to a dragon, with its head in Delhi, heart in Madras, and tail in Sri Lanka. He noted, "However much we cut the tail, it will grow."²

The findings of this thesis are significant in historical context, yet equally important to the military and political leadership of America today. Ethnic and cultural conflict continues to spread across the globe. Indeed, Samuel P. Huntington argues in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* that although nation-states will maintain their dominance in world affairs, "their interests, associations and conflicts are increasingly shaped by cultural . . . factors."³ *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age*, the national security strategy of the United States, identifies global engagement as fundamental to peace at home and abroad. Additionally, US military

involvement in Kosovo and East Timor is cited to illustrate where “important national interests” were protected--regional conflicts in which ethnic and cultural differences played no small role.⁴ Continuing US commitment to engagement ensures such substate conflicts will remain relevant to policymakers and military leaders of the future. An analysis of the conflict in Sri Lanka may help frame further questions US doctrine writers need answer about counterinsurgency.

Current US counterterrorism efforts further magnify the relevance of this thesis. The LTTE is identified by the US State Department as a foreign terrorist organization that has successfully integrated a battlefield insurgent strategy with a terrorist program.⁵ Notorious for its cadre of domestic suicide bombers and its implication in the 1972 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi, the LTTE targets key personnel, and senior political and military leaders in Colombo and other urban centers. The LTTE’s violent history and its transnational financing may attract closer scrutiny from the global community in the future.

The operational-level analysis in this thesis identifies shortcomings in the GSL counterinsurgency strategy from a campaign-planning perspective. The thesis uses the new JP 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* as an analytical framework, as well as principles of US IDAD and FID doctrine. This doctrinal approach facilitates understanding by US military and political leaders and capitalizes on the considerable knowledge amassed by the American military in the US Civil War and Indian Wars; in the counterinsurgencies in Greece, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic and Vietnam; and by working with the Nicaraguan Contras. From this experience, the body of US

counterinsurgency doctrine is impressive and well organized, facilitating academic analysis. By using this standard, an important assumption is made regarding the validity of US doctrine. Arguably, other nations have enjoyed greater success combating insurgency than the US; the British experience in Malaya is often cited. In contrast, the British faced more difficulty in Cyprus and Palestine and in confronting the Kaffirs in the Transvaal, Boers in South Africa, Mau Mau in Kenya, and the Irish Republican Army. Every insurgency is uniquely challenging; US doctrine does reflect a unique political and social history, rich resource base, and ideology. For this reason, the analysis is balanced with historical examples of other counterinsurgency campaigns.

Chapter 2 provides a brief background of the complex ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. Chapters 3 through 5 analyze the GSL's counterinsurgency effort. These chapters employ a case study methodology, analyzing three government campaigns: Operation Riviresa in 1995, Operation Jaya Sikurui in 1997, and Operation Kinihira in 2000. The intent is not to provide an exhaustive narrative of each campaign, but to highlight political and military shortcomings. These campaigns were selected because they reflect recent GSL efforts that incorporate the most modern equipment, tactics, and the benefit of lessons learned from earlier attempts to defeat the LTTE and other insurgent groups. In addition, the sample includes somewhat successful campaigns, as well as failures, as viewed by GSL forces. Although GSL military campaigns are used to delimit this research, military efforts often play the supporting role in counterinsurgency, and the other instruments of national power are not excluded from this analysis. Diplomatic, informational, and economic efforts by the GSL are reviewed to analyze

their impact on particular campaigns. This campaign construct enables greater focus on the synchronization of the GSL's political and military efforts during specific periods of time and narrows the scope of analysis of decades of conflict. Chapter 6 concludes by summarizing shortcomings in the GSL's strategy and advocating the publication of principles concerning tactics, techniques, and procedures as a supplement to current US counterinsurgency doctrine. The use of JP 5-00.1 as an effective methodology for analyzing situations other than war is also discussed. Finally, issues for further study are identified that might improve the overall understanding of counterinsurgency.

This analysis is not the first undertaken in the subject area. Of significant note is the master's thesis of Lieutenant Colonel Raj Vijayasiri, a Sri Lankan military officer attending the US Command and General Staff College. His thesis, "A Critical Analysis of the Sri Lankan Government's Counterinsurgency Campaign," is based on lessons learned from firsthand experience and primarily identifies political and strategic flaws in the GSL approach.⁶ This work complements Vijayasiri's personal account with an operational-level analysis of specific campaign case studies. Additionally, this thesis helps validate newly published US doctrine JP 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*, with respect to counterinsurgency.⁷

The need to identify biases in sources has been an important element of this research effort. In the midst of civil war, both GSL and LTTE information campaigns are fully mobilized, and propaganda is abundant. Expert accounts and verifiable data are difficult to obtain; the veracity of sources is often suspect. For this reason, the thesis utilizes resources from the US Departments of State and Defense, independent scholarly

sources, and US military personnel with experience in Sri Lanka. Firsthand accounts from Sri Lankan officers and civilians also proved immensely beneficial. Contributions that could not be independently verified are so identified.

The definitions of insurgency, counterinsurgency, terrorism, and similar labels are often value laden and hotly debated depending upon the political perspective. Whenever possible, the definitions accepted in joint US military doctrine are used to avoid confusion. This standard is not always sufficient. For example, current doctrine defines insurgency as “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.”⁸ The LTTE’s objectives are secessionist and include the establishment of an independent state of Tamil Eelam, but do not categorically espouse the overthrow of the GSL. Although *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*--sponsored by the Library of Congress’ Federal Research Division--repeatedly refers to the LTTE as an insurgency, the doctrinal definition of insurgency would not include this conflict.⁹ In *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*, Bard O’Neill offers a more precise definition of insurgency:

A struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses *political resources* (e.g., organizational expertise, propaganda, and demonstrations) and *violence* to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics.¹⁰

The LTTE, in the prosecution of its insurgency, often employs the tactic of terrorism, defined by the DoD as, “the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.”¹¹ Though the definition of

terrorism differs significantly not only among various authors, but also among various agencies within the US government, the DoD definition is often cited and is arguably the most precise.¹²

The doctrinal definition of counterinsurgency is rather broad and is thus less problematic: “Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.”¹³ In practice, however, the US military does not turn to a single reference for counterinsurgency doctrine. Instead, programs, policies, and procedures for assisting other governments are outlined in various sources, predominantly under the umbrella of FID, defined as:

Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.¹⁴

These definitions will not suffice for everyone; however, to become embroiled in semantic debate would prohibit any meaningful analysis of the political and military phenomena of counterinsurgency. Before examining specific campaigns, some background study is useful to keep the analysis in the proper context.

¹Justin Wintle, ed., *The Dictionary of War Quotations* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 363.

²Rohan Gunaratna, “International and Regional Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency,” 2 December 1998 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.counterterror.org.il/articles/articledet.cfm?articleid=57>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999; article author’s endnote 33.

³Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 36.

⁴The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, December 2000), 4.

⁵Dudley Knox Library, Naval Postgraduate School (DKL) Web Committee, “Terrorist Group Profiles: The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE)” [article online]; available from <http://www.nps.navy.mil/~library/tgp/lte.htm>; Internet; accessed on 9 March 2002.

⁶LTC Raj Vijayasiri, “A Critical Analysis of Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign” (Master’s thesis, US Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 1999), 86.

⁷US Department of Defense, JP 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 25 January 2002), I-6.

⁸US Department of Defense, JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 23 March 1994, as amended through 1 September 2000), 228.

⁹Russell R. Ross, ed., *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*, 2d ed. (Washington, DC: Superintendent of Documents, 1990), 177, 220, 221, 249, various.

¹⁰Bard E. O’Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* (Washington: Brassey’s, Inc., 1990), 13.

¹¹US Department of Defense, JP 1-02, 462.

¹²Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 38-39, 43.

¹³US Department of Defense, JP 1-02, 112.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 183.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

Of war men will ask its outcome, not its cause.¹

Seneca, A.D. 65

This stunningly beautiful island nation--formerly known as the Dominion of Ceylon--boasts a rich cultural and historical heritage reaching back over two thousand years. This chapter provides an overview of Sri Lanka's demographics, ancient history, colonial period, and modern political and economic history as they relate to societal divisions today. The island's earliest recorded history suggests a multiethnic society. The significant impact of centuries of colonization by the Portuguese, Dutch, and British likewise did not diminish the unique religious and cultural traditions of Sri Lanka's natives. Indeed, much of the nation's domestic turmoil today traces its origins to these enduring institutions.

Sri Lanka's population today is 74 percent Sinhalese, 18 percent Tamil, and 7 percent Moor and includes a minority 1 percent Burgher, Eurasian, Malay, and Veddah ethnicities.² Sinhalese speak Sinhala, and Tamils speak Tamil, though English is widely spoken in the government and approximately 10 percent of the educated population. It is significant to note that the language of the 7 percent Moor populace is also Tamil, though incorporating several Arabic words. This Muslim contingent of the population shares commonality of language, but not the Sri Lankan Tamil's desire for Tamil Eelam separatism. The Sinhalese majority, predominantly Buddhist, recognizes a further distinction between Kandyan and low-country Sinhalese. Kandyan Sinhalese trace their origins to the central highlands of the island and the Kingdom of Kandy, which was

largely able to resist European domination until 1818. The low-country Sinhalese inhabited the coastal regions and were more subject to colonial influence. The Tamil population of the island, primarily Hindu, also distinguishes between Sri Lankan Tamils and Indian Tamils. Sri Lankan Tamils trace their origins to the earliest Dravidian settlers on the island, as early as the third century B.C. In the nineteenth century, the British brought Indian Tamils to the island as plantation labor. The caste system of Sri Lanka further stratifies the ethnic groupings of Sinhalese and Tamils on the island. Caste structure in Sri Lanka varies significantly from the Brahman-dominated system of their Indian neighbors, as well as differing between Sinhalese and Tamils. Caste distinctions are still reflected in Sri Lankan political parties, marriage, and in rural areas. Urbanization, social mobility, and modernization, however, have rendered caste nearly invisible in public life, and social interaction outside the home takes place without reference to caste.³

Ethnic tension in Sri Lanka today has resulted in differing popular interpretations of the nation's ancient history. The Sinhalese claim to be the earliest inhabitants of the island--Indo-Aryan settlers who colonized the dry north-central regions around the fifth century B.C. These settlers founded a great civilization centered on the cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa. The Buddhist chronicle *Madhavamsa* (Great Genealogy or Dynasty) relates the rise and fall of various ancient Sinhalese kingdoms, and their guardianship of Buddhism.⁴ From earliest times, state patronage of Buddhism has impacted greatly on the Sinhalese national identity. This connection between religion, culture, and language reinforces the solidarity of the Sinhalese as an ethnic community.

Tamil ethnic consciousness is no less distinct. Sri Lankan Tamils comprise approximately 12.7 percent of the island's population and trace their heritage on the island at least as far back as the third century B.C.⁵ The Tamil dynasties of Pandya, Pallava, and Chola in India invaded Sinhalese Buddhist kingdoms on Sri Lanka numerous times from the second century B.C. to the sixth century A.D. Many Sri Lankan Tamils likely descend from settlers of these invasions and from Chola conquests in the ninth and tenth centuries. Of particular note is one of the earliest Chola incursions around 145 B.C., when the Sinhalese throne was usurped at Anuradhapura and remained in Tamil control for forty-four years. The Sinhalese king Dutthagamani defeated the Tamil invader after a difficult fifteen-year campaign, restoring the Sinhalese Buddhist monarchy. This historical conflict is often portrayed today as a pivotal confrontation between the Sinhalese and Tamil races. Several Sri Lankan historians cite the victory as the beginning of Sinhalese nationalism, and maintain that the epic tale is still capable of evoking ethno-religious passion from the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka today.⁶

Regardless of the true ethnic identity of the first settlers to Sri Lanka, most historians agree to the multiethnicity of the island from its earliest years. The constant stream of migration from southern India since prehistoric times, coupled with evidence that Sinhalese royalty often sought wives from the Tamil kingdoms of southern India, make ethnic exclusivity an unlikely prospect.⁷

By the thirteenth century disease and dynastic disputes had weakened the Sinhalese kingdoms markedly. Successive Tamil invasions of northern Sri Lanka further pressured an empire already in decline, although the significance of these incursions has been overstated and exploited in contemporary Sinhalese politics.⁸ The Sinhalese

withdrew to the central and southern regions of the island, intimidated by the proximity of the overwhelming Hindu presence on the Indian mainland, and the increasing strength of the Sri Lankan Tamils in the north. The Tamil kingdom, separated from the Sinhalese to a large extent by vast stretches of jungle, looked to expand their control from the Jaffna peninsula to neighboring regions on the northern part of the island.

By the 1500s, European imperialism had turned to the lucrative markets of South Asia. The decline of the Chola as a maritime power coincided with the flourishing of Muslim trading communities throughout the region. As the maritime supremacy of Portugal expanded to commercial routes in the Indian Ocean, these communities presented both a religious and commercial target of opportunity. The Portuguese recognized the strategic advantage Sri Lanka offered, and seized every opportunity to further their control of the island and its inhabitants. By 1619, only the Kingdom of Kandy remained free of Portuguese influence.

Although the Portuguese did not actively alter the administrative structures of the Sri Lankan kingdoms they dominated, they left at least two enduring legacies. The religious zeal of Portuguese Roman Catholic missionaries, under the auspices of Lisbon, fanatically discriminated against other religions, destroyed Buddhist and Hindu temples, and succeeded--in isolated areas--in converting large numbers of natives.⁹ Today's Roman Catholic enclaves, and an abiding fear of foreign influence and occupation, are legacies of Portuguese colonization. A collateral consequence was the educational legacy left by the proliferation of mission schools. Many families of later prominence in twentieth century Sri Lankan politics originally assumed Portuguese names, and benefited from educational opportunities, of this era.

Dutch expansion in the early seventeenth century soon threatened Portuguese monopoly of the regional spice trade. Ultimately, Dutch maritime power proved too powerful for the Portuguese to stave off. The Dutch negotiated alliances with the Kingdom of Kandy in 1638 to restore Portuguese conquests to the Sinhalese, but the Sinhalese soon realized they had traded one foe for another. Dutch naval power increased, and by 1658 the Dutch controlled Sri Lanka--notwithstanding the Kingdom of Kandy in the interior--and dominated the Indian Ocean.

The installation of the Dutch East India Company consolidated the political, administrative, and commercial control of the island. The Dutch were far more tolerant of religion than the Portuguese had been, although European alliances caused them to discriminate harshly against Roman Catholic converts on the island. Buddhist and Hindu practices were largely ignored. As a result, the Dutch Reformed Church was far less successful winning Protestant converts. Dutch influence on indigenous legal custom and practice had far greater impact. Dutch occupation also saw a growing rift between attitudes of the lowland Sinhalese, largely influenced by Western customs, and highland Kandyans, who remained proud of their unconquered traditions.

As Great Britain's global aspirations emerged in the eighteenth century, the Kandyans once again reached out for assistance against their colonizers. Again, they succeeded only in replacing one enemy with a much more powerful one, and one that was to have far-reaching and lasting impacts on their society. In 1801, the Dutch ceded Sri Lanka to the British, and the island became Britain's first crown colony. Through gradual assimilation, coercion, and conquest, the British came to control all of Sri Lanka. By 1818, this included the Kingdom of Kandy for the first time in Sri Lanka's history,

and effectively unified control of the island under one ruler for the first time since the twelfth century.

In 1829, the British conducted an internal assessment of their colonial administration of the island. This “Colebrook-Cameron Commission” recommended a number of reforms, and has been referred to by some historians as “the dividing line between the past and present in Sri Lanka.”¹⁰ The implementation of many of these reforms dramatically changed Sri Lankan society--impacts that still reverberate in Sri Lankan politics today. The commission proposed uniting administrative rule of the colony under one system, with five subordinate provinces. The reformers felt the existing practice of separate provincial rule for Sinhalese, Kandyan Sinhalese, and Tamils encouraged social and cultural cleavages. This same principle of uniformity was applied to the existing judicial system, eliminating distinctions of class or religion in the eyes of colonial law. A decentralization of executive power in colonial government increased the authority of the Legislative Council, and paved the way for opening the Ceylon Civil Service to Sri Lankans. In turn, increased demand for English education led to a proliferation of local English schools, and contributed to the creation of a Westernized elite.¹¹

On the economic front, the commission favored a *laissez-faire* approach. Government monopolies were abolished, as were traditional institutions such as patron-client granting of land for cultivation, and caste-based compulsory labor practices. A resulting native labor shortage in the plantation economy drove a massive migration of Tamils from India to meet labor demands for the coffee-harvesting season. Coffee cultivation dominated Sri Lanka’s economy, and displaced many Kandyan Sinhalese

from the highlands to accommodate the cash crop. The modernization of the island's interior effectively ended isolation of the old Kandyan kingdom--even Buddhist temple lands were not immune to coffee plantation expansion.

As the nineteenth century closed, British colonization and the island's wildly successful plantation economy had spurred modernization, but the rapid change caused tension within the old Sinhalese-Buddhist order. Displaced Kandyan Sinhalese were forced to compete with westernized lowland Sinhalese for status, education, and desirable employment. Sri Lankan Tamils, populating the northern and coastal provinces, were less integral to the plantation economy. Consequently, Sri Lankan attendance at English schools in coastal urban areas was higher than Sinhalese attendance. The resulting greater access to administrative and professional positions caused further tension between Sinhalese and Tamil communities.¹²

Sri Lanka avoided devastation during World Wars I and II and actually benefited from the modern infrastructure and health services the British imported to accommodate their Southeast Asia Command headquarters. The nationalist movement in India, as well as the relative demise of colonialism following World War II, fueled the independence movement in Sri Lanka.

The British granted Independence in 1948, and the transition was well orchestrated, amidst relative social calm. The new government faced an ethnic rift however, between Sinhalese and Tamils on the island nation. The Sinhalese leader of the UNP, Don Stephen Senanayake, led the first independent government, and all Sri Lankans benefited from his impartial and objective approach to ethnic issues.

Unfortunately, objectivity did not survive Senanayake's death in 1952, and the subsequent passing of power to the SLFP in 1956.

The SLFP government, led by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, assumed power on a platform of "Sinhala Only," and elevating the prestige of Buddhism in Sri Lankan society--policies obviously unpopular with the island's Tamil-speaking, Hindu population. In the wake of such an emotionally charged election, an ethnic-related rumor was all that was necessary to spark nationwide anti-Tamil rioting in May 1958. Hundreds were killed, mostly Tamils, and the government responded by relocating over 25,000 Tamils from primarily Sinhalese areas to Tamil provinces in the north. This episode of communal violence is often cited as the catalyst for today's Sinhalese-Tamil rift, sowing the seeds for future ethnic violence.

The SLFP has ruled, unilaterally or in coalition, for most of Sri Lanka's post-independence history, primarily under the leadership of S. R. D. Bandaranaike. The world's first female prime minister and widow of assassinated S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, S. R. D. B. vigorously enforced the policy of Sinhala as the only officially recognized language of government. Her administration's left-of-center policies succeeded in nationalizing religious denominational schools, a major portion of the nation's petroleum business, and the island's insurance industry, but were unsuccessful at attempts to nationalize and monitor the Sri Lankan media. The SLFP and S. R. D. B. did manage to alienate religious minority groups, including the Tamils, as well as traditional international trading partners, including the US and Britain. During a brief five-year interlude in SLFP power, UNP Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake declared the nation's economy "virtually bankrupt" in the wake of SLFP economic policy.¹³

Subsequent governments saw a decline in the representative power of Tamils in the legislature, and the rift widened between the ethnic-majority Sinhalese, and the minority Tamils. Surprisingly, it was an armed revolt by a Sinhalese organization, the right-wing JVP, which first threatened the GSL in April 1971. A state of emergency declaration, followed by sweeping increases in arrest and detention authority for security forces, resulted in elimination of the JVP insurgency. Collateral violence, disappearances, and abuses of authority were widespread however, and resulted in an estimated 10,000 rebel and civilian fatalities. This uprising exacerbated the GSL's reluctance to make concessions to minority groups. In 1971 the SLFP sanctioned a "standardization" policy that established lower university admissions standards for Sinhalese than for Tamils--a policy that was ratified in the 1972 constitution. The government and military leadership of the country had been, at independence, quite balanced between Sinhalese, Tamil, and English-speaking Burgher, but were now overwhelmingly Sinhalese.

The 1977 elections resulted in a landslide victory for the UNP. The new President, Junius Richard Jayawardene, undertook significant changes in the structure of Sri Lanka's government. He directed the rewriting of the constitution in 1978, altering the nation's parliamentary government to a new presidential system with a powerful chief executive. Now empowered with a six-year term, and the authority to appoint his prime minister (with Parliamentary approval), Jayawardene ushered in the strong executive form of governance that faces today's challenges of civil war. Included in this system was a huge cabinet, presided over by the president, of twenty-eight minister-level appointments, in addition to special-function and district ministers. Including deputy

ministers, a president's cabinet may have over eighty members, creating a powerful-- albeit unwieldy--patronage tool for the chief executive. Jayawardene's rule, and that of his UNP successor, Ramasinghe Premadasa, used this new authority to reverse the socialist policies of their SFLP predecessors, launching a period of rapid economic growth and prosperity for Sri Lanka.

Tamil political involvement took a decidedly different path. The power of the moderate ACTC, established in 1944, declined significantly. In 1949 ACTC dissidents founded the FP, important in Sri Lankan politics as a coalition partner. The FP was instrumental in the UNP wresting control from the Sri Lankan Freedom Party for five years in 1965. By 1970 the FP campaigned independently, disillusioned with its association with the UNP. The 1972 constitution further frustrated the Tamil community and resulted in the formation of the Tamil United Front, which became the TULF in 1976. An apparently false rumor during the 1977 elections held that Tamil extremists had murdered Sinhalese policemen. This touched off a new wave of communal rioting and anti-Tamil violence. One organization, the Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation Organization, estimated the death toll at 300. By the late 1970s Tamil guerrilla and terrorist activity was a reality, with the GSL claiming that Tamil militants were receiving assistance and refuge in India, in the state of Tamil Nadu.

The 1982 presidential elections were boycotted by TULF, and pressure from Tamil extremists resulted in less than 46 percent voter turnout in Jaffna District. Increasing ethnic violence and the refusal of TULF members to recite an oath of loyalty resulted in the expulsion of TULF from parliament, thus severing a critical link to the political process for the Tamil community.

In 1983 the ambush of an army patrol left thirteen Sinhalese soldiers dead, and triggered the worst incidence of communal violence in Sri Lanka's history. By GSL estimates, highly organized anti-Tamil rioting resulted in at least 400 deaths, mostly Tamil. Shock waves from these attacks spread across the island. General consensus usually cites 1983 as the start of Sri Lanka's full-blown ethnic civil war.

Initially, Tamil separatist groups and disillusioned youth were known collectively as Tamil Tigers. The LTTE, founded in 1972 by Velupillai Prabhakaran, proved to be the strongest. By the late 1980s, the LTTE had ruthlessly become the dominant militant group in Sri Lanka and effectively controlled the Jaffna Peninsula on the northern part of the island nation.

In a bid to wrest the control of the Jaffna Peninsula from the LTTE once and for all, the SLA launched a major military offensive in 1987, coupled with an economic blockade of the region. India, eager to maintain leverage over the GSL, had provided training and arms to Tamil militants in the past. Faced with apparent SLA successes in 1987, India airdropped humanitarian aid into Jaffna. Intense diplomatic pressure from Indian mediators resulted in a ceasefire, agreement to immediately receive the IPKF, and the Indo-Lanka Accord.

The 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord marked the GSL's first request for foreign military assistance since Sri Lanka's independence from British colonial rule in 1948. Following the anti-Tamil riots in 1983, President Jayawardene had adopted an official policy of eliminating Tamil extremists through military action. Now, with the 1987 Accord, occupation of the north by 100,000 Indian Army troops became a reality. The GSL hoped to use the Indian Army to extend its own military capabilities against the LTTE.

The result was a direct military confrontation that could not have been farther from Jayawardene's desired outcome.

India's role as mediator quickly deteriorated. The LTTE initially complied with peacekeeping forces, and turned in significant quantities of arms and materiel. Subsequently, without significant political proposals by the government in Colombo, LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran declared the Accord a "stab in the back of the Tamils."¹⁴ The LTTE anticipated no progress toward its goal of independence, merely an attempt to curtail its domestic influence and capabilities. The Accord collapsed by October 1987, and the LTTE took on both the Indian Army and government security forces.

In the south, JVP Sinhalese extremists made another bid for power in 1988, this time more determined than in 1971. In 1988 alone, JVP rebels were credited by the GSL with over 700 politically motivated killings.¹⁵ Capitalizing on popular discontent with the GSL over the Indo-Lanka Accord, the resurgent insurrection met with disaster at the hands of a ferocious GSL counterinsurgency campaign. In addition to emergency regulations and curfews, sweeping arrest and detention powers were given to government forces. Security forces were "given license to shoot curfew violators and protestors on sight, and to dispose of bodies without an inquest."¹⁶ Some 40,000 JVP leadership cadre and sympathizers were captured and summarily executed between 1988 and November 1989, when the revolt was crushed.

The LTTE fortified its hold on the population by eliminating rival Tamil militant groups, and stepping up attacks against the IPKF. Strikes against the civilian government infrastructure proved particularly effective in forcing a boycott of the Northern and Eastern Provincial Council Elections of 1988, supervised by the Indian Army. Although

the peacekeeping force was allowed to conduct elections, the LTTE issued threats to any Tamils thinking of casting votes.

The LTTE declared a victory over the Indian Army, and again stepped up its assault on government forces by attacking twelve police posts in June 1990.¹⁷ Dismayed by the failure of new peace talks, the GSL initiated new offensives against LTTE strongholds in the north. The government renewed sweeping arrest and detention powers for its military forces. Army occupation of the villages of Mathagal, Illvalai, and Vasavilan met with fierce guerrilla resistance. The Army used similar tactics as it had in eliminating the smaller, right-wing JVP insurrection in the south; thousands of people were killed or disappeared in custody as the Army attempted to gain absolute control of the countryside.¹⁸ The more the government appeared to abuse its authority, mismanaged violence, and lost control of collateral damage to life and property, the greater the indirect, endogenous feedback and support provided to the rebels. Propaganda and recruitment were areas of great LTTE expertise, and the government played handily into them. Defense Minister Ranjan Wijeratne pointed out, “You cannot do things under normal law. It takes a lot of time. By the time my good friends who are lawyers take time to solve these things, the match will be over.”¹⁹

While the government in Colombo was still reeling in the dark from reorganizing its intelligence apparatus, the LTTE underground was at the peak of its effectiveness. This was reflected by a devastating series of assassinations that rocked the government infrastructure: Defense Minister Wijeratne in March 1991, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in September 1991, and Sri Lanka President Premadasa in May 1993. The killing of Prime Minister Gandhi eliminated most of the LTTE’s support from Tamils on the

Indian mainland. Some authors contend that the assassination prevented any further reintroduction of Indian peacekeeping force, and was therefore a necessary evil on the LTTE's part.²⁰

Elsewhere in the international arena, the LTTE's influence had dramatically increased. Refugees and expatriates from the 1983 riots, as well as recent conflict with India, were contacted and exploited by rebel organizers. This growing international community became known as the Tamil diaspora, encompassing over 650,000 potential supporters in the United States, Britain, France, Canada, Australia, and elsewhere throughout the world. The LTTE became adept at the complexities of financing and supporting its insurgency from abroad. In 1989, authorities in Greece seized a plane transporting 300,000 rounds of ammunition and 400 automatic rockets; the plane had departed from East Berlin, had a delivery address in Colombo, listed a Switzerland firm as the exporter, and a British firm as the broker. In another testament to international sophistication, Egyptian authorities captured a Colombo-bound vessel with 92 machineguns, 100 pounds of TNT, 100 blasting caps, 35,000 rounds of 7.62-millimeter ammunition, and 3,200 Browning cartridges. The vessel had an Asian crew, but had false end user certificates issued in Nigeria.²¹

The elections of 1994 placed SLFP candidate Chandrika Kumaratunga at the helm under the banner of the PA coalition party. The PA was a marriage of necessity for parliamentary majority and is dominated by the SLFP, which holds 87 percent of its parliamentary seats. Seven parliament members of the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress and the sole Up-Country People's Front member constitute the remainder of the coalition. Kumaratunga is well versed in the ethnic violence and political machinations that engulf

her island nation. Her father, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, established the SLFP in 1951, and was assassinated by a Buddhist extremist when she was just fourteen. Her mother, S. R. D. Bandaranaike, was the world's first female prime minister, and led Sri Lanka for much of the SLFP's rule. Kumaratunga's own husband was gunned down in 1989; she pledged during her tenure to find a negotiated settlement with the Tamils:²²

The first task is, therefore, a new approach predicated on unqualified acceptance of the fact that the Tamil people have genuine grievances for which solutions must be found. The polity of the country must be structured on the premise that all sections of society are entitled to recognition as constructive partners in a pluralistic democracy.²³

Kumaratunga declared an immediate cessation of hostilities and began several rounds of talks with LTTE leaders. The president's earnestness was met with characteristic LTTE dissatisfaction. The insurgents set a deadline for the government to respond to a list of demands, then withdrew from all negotiations when the demands were not met. Divers of the Sea Tigers stealthily approached the *Sooraya* and the *Ranasuru*, two Sri Lankan Navy gunboats in Trincomalee Harbor, planted explosives, and sunk them.²⁴ The conflict had resumed less than six months after negotiations had begun.

On 31 January 1996, the LTTE bombed the Central Bank in Colombo, the biggest bombing in the conflict at that time, killing 80 and wounding over 1,300.²⁵ In July 1996, approximately 2,000 LTTE guerrillas attacked and overran the SLA base at Mullaittivu; rebel losses numbered about 500. On 27 September 1998, the LTTE overran Kilinochchi, another strategic and well-fortified SLA base, losing another 520 rebels. On 21 April 2000, rebel forces took and secured the critical Elephant Pass to the Jaffna Peninsula, severing SLA supply routes to their garrisons in the north. The significance of these assaults cannot be overstated. Regardless of the accuracy of rebel manpower

estimates, more important is the continual willingness of LTTE leadership to commit such combat power. The GSL's strategy of attrition does not bear close scrutiny; the LTTE's conscription and recruiting effort is alive and well.

The latest offensives, particularly the LTTE's April 2000 capture of Elephant Pass, reveal a great deal about current capabilities. The rebels' ability to meet and defeat elements of the SLA in direct conventional military confrontation is undeniable.

Advances in LTTE conventional capability have been facilitated by exploitation of the international community. The LTTE maintains a small fleet of patrol craft that interfere with SLA operations and continue to pose a credible threat to the Sri Lankan Navy.

Arms caches recovered from the LTTE routinely contain rocket-propelled grenade launchers. During Operation Riviresa, the LTTE used night vision goggles for the first time. The LTTE even purchased global-positioning satellite systems before the SLA was equipped with them. In 1995, some sources asserted that LTTE suicide bombers had been trained to pilot ultralight aircraft in France and Britain (though they have never been used in this capacity). In 1996, one source identified an island off the coast of Malaysia, where the LTTE hired former Norwegian naval personnel to establish a diving school, in order to train cadre in underwater activities.²⁶ Military observers noted in 1996 that while the LTTE lost considerable territory during its offensives, "Their ability to wage a guerrilla war has remained intact."²⁷ Even in 2001--as in 1998--the Army "has been unable to secure a safe road to the south, and has to supply its forces by air and sea."²⁸

The LTTE's overseas financing continues unabated, generating over 60 percent of the rebel war budget through the Tamil diaspora and both legitimate and illegal investments in real estate, restaurants, stocks, and money markets. Even films, food

festivals, and cultural events may contribute to insurgent income. The US Department of State also reports that expatriate Tamil communities in Europe have been tied to narcotics smuggling, another potential source of funding.²⁹

The LTTE's growth in capabilities, despite concerted operational efforts on behalf of the SLA, demands a closer examination of the GSL's counterinsurgency campaigns. The following case studies provide some insight as to potential shortcomings in the government's approach.

¹Wintle, *The Dictionary of War Quotations*, 26.

²"Sri Lanka," *CIA World Factbook* [book on-line]; available from <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ce.html>; Internet; accessed on 18 February 2002; and Ross, *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*, xvi.

³Ross, *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*, 82, 84, 86.

⁴*Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁵*Ibid.*, 75.

⁶*Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁷*Ibid.*, 7.

⁸William McGowan, *Only Man is Vile* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1992), 110-111; and Ross, *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*, 16.

⁹Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999), 45; and Ross, *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*, 21.

¹⁰Ross, *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*, 29.

¹¹Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 45-46; and McGowan, *Only Man is Vile*, 134.

¹²McGowan, *Only Man is Vile*, 134.

¹³Russell R. Ross, ed., *Sri Lanka, a Country Study*, 49.

¹⁴“On the Warpath,” *The Economist*, 27 July 1996 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.economist/archive.htm>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999.

¹⁵“Sri Lanka: Internal Affairs,” *Jane’s Sentinel - South Asia*, November 2001-April 2002, 365.

¹⁶Roland E. Dutton, “A Case Study of Two On-Going Insurgencies in Sri Lanka and the Government’s Response to Neutralize and Defeat Them” (Case study, US Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 1989), 15.

¹⁷M. Khan and D. Khosla, “Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka,” 24 July 1996 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/sritamil.htm>; Internet; accessed on 11 September 1999

¹⁸“On the Warpath,” *The Economist*, 27 July 1996 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.economist/archive.htm>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999.

¹⁹“Indictment Against Sri Lanka,” *Sri Lanka Hansard* 62 (25 January 1990): Col. 1249 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.tamilnation.org/indictment/indict27b.htm>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999.

²⁰Gunaratna, “International and Regional Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency.”

²¹Ibid.

²²O. Mehrotra, “Ethnic Strife in Sri Lanka,” 9 January 1998 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.idsa-india.org/an-jan-9.html>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999.

²³Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation*, 52.

²⁴Sri Lanka Army, “Army in Operation: Eelam War III,” Sri Lanka Army Situation Report and News Archive [article on-line]; available from <http://202.51.158.144/Operations6.htm>; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2002.

²⁵Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation*, 28.

²⁶Gunaratna, “International and Regional Implications of the Sri Lankan Tamil Insurgency.”

²⁷“People Power,” *The Economist*, 11 May 1996 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.economist/archive.htm>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999.

²⁸“Civil War Without End,” *The Economist*, 5 December 1998 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.economist/archive.htm>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999.

²⁹Dudley Knox Library, “Terrorist Group Profiles.”

CHAPTER 3

OPERATION RIVIRESA (“SUNRAYS”)

The ability to run away is the very characteristic of the guerrilla.¹

Mao Tse Tung

This chapter analyzes the first of three campaigns detailed in this thesis. Using JP 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* as a framework for this analysis, the tenets of US IDAD and FID doctrine provide a strong foundation for identifying shortcomings in counterinsurgency strategy. Although *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning* was not developed for application to foreign militaries, it does provide a rigorous test for assessing the synchronization of ends, ways, and means in military operations. Some aspects of this doctrine, such as multinational integration or space operations, are clearly outside the scope of analysis and can be disregarded. The campaign fundamentals described in Table 1, however, illustrate how all the instruments of national power-- diplomatic, informational, military, and economic--may be integrated to achieve national strategic objectives.

Prior to Operation Riviresa, the 1994 election of President Chandrika Kumaratunga's PA government created a spirit of cautious optimism in Sri Lanka. In December 1994 thousands of peace activists marched in the streets of Colombo, appealing to the new president to capitalize on the government's sweeping mandate for an end to the nation's civil war. Similar peace activist overtures were warmly received in Jaffna, the first civic delegation to visit the Tamil dominated peninsula since the LTTE took control of the region in 1990.² The government pledged to negotiate a settlement

with the LTTE, and to address growing concerns over human rights abuses. Although less than two years had passed since the May 1993 assassination of President Premadasa by the LTTE, in January 1995 the GSL secured the first ceasefire between the SLA and the rebels in over five years.

Subsequent rounds of talks resulted in easing the GSL's economic embargo of Jaffna, but differences in GSL and LTTE agendas soon became apparent. Kumaratunga's representatives wished to simultaneously negotiate a comprehensive package of reconstruction aid, as well as political initiatives to settle the ethnic conflict. The LTTE delegation demanded a sequential process; from ceasefire, to redressing war grievances, and only then progressing to political negotiations. As progress began to stall, the rebels demanded four conditions as prerequisites for further negotiation: elimination of the economic embargo, lifting of the ban on sea fishing, dismantling of the SLA camp at Pooneryn, and the right for LTTE cadre to move unhindered throughout eastern Sri Lanka. The GSL conceded to the first two demands, but suggested including the others in more expansive proposals.³ The LTTE used this occasion to declare the government negotiators evasive, and announced their withdrawal from talks on 18 April. The following day LTTE Sea Tigers attacked and destroyed two gunboats of the Sri Lankan navy in Trincomalee harbor. Announcing Eelam War III, the LTTE assaulted a number of police and Army camps in the east, and demonstrated their first use of shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles in the conflict on 28 April, downing two Sri Lankan air force AVRO aircraft.⁴

The state's response was slow. President Kumaratunga revealed that she felt "duped by the LTTE . . . that the LTTE agreed to the truce merely to regroup and

rearm.”⁵ Adding insult to injury, the President had recently cancelled \$72 million of military contracts as a sign of good faith to the Tamils. Sensing the need to act decisively, the government began Operation Leap Forward in July 1995. The offensive deployed 10,000 troops in the largest single operation undertaken against the LTTE yet. The results were dismaying; having conquered 78 kilometers of territory from the rebels, the SLA then relinquished all but 8 kilometers to LTTE counterattacks within a month. Casualties were high, and the government admitted to killing 234 civilians, injuring 500, and contributing to nearly 200,000 displaced persons.⁶

While regrouping and searching for new political alternatives, the Kumaratunga government planned yet another massive offensive in October 1995 to allow her to bargain from a position of strength. This undertaking dwarfed previous offensives, assembling over 40,000 troops. Operation Riviresa was hailed as the “decisive effort to end the 12-year Tamil insurgency.”⁷ The offensive was launched 17 October 1995 to seize and control the Valikamam area of the Jaffna Peninsula. The overall commander of the operation was Major General Rohan Daluwatte. Three divisions were task organized for the attack: 51 Division, commanded by Brigadier General Neil Dias; 52 Division, commanded by Brigadier General P. A. Karunathalaka; and 53 Division, commanded by Brigadier General Janaka Perera. Dias’ and Karunathalaka’s divisions advanced abreast along two main axes of attack, the Jaffna-Point Pedro Road in the west, and the Jaffna-Palaly Road in the east. Both divisions attacked south to isolate Jaffna, successfully reaching their initial limit of advance, a lateral line roughly connecting Kopay and Kondavil (see figure 3).⁸

From this lateral line the trail 53 Division, consisting of an Independent Brigade, Air Mobile Brigade, Armored Brigade and an Infantry Brigade, passed forward to continue the attack into Jaffna. By 22 November 1995, Valikamam was isolated; cut off from the Vadamarachchi and Tenamarachchi areas. Unexpected pockets of resistance from LTTE cadre within the city delayed SLA occupation, but by 2 December the town was securely in GSL control for the first time in twelve years. The Army Commander, LTG Daluwatte, declared, “more than half the guerrilla war is over.”⁹ Authorities hailed the capture of Jaffna as “the beginning of the end” of the insurgency.¹⁰ Deputy Defense Minister Anurudda Ratwatte confidently announced, “Very soon we will totally defeat and annihilate the separatist terrorists.”¹¹ These proclamations proved premature.

By many accounts, Operation Riviresa was a resounding military success, and brought Jaffna under GSL control for the first time in nearly ten years. The operation succeeded in capturing Jaffna with minimal property damage, which encouraged the eventual return of many of the approximately 120,000 inhabitants of the city. The LTTE chose not to make a determined stand in the face of such conventional firepower, and offered only minimal resistance. In anticipation of the GSL offensive, however, LTTE cadre instigated a massive civilian evacuation of Jaffna.¹² As a result of this exodus the SLA found “a virtual ghost town, populated only by thee sick and elderly” during its initial occupation.¹³ It is unclear to what extent the populace fled in fear of combat operations, occupation by the SLA, or in response to LTTE coercion. In any event, the GSL’s intent to demonstrate its legitimate authority to the Tamil populace, and replace the shadow administration of the LTTE, was initially muted by the absence of a populace.

Initially, combined casualty figures claimed as many as 2,500 soldiers and rebels killed, and over 7,000 wounded. More reliable government estimates later placed casualties at 600 to 700 SLA killed and 3,000 wounded, with around 400 Tamil Tigers killed and over 800 wounded.¹⁴

In the months of April and May 1996, sequels to Operation Riviresa were launched (Riviresa 2 and 3) to wrest control of the Tenamarachchi and Vadamarachchi areas in Jaffna peninsula. Unlike during the first stage of the operation however, civilians continued to remain in these areas, defying the orders of LTTE cadre to vacate their homes. Most of this populace consisted of those who had fled Valikamam during the original operation. Eager to return, they had undergone considerable suffering at the hands of the LTTE in refugee camps.¹⁵

Joint US doctrine declares, “Campaign plans are the operational extension of a commander’s strategy.”¹⁶ The overall counterinsurgency effort the GSL is waging can be viewed as a campaign; certainly, some of the more ambitious operations, which include several branches and sequels, can be viewed independently as campaigns. In the case of Operation Riviresa, four of the fundamentals outlined in JP 5-00.1 provide a framework for useful insights on operational planning and execution. Equally important is the synergistic effect of successfully considering all the campaign planning fundamentals, or the relative weakness of plans that fail to do so.

Critical in any campaign is the effort to identify the adversary strategic and operational centers of gravity and provide guidance for defeating them (see table 1). Credit is due the GSL and its security forces in regard to implementing this planning fundamental. In defining the COG Clausewitz states:

One must keep the dominant characteristics of both belligerents in mind. Out of these characteristics a certain center of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything else depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed.¹⁷

In *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Mao reflects that guerrilla organization will fail “if its political objectives do not coincide with the aspirations of the people and their sympathy, cooperation, and assistance cannot be gained.”¹⁸ The GSL correctly identified Tamil public support as the LTTE’s strategic COG, and targeted support from the Jaffna peninsula--the cultural, administrative, industrial, and political center with the highest concentration of ethnic Tamils--as the operational COG.

To determine ways to defeat an opponent’s COG, which is generally a strength, not a weakness, planners identify decisive points to attack. In the case of Operation Riviresa, this was the Valikamam sector of the Jaffna Peninsula, which contained the municipal limits of the city of Jaffna itself, as well as adjoining transportation and administrative hubs. During the LTTE’s decade of control in Jaffna, cadre leadership had established an administrative infrastructure to replace the void created by GSL absence. The establishment of tangible LTTE civil administration in Jaffna, and providing services to the populace, went a considerable way toward establishing the credibility of the insurgents, as well as undermining the legitimacy of GSL authority. Rebel authorities in Jaffna collected taxes, and placed levies on consumer goods sold in the city. A Tamil police force was established, backed by a civil municipal court system, where judges swore allegiance to LTTE leader Velupillai Prabhakaran. Public utilities officials for schools, transport services, hospitals, and agrarian services came from the ranks of LTTE cadre, though ironically much of the funding for these services continued to filter in from

the GSL in Colombo. Rebel recruitment was understandably highest for the LTTE on the peninsula, with many families required to enlist a member in return for permission to leave the province. The LTTE became perhaps the only insurgent group in the world to control and administer such a significant amount of territory, and a population of nearly 800,000. In his book, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, Sir Robert Thompson stresses giving priority to the elimination of the type of political subversion exemplified by LTTE control of Jaffna. This is one of Thompson's five principles of counterinsurgency, hard-won lessons learned from the British experience in Malaya that remain influential today (see table 2). The latest operations doctrine of the US Army, for example, emphasizes enhancing the capabilities and legitimacy of the host nation as a fundamental consideration when conducting FID, peace operations, or security assistance. Security forces accurately considered this campaign planning fundamental, and waged a successful military operation that secured its decisive point. What enabled the LTTE to avoid culmination?

When resorting to military force, government and military leadership must clearly define what constitutes success, including conflict termination objectives and potential post hostilities activities (see table 1). The observation that insurgency is foremost a political struggle, with a formidable military component in the case of the LTTE, underscores the importance of the political-military relationship in the execution of this responsibility. Although the GSL is not renowned for its political-military synchronization--Sri Lanka publishes no explicit national military strategy document--this planning fundamental was duly observed for Operation Riviresa. President Kumaratunga clearly wished to force the LTTE back to the negotiating table, with the

GSL in a strengthened bargaining position. Operational success criteria were similarly clear, and were ultimately achieved by security forces in the occupation of Jaffna, and restoration of government authority, administration, and services. The SLA, while caught off-guard by the LTTE evacuation of civilians from Jaffna, captured the city with minimal collateral damage, and transitioned relatively smoothly to civil administration duties. The GSL appointed a Northern Province Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Authority, increased access to health services at the Jaffna hospital, and oversaw the opening of banking branches, post offices, and public transit services, as well as promoting the opening of national retail outlets in Jaffna.¹⁹ In terms of US IDAD principles, GSL actions sought to demonstrate responsive government in the pursuit of a balanced development program for the Jaffna peninsula. By most accounts, Jaffna was returning to normal by the middle of 1996.²⁰ At least within the parameters of this operation, GSL actions approached something of the overall plan envisioned by Thompson. That the peninsula began a slow backslide out of government control during the next several months is attributable to the GSL perception that Operation Riviresa success equaled counterinsurgency campaign success. The seizure of Jaffna alone, identified as the operational COG, failed to achieve the political endstate defined by Kumaratunga's success criteria. Ultimately, defeating this operational COG proved insufficient to destroy the insurgent's strategic COG.

The LTTE suffered a severe setback in losing Jaffna--in prestige, credibility, revenue-generation, munitions resupply, and recruitment capability--but was not out of the fight. The lack of coordinated efforts in conjunction with Operation Riviresa, or determined follow-on operations, indicate both constrained GSL resources, and an

assumption that the insurgency would eventually wither on the vine following the defeat of its operational COG. In truth, this assumption--along with GSL conflict termination objectives--fell short of the reality needed for victory.

In terms of campaign planning, by viewing the seizure of Jaffna in isolation of the overall counterinsurgency effort, the GSL had failed to sequence a series of related major joint operations conducted simultaneously throughout the area of responsibility (see table 1). Resource constraints were undoubtedly a major consideration. While the LTTE's 8,000 to 10,000 armed insurgents may pale in end-strength next to the GSL's 123,000-member armed forces, figures can be misleading in insurgent conflict.²¹ Government forces must provide security for fortifications and bases throughout the 65,000 square-kilometer island. In addition, the GSL's large conventional formations have proven unwieldy against guerrilla tactics in restrictive terrain. The LTTE enjoys the freedom to mass and strike where and when it pleases, and a light, mobile force well suited to the jungle terrain of the interior. Consequently, government forces remain more vulnerable than overall force ratios would initially suggest. In mid-1995, security forces abandoned over twenty bases in eastern Sri Lanka to support the manpower requirements for Operation Riviresa, the main effort.²² Nevertheless, supporting efforts in the east were necessary for force protection, to deny the rebels access to popular support, and to destroy LTTE combat capabilities. The LTTE had retreated into the jungle in observance of Mao's dictum, "the first law of war is to preserve ourselves and destroy the enemy."²³ Preserving combat strength, the rebels transitioned easily to increased guerrilla activity, and were able to maintain their presence in Jaffna. With persistent reconnaissance and intelligence efforts, as many as 150 guerrillas had infiltrated the

Valikamam sector by March 1996, and were actively attempting to destabilize the area.²⁴

Denied the sanctuary of the Jaffna peninsula, LTTE operations resembled T. E.

Lawrence's description of his desert campaign against the Turks in his book, *Seven*

Pillars of Wisdom:

In character our operations . . . should be like naval war, in mobility, ubiquity, independence of bases and communications, ignoring of ground features, of strategic areas, of fixed directions, of fixed points. He who commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much or as little of the war as he will! And we command the desert.²⁵

Military manpower shortfalls, and the GSL inability to match the mobility of the LTTE guerrillas, are challenges that have historically plagued counterinsurgency forces. The French experience in nineteenth century Algiers is one example. Restricted to command of the coastal cities by the hit and run attacks of guerrilla leader Abd el Kader's forces, it was the arrival of Marshal Bugeaud in 1840 that eventually turned the tide in favor of French forces. Bugeaud was a superior administrator and colonial organizer, as well as able tactician. Notably, his reorganization of the African army incorporated indigenous forces. Bugeaud established decentralized commands, from which emanated small, highly mobile strike forces, which he called the "boar's head," and "flying formations."²⁶ French forces, eventually numbering over 160,000 in Algeria, gradually overcame the effective irregulars of Abd el Kader, cutting off his lines of communication and popular support.²⁷ Variations of Bugeaud's pacification strategy would continue to be employed with some success for over one hundred years by the French. Though successful, the decentralized method required large numbers of troops organized into flexible, mobile formations. Most significantly, the strategy was only successful when coupled with effective administrative and organizational control of the populace.

Late in the nineteenth century, the British had similar problems subduing the Boer in South Africa. At the outset the 45,000 Boer militia and irregular horse were able to rapidly strike and cripple the British forces in Africa, which numbered only 15,000. Later, when the British forces were augmented to 250,000 to meet this colonial threat, the Boer began a protracted guerrilla campaign, using hit and run tactics to keep the British off balance.²⁸

The strategy Lord Kitchener finally settled upon with his British forces was reminiscent of French pacification techniques, though more brutal in employment in the Boer case. Systematically sweeping across the veldt, Kitchener cut the Boer from their bases of popular support and interned the population, a strategy that still required over two years to subdue the guerrillas.²⁹

By recognizing these historical lessons, an evolution of GSL tactics may help to mitigate the inherent inadequacies of massed troop formations combating guerrilla forces. Major Hilaire Bethouart's essay, *Combat Helicopters in Algeria*, is a more modern example, illustrating how helicopters can be used to envelop and maneuver by air, thus negating the mobility advantage of the guerrilla in austere mountainous terrain.³⁰ The SLA's current effort to develop its air-mobility shows great promise. The author's experience--as a US Army Special Forces officer commanding a 1997 FID mission in Sri Lanka--is that SLA combined arms coordination between air and ground is still in its infancy. Until security forces are able to overcome this resource and mobility disadvantage, elusive LTTE guerrillas will continue to locally overwhelm SLA formations at the time and location of their choosing.

The disadvantages and challenges facing the SLA illustrate why government forces had such difficulty with another campaign planning fundamental, identifying friendly strategic and operational centers of gravity and providing guidance to subordinates for protecting them. In this contest for legitimacy, the GSL understood its strategic COG to be domestic political support for the administration's prosecution of the war, a fact complicated by war weariness and partisan politics. Operational COG included SLA forces and installations whose defeat would reflect incompetence in the administration's war effort. The operational methods of the military, however, left these very forces vulnerable to enemy strengths, and ultimately exposed friendly COG to attack.

In General Vo Nguyen Giap's commentary on the Viet Cong struggle against the French in Indochina, he relates the guerrilla strategy for victory in the face of seemingly overwhelming offensive power:

Always convinced that the essential thing was to destroy the enemy's manpower, the Central Committee worked out its plan . . . to concentrate our offensive against important strategic points where the enemy were relatively weak in order to wipe out a part of their manpower, at the same time compelling them to scatter their forces to cope with us at vital points which they had to defend at all costs. This strategy proved correct.³¹

Despite Thompson's admonition to always secure base areas before conducting a military campaign (see table 2), Operation Riviresa left government bases in the east woefully undermanned. Following GSL occupation of Jaffna, the LTTE chose to strike the military base at Mullaittivu in late July 1996.

The only military base on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka, the isolated camp at Mullaittivu maintained a brigade-sized element of approximately 1,600 personnel. The

base was of considerable significance to the military, both for early warning of LTTE Sea Tiger activities, and as a potential staging area for operations inland. The camp was moderately well defended by obstacles and anti-personnel mines, and supported by a troop of artillery, but in the past had only to contend with sporadic rebel reconnaissance probes. The resident brigade fell under the command of the distant division headquarters at Elephant Pass in the north.³²

The LTTE launched a coordinated assault on the base at midnight, beginning with an extensive artillery and mortar barrage. The ground attack from the north was synchronized with a LTTE Sea Tiger attack from the seaward side of the base (see figure 4). Reports of the estimated strength of the attacking rebel forces vary from 2,000 to 3,000 cadre.³³ Conclusive accounts are unavailable however, because both assaults apparently achieved total surprise over the defenders, penetrated the camp's defenses, and quickly severed base communications to the outside. By daylight, insurgents had compromised the defensive integrity of the installation and isolated pockets of SLA resistance within the camp were all that remained.³⁴

The GSL military attempted to relieve the beleaguered garrison from the sea throughout the second day of fighting, but a substantial Sea Tiger suicide boat presence frustrated the ad-hoc relief efforts. That evening, a SLA Special Forces regiment of 250 men air-landed south of the base in another reinforcement attempt. This force was quickly surrounded, and likewise thwarted from linking up with the defenders.

By the third day, 18 July 1996, the garrison had been completely overrun. Nearly all the defenders of Mullaittivu were killed in action, barring a few dozen survivors who managed to evade capture by escaping into the jungle. Casualty estimates range from

1,200 to 1,600, and there are GSL allegations that wounded and surrendering SLA forces were executed following the capture of the camp. Large amounts of military equipment were captured with the base, including several armored personnel carriers, four 120-millimeter howitzers, and recently purchased night-vision and surveillance optics.³⁵

The desperate situation continued for two more days, as a second Special Forces regiment was inserted to effect the extraction of the first, which by now had suffered nearly 100 casualties, including the commanding officer. The second regiment successfully fought its way through to the first, losing nearly thirty men and its commanding officer in the process. Both units fought a running battle to the coast, where security forces had established and enlarged a beachhead to withdraw remaining GSL troops.³⁶

Government sources claim rebel losses amounted to some 800 killed, and a further 500 wounded.³⁷ Even the rare admission by LTTE leadership that over 240 of their fighters were killed in one battle indicates a dramatic loss of experienced cadre for the insurgents.³⁸ In wrangling over body counts, however, GSL leaders are likely to overlook something far more important. The willingness of the LTTE to incur predictably high losses in such a direct attack reveals their strong understanding of the strategic value of such a target. Striking at the heart of GSL legitimacy, the insurgents instilled fear and confusion in the wake of a jubilant government victory in Jaffna. One extremely well coordinated attack, capitalizing on guerrilla strengths, and directly striking an unprotected operational COG, proved devastating to GSL credibility. An analogy can be drawn to the 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam, where US claims of a resounding military defeat of the North Vietnamese sounded hollow in the wake of

assertions that the enemy was incapable of launching such an offensive in the first place. Many authors credit this event as the crippling blow to the credibility of US leadership that catalyzed the final collapse of public support for the war effort.³⁹

In hindsight, the ability of the LTTE to avoid culmination in the wake of Operation Riviresa can largely be attributed to the GSL's violation of campaign planning fundamentals. In the context of US doctrine, security forces succeeded in identifying the adversary strategic and operational centers of gravity. The operational success in Jaffna resulted in a devastating loss for the LTTE, despite the preservation of their combat power. The military, however, did not translate its understanding of the enemy into a campaign plan comprehensive enough to decisively defeat the LTTE's strategic COG. In this regard, operational plans did not adequately address President Kumaratunga's attempt to clearly define what constitutes success, in terms of political and strategic endstate. Allowing rebel forces to escape into the jungle, and naively believing the LTTE would wither without its Jaffna sanctuary, reveals a lack of understanding on the part of GSL leadership about the resiliency of this Maoist insurgency. Sri Lankan military leaders have not demonstrated an appreciation for identifying and protecting friendly strategic and operational centers of gravity. Unfortunately, this has presented the insurgents with numerous opportunities to pit guerrilla strengths against SLA weaknesses, as with the LTTE attack on Mullaitivu. Subsequent catastrophes at Killinochchi, Paranthan, and Mankulam suggest this mindset has not yet changed. Finally, despite the political challenges and resource shortfalls the GSL faces, it must find a way to leverage the capabilities it does have, in order to sequence a series of related major joint operations conducted simultaneously. Such a comprehensive campaign effort

could then achieve the synergistic effect of applying all the fundamentals outlined in JP 5-00.1.

¹US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS) *Unconventional Warfare: Summary Sheet Packet* (Special Forces Officer Qualification Course issue material, November 1991), 15.

²Kumudini Samuel, "Straining Consensus," in "Demanding Sacrifice: War and Negotiation in Sri Lanka," *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, August 1998 [article on-line]; available from http://www.c-r.org/accord/acc_sri/index.htm; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2002.

³Ibid.

⁴"Sri Lanka: Internal Affairs," 365-371; and Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific Committee on International Relations. *Sri Lanka in Turmoil: Implications of Intensified Conflict* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1996), 49.

⁵Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, *Sri Lanka in Turmoil*, 49.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Khan and Khosla, "Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka."

⁸Sri Lanka Army, "Army in Operation: Eelam War III," Sri Lanka Army Situation Report.

⁹Iqbal Athas, "Surrendering Rebels to Get Amnesty," *The Sunday Times*, 26 May 1996 [article on-line]; available from <http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/parade/nm58/command.htm>; Internet; accessed on 28 August 1999.

¹⁰Khan and Khosla, "Sri Lankan Tamils in Sri Lanka."

¹¹"Sri Lankan Army Hails Capture of Jaffna," CNN.com, 5 December 1995 [article on-line]; available from http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9512/sri_lanka/index.html; Internet; accessed on 27 February 2002.

¹²Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 27.

¹³Ibid., 28.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵"People Power," *The Economist*.

- ¹⁶US Department of Defense, *JP 5-00.1*, vii.
- ¹⁷Michael Howard and Peter Paret, trans., *On War* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), 595.
- ¹⁸Samuel B. Griffith, trans., *Mao Tse-tung: On Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1961), 43.
- ¹⁹Iqbal Athas, "Yet Another Op-Riviresa in Valikamam," *The Sunday Times*, 31 March 1996 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.lancet.org/suntimes/960331/sitrep.html>; Internet; accessed on 27 February 2002.
- ²⁰Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 28.
- ²¹Dudley Knox Library, "Terrorist Group Profiles."
- ²²Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 28.
- ²³Griffith, *Mao Tse-tung: On Guerrilla Warfare*, 20.
- ²⁴Athas, "Yet Another Op-Riviresa in Valikamam."
- ²⁵US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), *Unconventional Warfare: Summary Sheet Packet*, 27.
- ²⁶R. E. Dupuy, and T. N. Dupuy, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military History: From 3500 B.C. to the Present, 4th ed.* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 855.
- ²⁷John Arquilla, ed., *From Troy to Entebbe: Special Operations in Ancient and Modern Times* (New York: University Press of America, Inc., 1996), 141.
- ²⁸Larry H. Addington, *The Patterns of War Since the Eighteenth Century 2nd ed.* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 124.
- ²⁹*Ibid.*
- ³⁰Department of the Navy, Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-25, *The Guerrilla and How to Fight Him* (Virginia: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 1990), 260.
- ³¹*Ibid.*, 173.
- ³²Vijayasiri, "Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign," 43.
- ³³*Ibid.*, 44; also, "On the Warpath," *The Economist*.

³⁴Vijayasiri, "Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign," 45.

³⁵Robert I. Rotberg, ed., *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 28.

³⁶Vijayasiri, "Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign," 45.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 46.

³⁸"On the Warpath," *The Economist*.

³⁹Many sources subscribe to this view, among them: Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 559-560; Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam* (New York: Random House, 1988), 717; Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 237.

CHAPTER 4

OPERATION JAYA SIKURUI (“VICTORY ASSURED”)

Guerrillas never win wars, but their adversaries often lose them.¹

Charles Wheller Thayer, Guerrilla

In the wake of the GSL’s success during Operation Riviresa, a seemingly intractable pattern of fighting and terrorism prevailed, making the capture of Jaffna a less than decisive victory. In January 1996, Colombo saw LTTE terror bombings of the Central Bank and a passenger train that together killed more than 150 people and injured over one thousand more. In July 1996, the LTTE capture of Mullaittivu was a severe loss to the GSL, in terms of casualties, captured military hardware, and loss of credibility. Somewhat isolated on the Jaffna peninsula, the SLA met with increasing difficulty in keeping open its lines of communication and MSR to the distant capital in Colombo. This chapter describes the government’s subsequent military campaign to reinforce its operational gains, and to secure the land MSR to Jaffna. The fundamentals outlined in JP 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*, again frame the campaign analysis.

In response to increasing insurgent activity, and deteriorating security of the government’s MSR south of Jaffna, the GSL launched Operation Jaya Sikurui on 13 May 1997. The operational objective was to recapture and secure the most northern 74 kilometers of the Colombo-Jaffna MSR, enabling resupply of the Jaffna peninsula from the capital via Elephant Pass. Ultimately, the operation would entail offensives conducted in two major phases: first, an attack southward, through Elephant Pass, to take the crossroads at Parathan, and to prevent the LTTE from employing its captured artillery

pieces against the air base at Palay; second--nearly a year later--an offensive northward from the vicinity of Puliyanakulam toward Mankulam and beyond, effectively connecting the Kilinochchi district with the northern town of Vavuniya (see figures 5, 6).² Securing the land MSR to Jaffna would have allowed the GSL to become more responsive to the hardships of the Tamil populace there, in addition to dividing the LTTE stronghold districts in the north into two.³

The ambitious operation included over 20,000 GSL troops, initially under the overall command of Major General A. K. Jayawardene. Later phases of the campaign would see operational command pass to Major General C. S. Weerisoriya, and ultimately direct oversight by the Commander-in-Chief, President Chandrika Kumaratunga herself. Over the ensuing eighteen months, Operation Jaya Sikurui was to prove the largest and costliest military endeavor in Sri Lanka's history.

To meet the manpower demands of this operation the SLA employed 53 Division as the main effort, which took the brunt of the fighting, and 54, 55, 56, and 21 Divisions. The Sri Lankan Air Force and Navy were also tasked to provide troops in a ground combat role to help man the Forward Defense Line.⁴ During the initial phase of the operation, the divisions' axis of advance was the segment of the A9 Highway linking the Jaffna peninsula to Kandy.

As security forces advanced southward from Jaffna, they met strong LTTE resistance, particularly in and around Paranthan. The jungle terrain of the Wannu district supported the LTTE's guerrilla tactics, while the linear SLA formations proved cumbersome and vulnerable in the restrictive terrain. The predictable southward advance of the security forces ceded all initiative to the guerrillas, who counterattacked fiercely

and repeatedly. Employed as regular infantry, the Special Forces brigade of 53 Division suffered similarly. Tasked to secure a bridge across Kanakarayan Aru, then cross the A9 Highway to link up with 55 Division, the brigade was caught in the open by heavy mortar fire. The September 1997 engagement cost the brigade 48 killed and 308 wounded.⁵

Rebel mortar and artillery fire proved to be the highest casualty producer during Operation Jaya Sikurui. Adding insult to injury, the LTTE's liberal use of mortars was facilitated by a hijacked shipment of ammunition and 81-millimeter mortars intended for the SLA. The LTTE had seized the vessel's cargo in February 1997, before the ship reached port in Sri Lanka, and smuggled the mortars and over 32,000 rounds of ammunition into the country via Mullaittivu.⁶ The LTTE maximized the employment of these weapons, and the howitzers captured at Mullaittivu, during the government offensive.

Impending presentation of the GSL's devolution proposals to Parliament, the 50th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence, and upcoming local elections continued to increase pressure to complete Operation Jaya Sikurui in a timely and successful manner. As year-end monsoons approached, GSL forces had yet to secure some 24 kilometers of their operational objectives. Nevertheless, Deputy Defense Minister General Anuruddha Ratwatte announced to Joint Operational Headquarters in Vavuniya that he expected the operation to be completed by 31 December 1997 and that "92 per cent of the war had in fact been concluded."⁷

On 4 December 1997, 53 Division advanced under cover of heavy artillery barrage towards Mankulam, overcoming sporadic enemy resistance. Special Forces units were leading infantry units in clearing three known guerrilla concentrations, when the

LTTE launched its largest counterattack yet. The SLA was forced to withdraw, losing 147 killed and 396 injured. The engagement was to result in the highest casualty rate ever for the Special Forces brigade.⁸

Budgetary debates were scheduled in Colombo that week, as well as debates for extending the current State of Emergency in Sri Lanka. Fearful that the setback would be political ammunition for the GSL's opposition, the following vague report was released by the JOH:

Troops having advanced further from their earlier held positions confronted a large group of terrorists. . . . Troops overcame heavy enemy resistance causing heavy casualties among them. Terrorists continued to engage troops with mortars and artillery. Troops retaliated with artillery and mortars. Ground troops confirmed terrorists have suffered heavy casualties. The details of own casualties will be released later. . . . Troops are now in the process of clearing the area.⁹

Three hours following Parliament's session, a subsequent press release announced:

Terrorists engaged troops from well-prepared defenses. . . . Fighting was at close quarters and intense. Fighting which broke out at 9 a.m. continued till late afternoon. The bodies of 36 soldiers including one officer killed have been handed over to their families. . . . The operation continues.¹⁰

By year's end, Operation Jaya Sikurui had claimed over 1,000 GSL troops killed in action, and more than 3,000 wounded.¹¹ Government military reports indicate varying statistics on LTTE casualties. Ground elements in contact estimate 858 killed, official releases put the toll higher at 1,305 killed, and intercepted LTTE transmissions confirm a minimum of 515 killed. Independent verification of casualties is problematic, due to intense government censorship during this phase of the operation.¹²

On 25 January 1998, an LTTE suicide bomber attacked the sacred Temple of the Tooth (Dalada Maligawa) in Kandy, considerably damaging the building, as well as killing and injuring dozens of worshippers. Of great religious significance, the Tooth

Relic is also closely associated with the sovereignty of Sri Lanka. Captured by the British in 1818, its loss was considered symbolically more decisive than territorial occupation by British forces. Its desecration by the LTTE attack outraged even secular Sinhalese, and was seen more as an attack on the Sinahala people than the GSL.¹³

The New Year saw a change of command, as operational responsibility for Jaya Sikurui was passed to Major General Srilal Weerisuriya. New proclamations by General Ratwatte assured the GSL that the MSR would be secured once and for all by 4 February 1998, an excessively optimistic prediction. The inevitable failure of GSL forces to meet this deadline was ultimately blamed on bad weather.¹⁴

On 27 September 1998, as GSL troops continued to struggle to reach their final operational objectives, LTTE cadre launched a large-scale offensive against the Killinochchi defense complex, the southernmost strongpoint in a string of military garrisons reaching north to GSL security force headquarters in Jaffna. The Killinochchi garrison was home to the SLA's 54 Division, and was manned with four infantry brigades, including supporting armor, artillery, and engineer units.¹⁵ The defense complex stretched some 15 kilometers, nearly three times the size of the base at Mullaittivu, and included a concrete-reinforced Forward Defensive Line.

The LTTE assault began with a heavy mortar and artillery barrage. Special teams of guerrillas, infiltrated before the attack, were able to adjust indirect fire precisely onto key command and control targets.¹⁶ Simultaneous attacks from the west and southeast were facilitated by the LTTE's breach of the perimeter, using a captured T-55 tank, and an explosive-filled armored vehicle (see figure 7).¹⁷ Taking advantage of the mostly open terrain and scrub brush surrounding the complex, the LTTE maximized direct and

indirect fires to isolate the base from advancing reinforcements. After two days of intense fighting, the order was given from the neighboring headquarters at Elephant Pass to withdraw the remaining troops from Killinochchi, and the GSL forces consolidated at Paranthan.¹⁸

Reminiscent of the LTTE attack on Mullaittivu, the Killinochchi battle proved to be the greatest debacle for GSL forces to date. Once again, rebel forces captured large caches of weapons and ammunition after overrunning the complex. According to government figures, casualties numbered 663 SLA troops killed. The International Committee of the Red Cross reports taking control of at least 674 bodies from the LTTE. Other SLA estimates report nearly 1,000 killed or missing, and a further 700 wounded.¹⁹

Political machinations continued unabated as Operation Jaya Sikurui dragged on interminably. Despite the violence, the government proceeded with a scheduled round of limited autonomy provincial elections in 1998. The leading opposition party, the UNP, boycotted the parliamentary vote to amend the constitution to allow semi-autonomous regional councils. Fighting between government forces and the LTTE continued throughout the electoral period. Against a background of election-related violence featuring attacks against both independence supporters and those favoring conciliation with the government under the limited autonomy plan, no workable political solution emerged. In May 1998, the mayor of Jaffna was assassinated. The Tigers blamed the killing on a pro-government group called the TULF. Around this time, the Sri Lankan government tightened press censorship, restricting coverage of the conflict in the Jaffna region. The detention of several journalists coincided with the President stopping an

ongoing investigation of government corruption when the probe reached the level of senior officials.

In June 1998, President Kumaratunga made an offer to the UNP to hold presidential elections, originally scheduled for 2000, a year early if they would consent to postponing the provincial elections in August. This was seen as a move to avoid a possible loss in the elections due to the government's slow progress in the Jaffna conflict. The opposition rejected this deal. In August, a few weeks prior to the elections, the president declared a state of emergency that indefinitely postponed the elections while augmenting the power of state security forces. The government agreed to hold provincial elections in January 1999, and the result was a sweeping victory for the ruling party in the northern province. Thousands of UNP supporters protested the results and independent election monitors attested to ballot stuffing by the government. Even the LSSP, a government ally, criticized the ruling party for fixing the election after initially delaying it by declaring a state of emergency.

As 1998 drew to a close, security forces had still failed to secure their original operational objectives for Jaya Sikurui. The town of Mankulam had yet to be secured in the south, and the rebel capture of Killinochchi had halted progress in the north. The LTTE continued to successfully infiltrate the Jaffna peninsula, further threatening control of the MSR. In May, the LTTE was able to assassinate Brigadier General Larry Wijeratne, and successfully attacked army and police convoys throughout the year along the Vavuniya-Mannar road, previously considered secure. These security force failures indicated how overstretched the GSL had become. The Killinochchi defeat caused President Kumaratunga to again reshuffle the leadership occupying senior military

commands, and to personally oversee progress of the operation. The President's involvement included personally interviewing officers from the battle areas, and presiding at lengthy sessions of the National Council to develop her assessment of the military's performance.²⁰ On 29 September 1998, GSL troops finally captured the town of Mankulam, a key intermediate objective in securing the MSR. After consolidating recent gains, the government decided to end the operation on a relatively high note. Operation Jaya Sikurui officially drew to a close on 4 December 1998, leaving large areas of the MSR between Killinochchi and Mankulam unsecured.²¹

Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning emphasizes the importance of identifying any forces or capabilities that the adversary has in the area (see table 1). From a campaign-planning perspective, Jaya Sikurui reveals a continuing deficiency in the GSL's ability to collect operationally responsive intelligence. The LTTE offensive against Killinochchi in September 1998 represented a catastrophic intelligence failure for security forces. The ability of insurgent forces to mount an organized combined arms assault of some 3,000 guerrillas--in close proximity to SLA units conducting offensive operations--represents an alarming lack of situational awareness among GSL security forces. Likewise, the predictable nature of the SLA's advance along the A9 Kandy-Jaffna Highway does not excuse the repeated surprise achieved by LTTE counterattacks. On the contrary, the simplicity of operational maneuver should have facilitated reconnaissance and security efforts. Effective intelligence collection and analysis is certainly instrumental to the success of any military operation, and acquires a special significance during counterinsurgency operations.

The insurgent is not self-sufficient and requires considerable amounts of support from the populace to sustain the force and to continue to conduct guerrilla operations. Lacking strength in numbers, guerrillas depend on dispersion, stealth, and mobility as combat multipliers. For this reason, intelligence operations against insurgents become problematic for forces organized to fight conventional military formations.

A British commander during counterinsurgency operations in Malaya stressed “the evolution of a coordinated intelligence network. The existence of an efficient police force was invaluable in this connection, and in countries where this does not exist, building one up may have to be the first step in the campaign.”²² Subsequent British counterinsurgency operations coordinated the employment of police, intelligence, military intelligence, and special operations forces, in order to focus collection and avoid duplication of effort.²³ The GSL possesses special forces units with unique training and operational experience that could form the foundation for this capability in the future. During Operation Jaya Sikurui, these units were misutilized as regular infantry and suffered extreme casualty rates. Such employment is decidedly shortsighted, and quickly decimates capabilities that often take years to acquire.

In Algeria, the French lifted the insurgents’ veil of secrecy using *quadrillage*, and *commandos de chasse*. Dividing the entire country into sectors, French forces used manpower intensive operations to gather intelligence on the activities and intentions of insurgents. Forewarned by an intelligence apparatus employing extensive human and technical collection means, French airmobile strike forces could respond rapidly to destroy guerrilla elements.²⁴ In another example of aggressive intelligence operations, the US Phoenix program in Vietnam directly attacked the political legitimacy of the

insurgency. The program essentially sought to coordinate all collection assets in South Vietnam, in order to identify and destroy the shadow political infrastructure of the Viet Cong.²⁵ Repeated GSL disasters at Mullaitivu, Killinochchi, and others bear testament to the critical need for security forces to develop a comprehensive, coordinated intelligence architecture that is responsive to the operational commander.

Operation Jaya Sikurui further illustrated the inability of the GSL to conduct major operations simultaneously. After successfully striking the enemy's COG during Operation Riviresa, GSL forces became bogged down in an 18-month campaign to secure the MSR supporting the seized objective. Instead of being an important shaping effort, securing the MSR to Jaffna rapidly became an end unto itself. Although phasing and sequencing of operations are basic tenants of campaign plan design, they allow the commander to exploit emerging operational opportunities, not forfeit strategic or operational initiative to the enemy. Proper phasing and sequencing is described in JP 5-00.1, and addresses how the process dictates allocation of resources. Correct sequencing prevents friendly forces from culminating before operational objectives are attained, and compels enemy culmination. In Sri Lanka, the operational initiative was ceded to the LTTE following Operation Riviresa, and arguably never regained by GSL forces over the course of Operation Jaya Sikurui. Given the resources available, the manner in which the GSL employed its forces precluded the comprehensive operations needed to decisively defeat the LTTE. Faced with similar challenges, other counterinsurgency forces have historically approached the problem in innovative ways.

Consider the example of the US-led counterinsurgency effort in the Philippines at the turn of the century. Emilio Aguinaldo initially opted to fight the US conventionally,

but by November 1899, the Filipinos, too, were forced to flee to the mountains north of Luzon to wage a guerrilla campaign.²⁶ Aguinaldo's hit and run philosophy was supported by his organization into "highly autonomous regional commands," and complemented with "a clandestine civil-military organization or infrastructure that acted as a shadow government."²⁷ Eventually, the Americans were forced to employ over 65,000 troops and 35,000 short-term volunteers to control the insurrection. Even this large troop presence, however, proved insufficient to secure the myriad jungle villages throughout the islands. US Army commanders learned that mobility, flexibility, and aggressiveness were needed to fight the Filipinos, and that decentralized authority was a particularly effective way to achieve it.²⁸ There remained the question, however, of safeguarding the operational gains of these smaller, more mobile strike forces. Only in this way could the rebels be separated from their base of support.

In response to this need, the US Army established the Philippine Constabulary. Infrequent patrols had proven useless; the insurgents possessed sophisticated intelligence and support networks among the population. Even small outposts were impractical because of the scope of the requirement, and rebel forces easily overcame such small garrisons. In contrast, the Constabulary was constituted from the indigenous populace--a plentiful manpower pool. Although the ranks of the Constabulary were Filipino, and technically an arm of the civil government, a US Army cadre profoundly influenced its organization, training, and employment.

This cadre was handpicked by the commanding general of the US counterinsurgency force. Brigadier General Henry T. Allen selected only "bright, ambitious, and physically robust men who could not only withstand the rigors of bush

service, but who were also sensitive to the local sociopolitical environment.” The Constabulary was trained as light infantry, with emphasis on ambush and counter-ambush techniques, operations at night and during inclement weather, tactical deception, and tracking techniques. In addition to irregular combat skills, the Constabulary was instructed in police functions, court and legal matters, arrest procedures, and evidence collection. Officers were trained to monitor the mood and disposition of their local populace, and were required to learn the dialects and customs of the regions they were posted to.

The Philippine Constabulary proved an enormous combat multiplier. With an effective militia to secure operational successes, combat forces were freed for offensive operations. The Constabulary provided a lasting presence in sufficient force to deter counterattacks or reprisals by the rebels. Infiltration by the insurgents proved extremely difficult, given the presence of indigenous security forces attuned to the local populace. With the Constabulary in place, US-led pacification efforts progressed unimpeded. Efforts included medical care, school construction, and the establishment of courts, roads, and other administration infrastructure. By the end of the war, the government had over 15,000 native auxiliaries in its Philippine Scouts, Constabulary, local police, and volunteer militia organizations. The insurgents were gradually, but effectively, isolated from their bases of support. In areas most vulnerable to rebel influence and coercion, US forces employed concentration, relocating local populations to towns and camps under heavy military control. In parts of Cavite province, this policy left evacuated areas that essentially became free-fire zones, again denying sanctuary to the enemy.

Certain parallels between the insurgency in Sri Lanka and the threat that faced US forces in the Philippines make the analogy a valuable one. The current operational methods of GSL security forces often play to enemy strengths. Deprived of operational intelligence and mobility, large, unwieldy SLA formations consistently cede the initiative to LTTE guerrillas in restrictive jungle terrain. Using these methods, security forces are unable to harness the combat power necessary to deal a decisive blow to the LTTE, while still safeguarding their rear areas, securing LOCs, and sustaining operations. Climbing desertion rates, with estimates as high as 15,000 during the Jaya Sikurui campaign, indicate these manpower-intensive methods will be increasingly difficult to maintain in the future. The operational record of Sri Lanka's attrition-based strategy is not enviable, and mounting losses may prove politically unviable for the current administration.

Ironically, the government's need to mount Operation Jaya Sikurui stemmed in part from its broad strategic concepts of operations and sustainment for achieving theater-strategic objectives during Operation Riviresa (see table 1). This fundamental of campaign planning illustrates the importance of considering operational and sustainment relationships, and ensuring these concepts support strategic objectives. Sustainment operations for Operation Riviresa proved adequate as initially executed. Operational success did not result in the strategic victory anticipated, however, proving the sustainment concept to be similarly flawed. Once ousted from Jaffna, the LTTE wreaked havoc on the MSR to Colombo. Air and sealift assets were unable to completely fulfill this unforeseen requirement. Manpower requirements were difficult to sustain, because units in the east had already been thinned for the offensive on Jaffna. In many respects,

the longest, costliest campaign in Sri Lanka's history was mounted to salvage an earlier operation.

Overall, Operation Jaya Sikurui was a dismal showing for President Kumaratunga and GSL security forces. In terms of campaign planning, none of the shortcomings observed during Operation Riviresa were remedied, and violations of JP 5-00.1 fundamentals continued to degrade the SLA's chances for success. Constraints on combat resources again led planners to mass combat power from garrisons across Sri Lanka, creating unacceptable risk in many locations. Special operations, air force, and navy personnel were all misutilized in a ground combat role during this operation. This combat power was directed at terrain-oriented objectives along the MSR, with few related supporting operations. Jaya Sikurui also revealed severe shortcomings in the GSL's operational intelligence capabilities, so ground elements found themselves repeatedly surprised by guerrilla counterattacks, and unexpected artillery barrages from captured howitzers. Operation Jaya Sikurui did not strike directly or indirectly at the LTTE COG, unless viewed as a poorly phased sequel to Operation Riviresa. Nevertheless, as losses mounted, more and more political capital was invested in the campaign. The GSL became obsessed with succeeding, progress was measured in kilometers of ground taken, and the operation soon took on a life of its own. At the campaign's conclusion the GSL had realized few operational gains, incurred enormous losses in men and materiel, and absorbed a devastating strategic defeat at Killinochchi.

¹Wintle, *The Dictionary of War Quotations*, 127.

²“Sri Lanka: Internal Affairs,” 29.

³Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 29.

⁴Sri Lanka Army, “Army in Operation: Op Jaya Sikurui,” Sri Lanka Army Situation Report and News Archive [article on-line]; available from <http://202.51.158.144/Operations8.htm>; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2002.

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⁶Ibid.

⁷Iqbal Athas, “Worst-ever Commando Debacle,” *The Sunday Times*, 7 December 1997 [article on-line]; available from <http://lacnet.org/suntimes/971207/sitrep.html>; Internet; accessed on 14 April 2002.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 29; and Athas, “Worst-ever Commando Debacle.”

¹²Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 29.

¹³Priyath Liyanage, “Popular Buddhism, Politics, and the Ethnic Problem” in “Demanding Sacrifice: War and Negotiation in Sri Lanka,” *Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives*, August 1998 [article on-line]; available from http://www.c-r.org/accord/acc_sri/index.htm; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2002.

¹⁴Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 29.

¹⁵Vijayasiri, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign,” 53.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 54.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸Iqbal Athas, “Killinochchi Calamity: Worst Debacle in 17 Years War,” *The Sunday Times*, 4 October 1998 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.lacnet.org/suntimes/981004/sitrep.html>; Internet; accessed on 14 April 2002.

¹⁹*Ibid.*; and Vijayasiri, “Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign,” 54.

²⁰Iqbal Athas, “CBK Sets Jaya Sikurui on Professional Course,” *The Sunday Times*, 1 November 1998 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.lacnet.org/suntimes/981101/sitrep.html>; Internet; accessed on 14 April 2002.

²¹Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 31.

²²Department of the Navy, FMFRP 12-25, 127.

²³Ian F.W. Beckett, *Encyclopedia of Guerrilla Warfare* (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), 111.

²⁴Douglas Porch, *The French Foreign Legion* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1991), 594; and Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, trans. Daniel Lee (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and General Staff College, January 1985), 30-32.

²⁵Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (Portland: Frank Cass, 1998), 132-135.

²⁶Andrew J. Birtle, *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine: 1860-1941* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1998), 110.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 110-111.

²⁸Addington, *Patterns of War*, 126.

CHAPTER 5

OPERATION KINIHIRA (“ANVIL”)

You may kill ten of my men for every one I kill of yours, but even at those odds, you will lose and I will win.¹

Ho Chi Minh

The Tamil-Sinhalese conflict has surged, ebbed and resurged numerous times over the last two decades, with no clear prospect of resolution. Hostilities following the completion of Jaya Sikurui escalated severely, encompassing both military battles for territory and terrorist attacks on civilians. This chapter assesses the shortcomings of the final of three government campaigns, using the framework provided by the campaign-planning fundamentals of JP 5-00.1, and concludes with a synopsis of events following the campaign to the present day.

At the end of 1998, the government prepared to mount another offensive in Jaffna province. A rapid advance a few months later resulted in the army capturing twenty-four villages, driving the LTTE into retreat. As government occupation commenced in the area, thousands of Tamils fled to areas still controlled by the LTTE. Government gains included two Hindu temples and a Christian shrine, and a dispute arose over access to the holy sites. While the GSL restricted access to worshippers, the LTTE blocked shipments of food to civilians in Jaffna. In August 1999, the GSL acceded to a previous rebel demand for a five-kilometer demilitarized zone on either side of the main highway, and distribution of food aid finally began. The government, opposition parties, and business interests attempted to promote peace within a framework of devolution of power and limited Tamil autonomy. The effort foundered against LTTE insistence on full

independence. The battle for Jaffna intensified and appeared headed for a climax. In October 1999, the rebels went back on the military offensive and re-captured ten SLA garrisons, reoccupying territory lost over the past two years and acquiring considerable government weaponry abandoned in the rout.² The LTTE offensives were a source of significant embarrassment for the GSL, and the government was finding any of its claims of military success greeted with increasing skepticism. President Kumaratunga had grown increasingly unpopular for the widening war and its escalating costs. An earlier July 1999 rally held by the UNP was attended by thousands of people, and subsequent disorder led to government troops using tear gas and water cannons on opposition supporters.

Worst of all for the GSL, in a major battle that lasted from late March through early April 2000, the LTTE gained control of Elephant Pass, a strategic causeway linking the Jaffna Peninsula with the main part of the island. Several hundred government soldiers were apparently killed in fierce fighting, but unclassified details are difficult to obtain due to official censorship. A short-term truce was arranged when rebels returned the bodies of 126 government troops killed in action.³ Fighting resumed and security forces on the peninsula, estimated at 35,000 to 40,000, appeared in danger of being completely cut off. Facing rising criticism of the GSL's military strategy--with forces in the field spread very thin and desertions by troops on the increase--the president relieved several senior military commanders. Both India and Pakistan denied any intention of offering military assistance to the GSL to fight the LTTE. The government of Norway offered its services as a mediator, but no movement toward a negotiated settlement or even a cease-fire appeared imminent. In mid-May 2000, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister

Lakshman Kadirgamar announced that the government would seek to purchase \$800 million worth of armaments on the open market in order to continue its fight against the LTTE. The buying spree was seen as an effort to provide security forces on the Jaffna Peninsula with badly needed combat power, and as an alternative to the garrisons on the peninsula becoming completely cut off from Colombo.⁴

On 17 September 2000, with newly purchased military hardware, the GSL commenced Operation Kinihira. Unlike Operations Riviresa or Jaya Sikurui, continuity in the Kinihira campaign is difficult to discern. By January 2001, GSL forces would conduct nine phases of Operation Kinihira, each with two to four stages of employment. The complexity of operational planning reflects the SLA's attempt to isolate LTTE defenses by sequentially securing numerous terrain-oriented objectives, then defeating the insurgents in detail. The many villages, axes of advance, and terrain-anchored references listed as objectives for these individual actions would only confuse analysis, and are not presented here. Specific examples of the overall operational effort illustrate the intent of GSL forces. In reality, these intermediate objectives only obscure the ultimate purpose of the campaign, which was to secure key positions on the Jaffna Peninsula, in order to position the armed forces to retake the strategic Elephant Pass lost to the LTTE in May 2000.⁵

The propitious timing of the campaign--only weeks before general parliamentary elections were scheduled--was not lost on Kumaratunga's political opposition. The move to achieve operational success against the LTTE was widely interpreted as a response to her fast-dwindling support after a violence-marred first term belied her 1994 campaign promises of peace, and the easing of autocratic central government control. Inevitably,

accusations were lodged that the president was trying to stave off a certain no-confidence vote. Even slow initial SLA progress was blamed on Kumaratunga's fear of a catastrophic military defeat right before the December 2000 general elections.⁶ While such manipulation is certainly a matter of course in Sri Lankan politics, in all fairness it is unlikely that the GSL expected a major military breakthrough so soon before the elections.

Prior to this GSL offensive, the LTTE had nearly succeeded in completely surrounding security forces garrisoned in the city of Jaffna. The first phase of the operation, Kinihira I, aimed to push rebel forces back from the outskirts of the city. The primary operational objective was to secure the town of Chavakachcheri, in order to isolate the rebels from supplies and reinforcements infiltrating along the Tthanankilappu-Chavakachcheri road. Four divisions were allocated for the effort (51, 52, 53, and 55 Divisions), supported by recently purchased Kfir aircraft from Israel, and Mig-27 Flogger-J aircraft from the Ukraine, and placed under the overall operational command of Major General Anton E. D. Wijendra. Two divisions were designated the main effort for the attack from Jaffna, and the remaining two conducted division-level diversions in support of the main effort. Operations went as planned, and three square kilometers around Chavakachcheri were secured, up to the Kilali lagoon-front. By 26 September 2000, further attacks succeeded in extending GSL lines of control to areas west of Sarasalai, and north of Madduvil. Releases by the GSL indicated 127 LTTE cadre killed and a further 135 wounded, as well as over 300 soldiers killed and more than 1,300 wounded.⁷

Further phases of Kinihira met with stiffening LTTE resistance, and particularly heavy mortar and artillery bombardment by the rebels. Increased LTTE activity was noted by SLA intelligence, as was the near-continuous presence of prominent cadre leaders along defensive lines on the Jaffna peninsula. To maintain offensive pressure, the SLA began Kinihira IV with the aim of capturing the Nunavil East and Maduvil South regions. The SLA 53 Division (comprised of the 6th, 7th, and 10th Sri Lanka Sinha Regiments, the 6th Gajaba Regiment, and 3rd and 8th Sri Lanka Light Infantry Regiments) conducted the dismounted assault, advancing south from Sarasalai. The 52 Division (comprised of the 4th Vijayaba Infantry and the 11th Volunteer Gajaba Regiment) advanced west from the vicinity of Meesalai. The SLA achieved its objectives by 10 December 2000, and penetrated further than expected after initially faltering under a concentrated artillery barrage.

Operation Kinihira V was launched with the aim of capturing Madduvil and Nunavil, and the A9 Highway including the Kaithadi and Navatkuli Bridges. The bridgeheads would consolidate control of the MSR from Jaffna to Chavakachcheri, and was considered key to supporting subsequent attacks east against the Elephant Pass. Confronted by improved LTTE defensive positions, the 53 Division westward advance was slow, and heavy casualties again occurred from LTTE indirect fires. Subsequent SLA counter-battery fires were able to neutralize the rebel artillery, and facilitated the Division's capture of the Kaithadi Bridge by 22 December 2000. The Navatkuli Bridge, however, remained in LTTE control. Occupying forces reported twenty-six guerrillas killed, thirty-four wounded, and a large number of mortar tubes destroyed or abandoned. The LTTE were also reported to be abandoning stockpiles weapons and munitions, and

leaving behind their dead and wounded. Two junior LTTE cadres had chosen to surrender to security forces rather than take their cyanide pills.

The primary objective of Kinihira VIII was to capture the Navatkuli Bridge and restore control the A9 MSR all the way from Jaffna to Chavakachcheri. Rebel artillery bombardment was lessening, and security forces quickly advanced westward along the A9 axis. Occupying SLA units were quick to note that defensive positions had been thoroughly prepared, and booby-trapped with improvised explosive devices and anti-personnel mines, indicating a planned withdrawal by the LTTE. Withdrawing guerrillas left behind large stockpiles of partially destroyed arms and equipment. At the conclusion of Kinihira VIII on 31 December 2000, GSL forces had secured the Navatkuli Bridge, and were once again in control of the Jaffna Peninsula. A government release announced that with the successful re-occupation of the Jaffna Peninsula, all the gains made by the LTTE during its Operation Unceasing Waves IV in early 2000 had been reversed.⁸

The SLA's intelligence proved correct, and the LTTE's planned withdrawal occurred shortly after the two strategic bridges were captured at Navatkuli and Kaithadi. Following the successful completion of Kinihira VIII, intelligence reports indicated that the guerrillas were consolidating just south of LTTE-held Thenmarachchi and Vadamarachchi, and were stockpiling ammunition and strengthening defenses in preparation for a counterattack. The SLA seized the opportunity to exploit the successes of the past three months, and launched a final operation against the southernmost insurgent defenses on the peninsula, Operation Kinihira IX.

Operation Kinihira IX began with the objective of destroying the insurgents at Muhamalai, Avaraikkaadu, and Ponnar. The operation employed 55 Division as the main

effort, augmented with an armored brigade and commando brigade, against the bulk of the defenses. Just to the south, 53 Division launched a diversionary attack in support of the main effort. The 53 Division assault is noteworthy for its excellent application of tactical intelligence. Several commando and special forces elements were able to penetrate the outer defensive perimeter of the LTTE defensive positions at night, pinpointing key defensive positions and command and control locations in advance. Numerous guerrilla patrols were allowed to pass unhindered to avoid compromise, until shortly before the attack special forces and commando teams destroyed several bunker positions before withdrawing without casualties. Tactical surprise was complete, the LTTE was unable to bring its indirect fires to bear before SLA forces had breached the defensive perimeter, and the insurgents withdrew from Muhamalai under intense artillery barrage by very well adjusted fires.⁹ Security forces occupied the tactically important high ground on 19 January 2001. To the north, 55 Division advanced in two columns, supported by multiple-barrel rocket launcher preparatory fires, and air strikes from Israeli-made Kfir fighter-bombers. After repulsing LTTE counterattacks launched from northeast of Avaraikkaadu, the division secured its objectives and ended Operation Kinihira.

Subsequent to the operation, government releases announced that a total of 139 square kilometers of territory had been liberated during Kinihira. Security forces sustained 268 killed in action, and over 1,300 wounded. The GSL reported rebel casualties to be over 1,220 killed, and 1,250 wounded in action against the SLA since the September launch of Kinihira.¹⁰ Admissions from the LTTE are much lower, citing around 800 cadre killed during the operation.¹¹

Given the recent occurrence of this campaign, and the extraordinary censorship imposed by the GSL, operational details for analysis of Kihinira are scarce. Nevertheless, from the perspective of campaign-planning fundamentals, two significant observations regarding Operation Kihinira can be made. First, on the positive side, the SLA appears to have done a much better job identifying any forces or capabilities that the adversary has in the area. Secondly, on the negative side, there does not appear to have been any coordinated effort to launch a series of related major operations simultaneously.

Although the Kihinira campaign provides some good examples of well-executed intelligence operations at the tactical level, there is little evidence to suggest that the operational capabilities of the security forces have improved dramatically. The increased success enjoyed by the SLA in intelligence operations on the peninsula can also be attributed to the occupation of conventional, static defensive positions by the LTTE. Ceding the advantages that normally accrue to the insurgent conducting guerrilla warfare, LTTE defenders facilitated the SLA intelligence collection effort by establishing fixed defenses. In addition, the populated, urbanized areas of the Jaffna district made it much easier for the GSL to bring its resources to bear than in the jungles of the Wannu.

The sequencing of objectives by the SLA on the peninsula was undeniably effective. On the other hand, no coordinated effort was made to isolate or contain withdrawing guerrilla forces, so another valuable opportunity was missed. The guerrillas were all the more vulnerable to the massed effects of superior GSL firepower while in the relatively open terrain of the peninsula, particularly the air power employed with great effect by security forces. The LTTE defenders who escaped these attacks faced the SLA

again at newly reinforced positions, in highly defensible terrain at the Elephant Pass, which the GSL was unable to recapture after several concerted efforts.

¹Wintle, *The Dictionary of War Quotations*, 359.

²“Sri Lanka: Internal Affairs,” 370.

³V. S. Sambandan, “The Fall of Elephant Pass,” *Frontline*, Vol. 17, Issue 9, 29 April-May 12 2000 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.flonnet.com/fl1709/17091240.htm>; Internet; accessed on 2 May 2002; and D. B. S. Jeyaraj, “The Taking of Elephant Pass,” *Frontline*, Vol. 17, Issue 10, 13-26 May 2000 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.flonnet.com/fl1710/17100100.htm>; Internet; accessed on 2 May 2002; and Iqbal Athas, “It is from Lessons Learnt from Failures that Future Successes are Fashioned,” *The Sunday Times*, 9 July 2000 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.lacnet.org/suntimes/981004/sitrep.html>; Internet; accessed on 14 April 2002.

⁴Waruna Karunatilake, “We are Confident of Winning this War,” *TimeAsia*, 17 January 2001 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.tme.com/asia/features/interviews/2001/01/17/conv.wijendra.html>; Internet; accessed on 11 November 2001; and Manoharan, “Cease the Fire and Catch the Peace,” *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 18 January 2001 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.ipcs.org/issues/articles/451-sl-mano.html>; Internet; accessed on 5 May 2002.

⁵Sri Lanka Army, “Army in Operation: Operation Kiniheera,” Sri Lanka Army Situation Report and News Archive [article on-line]; available from <http://202.51.158.144/Operations19.htm>; Internet; accessed on 10 March 2002.

⁶Scott MacDonald, “Sri Lankan President Sees Narrow Election Victory,” *Reuters*, 3 December 2001 [article on-line]; available from <http://in.news.yahoo.com/011203/64/1a54y.html>; Internet; accessed on 5 May 2002.

⁷In comparison with other sources, it is likely that these GSL casualty figures include losses incurred during the ill-fated Operation Rivikirana (“Sunrays”), an operation distinct from Kihinira, conducted on 3 September 2000; “Army in Operation: Operation Kiniheera;” and “Army Captures Chavakachcheri,” *Sri Lanka Monitor*, 26 September 2000 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.gn.apc.org/brcslproject/slmonitor/September2000/army.html>; Internet; accessed on 11 November 2001.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Sri Lanka Army, “Army in Operation: Operation Kiniheera.”

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Manoharan, “Cease the Fire and Catch the Peace.”

CHAPTER 6

POSTSCRIPT

Prior to the completion of the Kinihira campaign, on 21 December 2000, the LTTE proposed a ceasefire as a gesture of its “sincere desire for peace and a negotiated settlement.”¹ Not entirely unexpected, the announcement was met with skepticism since the rebels were now on the defensive. The cycle of negotiate and reconstitute, then attack, was in character for the LTTE, as were their demands: immediate cessation of ongoing military operations, lifting of the economic blockade on LTTE-controlled areas, creating a conducive atmosphere for talks, and focusing talks on ‘core’ political issues. Prior to her reelection, Kumaratunga remained resolutely opposed to these overtures, vowing that the lifting of a ban on the LTTE and a ceasefire could only occur after constructive peace talks had begun. She stated, “I cannot allow a separate state of Eelam, or lift the ban. We are straightforward, no Eelam, no terrorism, then we have talks.”²

Subsequent to repeated failed attempts by security forces to re-take the Elephant Pass, no new operations were mounted by the GSL, although the LTTE ceasefire offer continued to be officially rejected. The pause in fighting allowed new initiatives to begin. A Norwegian-brokered peace process began to take hold in 2001, under the direction of chief facilitator Erik Solheim. In February 2001, however, the LTTE suffered a new setback when Britain labeled them a terrorist organization, under new legislation aimed at halting the funding for British domestic-based militant groups. In July 2001, the LTTE conducted a devastating suicide attack on the International Airport and the Air Force Base at Katunayake. The assault destroyed eight Air Force planes and

three Sri Lanka Airlines airbuses--25 percent of the Air Force's fixed-wing capability, and 33 percent of the commercial fleet--as well as killing 14.³

Also in July 2001, the politically beleaguered President Kumaratunga suspended Parliament to save the collapse of her minority government from an anticipated vote of no-confidence. New parliamentary elections were set for December 2001, at which time the opposition UNP narrowly won the parliamentary election, and Ranil Wickramasinghe was sworn in as Prime Minister with the new cabinet.

On 24 December 2001, the LTTE implemented a month-long unilateral ceasefire, and the GSL announced it would also observe the truce. In January 2002, the GSL eased its seven-year embargo on commerce entering the northern LTTE-controlled provinces. More recently, the ceasefire has been extended, and on 21 February 2002 both the GSL and LTTE agreed to a permanent ceasefire to pave the way for future peace talks. Negotiations remain problematic, and have been overseen by the Norwegian facilitators of the Sri Lankan Monitoring Mission. Since 4 April 2002, ceasefire monitors have been trying to prevent the LTTE from charging an entry tax on travelers along the A9 Highway, as they enter areas of the northern mainland controlled by the rebels. Although attempts to de-militarize a zone on either side of the Elephant Pass have proven successful to date, prospects for continued peace are uncertain.

¹Manoharan, "Cease the Fire and Catch the Peace."

²MacDonald, "Narrow Election Victory."

³"Sri Lanka: Internal Affairs," 371.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

To them the jungle seemed predominately hostile, being full of man-eating tigers, deadly fevers, venomous snakes and scorpions, natives with poisonous darts, and a host of half-imagined nameless terrors. They were unable to adapt themselves to a new way of life and a diet of rice and vegetables. In this green hell they expected to be dead within a few weeks--and as a rule they were... The truth is that the jungle is neutral. It provides any amount of fresh water, and unlimited cover for friend as well as foe--an armed neutrality, if you like, but neutrality nevertheless. It is the attitude of mind that determines whether you go under or survive. There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so. The jungle itself is neutral.¹

F. Spencer Chapman

Prospects for a definitive peace settlement in Sri Lanka remain grim. The preceding campaigns illustrate the obstinacy with which both adversaries refuse to negotiate a compromise. Nevertheless, the “nameless terrors” of this substate conflict are operational hurdles for security forces and insurgents alike. If GSL and military leaders are able to modify their operational methods--to subsist on the metaphorical “diet of rice and vegetables”--security forces can successfully exploit the vulnerabilities of the LTTE insurgents. This operational-level analysis identified shortcomings in the GSL counterinsurgency strategy from a campaign-planning perspective, used JP 5-00.1 as a framework, and incorporated principles of US IDAD and FID doctrine. The intent of this doctrinal approach is to facilitate understanding by US military and political leaders, capitalizing on the considerable knowledge amassed by the American military. Other relevant historical examples of counterinsurgency campaigns have been cited to balance the analysis. Three government campaigns were analyzed: Operation Riviresa in 1995,

Operation Jaya Sikurui in 1996, and Operation Kinihira in 2000. This chapter summarizes the shortcomings noted, and advocates the publication of principles concerning tactics, techniques, and procedures as a supplement to current US counterinsurgency doctrine. In addition, this thesis has discussed the use of JP 5-00.1 as an effective methodology for analyzing situations other than war, and identified issues for further study that might improve overall understanding of counterinsurgency.

Operations Riviresa, Jaya Sikurui, and Kinihira violated several campaign-planning fundamentals as enumerated in JP 5-00.1. These violations contributed to poorly coordinated campaigns, and prevented the synergy that is the goal of the campaign-planning process. Despite GSL tactical and operational successes, this lack of coordination enables the LTTE to reconstitute and return to the conventional battlefield at a later date. Not surprisingly, the campaign-planning fundamentals are closely related and mutually supporting. Neglecting one fundamental often ensures deficiencies elsewhere in the campaign-planning process. Finally, the GSL counterinsurgency effort has been further compromised by insufficient political-military synchronization, and poor overall tactical preparedness.

The JP 5-00.1 framework used in the preceding campaign analyses reveals a common shortcoming among all; the inability of the GSL to sequence a series of related major joint operations conducted simultaneously throughout the area of responsibility. This is a particularly damaging deficiency. In many respects, this campaign-planning fundamental provides the cohesion for a coordinated campaign. Without a series of operations conducted simultaneously, major operational requirements may be neglected. Relatively simultaneous execution ensures that no effort will go unsupported, or be left

vulnerable to piecemeal attack. Furthermore, if these operations are not properly sequenced, there is little hope for unity of effort towards a common operational goal. Even when the enemy operational COG is effectively identified and targeted, GSL forces cannot afford to squander scarce resources on piecemeal attacks against terrain-oriented objectives. Attrition is also a decidedly poor strategy against the insurgent. The government must find a way to leverage the limited assets it possesses, in order to mount a coordinated series of decentralized operations that do not allow the LTTE to consolidate, recruit, and reorganize. This observation has significant doctrinal implications for security forces, as well as potential organizational changes. Operational doctrine is called for that negates the guerrilla's mobility advantage. Equally important, credible methods are needed to secure and safeguard the government's operational gains. The GSL has not demonstrated an ability to decisively strike the LTTE. Unless decisive strikes occur, the LTTE will continue to challenge GSL forces conventionally when and where it chooses, dispersing when necessary to husband forces, and pressuring the government with terrorism and guerrilla tactics. Every LTTE operational victory on the conventional battlefield scores a strategic blow against government legitimacy. Political obstacles notwithstanding, the GSL needs to mitigate the negative operational impact of manpower and resource shortfalls by developing an effective militia, implementing conscription, employing resettlement programs, and emphasizing airmobile operations--doctrinally and in task organization.

Numerous historical examples support the concept that a well trained, disciplined militia could enable GSL military forces to offset its resource shortfalls in this manpower-intensive counterinsurgency effort. In addition to the Philippine Constabulary

cited earlier, several British experiences met with considerable success. During the Kenyan Emergency (1952-1960), a young British intelligence officer named Frank Kitson was instrumental in raising the Kikuyu Home Guard of the Kenyan police's Special Branch. These "counter-gangs" of the Home Guard employed tribesmen loyal to the British, and were a great force-multiplier in defeating the Mau Mau insurgency. Kitson was then posted to Malaya toward the end of the Malayan Emergency (1948-1960), where he again successfully focused on devolving responsibility for local security to the indigenous populace. This freed army units to strike the guerrillas that were isolated from their supporters.²

Admittedly, Sri Lankan anti-LTTE paramilitaries and state-sponsored home guard organizations--the PLOTE, and the TELO, in particular--have a checkered history, at best. These groups often collaborate with the SLA against the LTTE, but their assistance routinely devolves into disorder and torture. Bankrolled by the GSL, the activities of these groups indirectly become state-sponsored terror.³ The potential exists, however, to leverage this infrastructure in favor of lawful participation that supports the counterinsurgency effort. This could be an ideal mission for the two commando battalions and three special forces battalions of the SLA that focus primarily on counterinsurgency operations.⁴ Discipline, training, and effective employment could potentially develop an effective constabulary force in a relatively short period of time. As a precondition, the SLA must stop misutilizing their special operations forces as regular infantry.

Finally, troop shortages have another, less obvious impact on operational performance. Resource constraints have led military leadership to scour the armed forces

for available manpower. Units frequently rotate between short cycles of combat operations, rest and reconstitution, and training--often spending as little as three months in a given cycle.⁵ As security forces struggle to learn the most effective ways to combat the LTTE, their lessons are lost to the entire force when they rotate out of combat operations. The armed forces do have a Command and Staff College, and a professional education system, but because officers and units are rotating through combat operations on a near continual basis, these higher-level institutions face difficulty effectively capturing and integrating the wealth of operational and tactical lessons learned. Shorter curriculums--apart from the existing higher-level institutions--attended routinely by both junior and senior leaders, might prove more effective at disseminating the lessons learned in blood during operation after operation. Decades of civil war have produced a considerable number of veterans of counterinsurgency operations; these experienced former operators may provide a pool of instructor talent for this purpose.

The military and President Kumaratunga's inability to "clearly define what constitutes success," in terms of political and strategic endstate, underscores another major shortcoming in GSL campaigns. The definition of an endstate should fundamentally include the delineation of conflict termination objectives and potential post-hostility activities. Without the definition of such basics, the GSL capacity for political-military synchronization will be minimal.

In the case of Operation Riviresa, the military somehow equated operational objectives with the President's strategic guidance. Military leaders mistakenly believed the insurgency could not survive the blow of losing Jaffna. In this regard, the military's attempt to identify the adversary's strategic center of gravity was flawed. Operationally,

the security forces' assessment of the LTTE's COG was on target; had other operations been synchronized with Riviresa, their outcomes may have been different. Indeed, although the combat power of the LTTE remained largely intact, the seizure of Jaffna was potentially economically and operationally devastating for the rebels in the long run. However, the security forces' campaign plan was not comprehensive enough to decisively defeat the LTTE's strategic COG. Consequently, the LTTE was able to avoid full culmination in 1995.

By not focusing sufficiently on the insurgents' strategic COG--after nearly twenty years of counterinsurgency against the LTTE--the GSL reveals its disturbing lack of understanding about insurgency. Political and military leaders continue to obsess over quantitative indicators, such as body count and kilometers of MSR secured. In doing so, they fail to appreciate that repeatedly high LTTE casualties do not indicate that the war is some percentage complete. The insurgents' willingness to repeatedly meet the SLA on the conventional battlefield, in spite of heavy losses, might indicate their superior understanding of the strategic importance of a major conventional victory--such as Killinochchi, or Mullaittivu. More sinister is the implication that insurgent forces are continuing to replace their losses in the face of GSL offensives, perhaps indicating that rebel recruits are not as finite as security forces would like to believe.

Government and military leaders must demonstrate greater appreciation for friendly strategic and operational centers of gravity. This campaign-planning fundamental is wedded to that of identifying adversary COGs, in the sense of preventing the culmination of friendly forces while simultaneously seeking to compel enemy culmination. Counterinsurgency is first and foremost a political conflict, and the contest

is for legitimacy. The GSL understands its strategic COG is domestic political support for the prosecution of the war, but this fact is complicated by war weariness and partisan politics. Operational COGs include security forces and installations whose defeat would reflect incompetence in the administration's war effort. The operational methods of the military, however, leave these very forces vulnerable. Neglecting these relationships has presented the insurgents with repeated opportunities to pit guerrilla strengths against SLA weaknesses, as the LTTE did at Mullaittivu. Similar experiences during Operation Jaya Sikurui proved even more costly, when special operations, air force, and naval personnel were employed as regular infantry to make up for manpower shortfalls. The entire force advanced in linear fashion along the MSR, and was subjected to repeat, debilitating assaults by LTTE guerrillas. Evidently, force protection lessons yet to be learned by GSL security forces.

Media relations and censorship will continue to play an important role in shaping political support for the GSL's counterinsurgency policies. It would be unfair to view the GSL's media relations through an American lens. The US perspective on freedom of the press and access to information differs from that of most nations. Nevertheless, the repeated need for stricter policies of censorship might be perceived as a barometer of performance in the field and provide ammunition for Kumaratunga's political opposition. Likewise, security forces must avoid using disproportionate levels of violence against the guerrillas, particularly in proximity to noncombatants. Massive conventional force is unlikely to be effective against dispersed guerrillas in jungle terrain and will almost certainly result in collateral damage and unintended consequences in populated areas. Airstrikes are notorious for causing excessive collateral damage and civilian casualties,

and are frequently touted in LTTE propaganda efforts. For its part, the GSL should resist public proclamations of unrealistic timelines. These statements serve only to pressure security forces to take unnecessary risks, and increase the likelihood of using undue force to achieve quick results. Decades of conflict should serve as indicator enough that countering insurgency is neither a quick nor simple process.

One critical asset, conspicuous by its absence in the SLA, is an operationally responsive intelligence apparatus. Accurate intelligence provides the foundation for any operational planning, yet is uniquely significant during counterinsurgency operations. Accordingly, one campaign-planning fundamental in JP 5-00.1 stresses identifying any forces or capabilities that the adversary has in the area (see table 1).

Often the greatest challenge to intelligence operations in support of counterinsurgency is effectively coordinating and integrating the effort. This substate conflict spans the operational spectrum, including criminal organizations, terrorist activities, cellular auxiliary networks, dispersed guerrilla warfare, and conventional combat formations with air, land, and sea components. Traditionally, these targets are often the focus of disparate agencies, including police, civilian intelligence communities, special operations forces, military intelligence, and a host of other human and technical means. The myriad sources and inputs of information can quickly overwhelm even the most sophisticated organization.

The Sri Lankan intelligence community has undergone several restructuring initiatives in the past two decades. The operational performance of security forces in the field, however, suggests that more emphasis is needed at the operational level. The recent formation of Deep Penetration Units may be a significant step in the right

direction. These small, covert, special operations teams are tasked with reconnaissance and direct action strikes against the Tamil separatists in the north and east, usually far beyond supporting range of SLA conventional units. Unfortunately, a recent police raid on a house in the Columbo suburb of Athurugiriya arrested several of these teams, mistakenly believing they had uncovered a plot to assassinate the Prime Minister. Government spokesman Harim Peiris stated the raid had “caused extreme embarrassment and loss of morale to the elite special forces Deep Penetration Units.”⁶ Rather than create new elite units, the GSL should find it more productive to re-focus the efforts of its special forces regiments as a whole on their original reconnaissance and counterinsurgency missions. Subsequently improving the integration of these teams into the planning and execution of task force operations--optimally at division or brigade levels--should pay great dividends for field commanders.

On a final note concerning the campaign-planning fundamentals, it is worth noting that JP 5-00.1 stresses the importance of broad strategic concepts of operations and sustainment for achieving national objectives. This chapter has illustrated the close relationships among the campaign-planning fundamentals. Similarly, sustainment impacts upon every aspect of operational planning, and is the key to finishing the fight. Historically, GSL sustainment planning has been weak. Operationally, Riviresa was conducted with nary a nod to the complex logistics necessary to project and sustain an offensive force nearly the length of the nation. In the wake of success, MSR interdiction by the LTTE revealed no GSL contingency plans for sustaining their occupation of Jaffna. Arguably, better logistic contingency planning may have obviated the need for Jaya Sikurui.

Extended campaigns with uncertain outcomes and high casualty rates have made recruitment problematic for the armed forces. In May 1998, the government attempted to benignly rectify the problem of increasing desertions in the wake of Jaya Sikurui. The GSL offered an amnesty over a five-day period for the estimated 15,000 deserters from the SLA--only 5,000 availed themselves of the offer.⁷ The sweeping police arrests that followed did not help recruitment drives. Even where manpower has been sustained, turnover rates have increased dramatically. Replacements are continually funneled into existing units to feed a rapidly growing force structure, yet the training infrastructure has not expanded to accommodate the increased demand for leaders and troops.⁸ The small-unit actions that predominate in guerrilla warfare in jungle operations would benefit greatly from a better personnel replacement and integration system. Without one, operations will feed a cycle of increased casualties, inexperienced recruits, and no time to develop unit cohesion, resulting in lackluster performance that will cause yet more casualties. This cycle will, in turn, feed desertions and hurt recruitment, as well.

Operational shortcomings in the GSL counterinsurgency effort are magnified by a lack of political-military synchronization. Because insurgency is fundamentally a political conflict, countering insurgency demands that policy objectives be understood, clearly articulated to military leadership, and supported by feasible military objectives. Recent GSL political-military activity suggests an inherent failure to command the political power necessary to achieve this synchronization of effort.

The preceding campaign analyses are in many ways a reflection of the fractured Sri Lankan political process. Consider that although Kumaratunga's devolution proposals are in line with the Norwegian-brokered peace process, they have been

consistently frustrated, in part, because her successive governments have lacked the requisite majority to push through the constitutional changes needed. Some parties, like the UNP, oppose the extent of Kumaratunga's proposed devolution and extensive constitutional reforms in principle, while others have come to resist them on the simple grounds that the LTTE itself has said it will accept nothing less than outright independence. Consequently, when she put her proposals before the Parliament in August 2000, they met with almost unanimous opposition. The failure of the devolution plan, coupled with the inability of the military to deal a decisive blow to the LTTE, produced substantial strains within the PA coalition. In June 2001, a close Muslim ally quit his ministerial post and defected to the opposition with six of his colleagues from the SLMC. The move returned the PA to minority government status, and triggered the UNP's first attempt at mounting a no-confidence motion. Kumaratunga avoided defeat on that occasion by suspending Parliament for 60 days and calling for a plebiscite on the issue of constitutional reform. Unfortunately, a plebiscite was never a realistic option. Almost every Sinhalese social organization, including the powerful Buddhist clergy, either opposed or was extremely wary of her devolution plans, implying that the whole exercise was simply a ploy to buy time to save her government.

Kumaratunga's desperation was apparent in early August 2001, when she cut a deal with the Marxist JVP. The JVP, which held 10 seats in the Parliament elected in 2000, refused to accept any ministerial posts but agreed to support the government in Parliament, giving the PA a seven-seat majority. In return, however, the JVP demanded: cancellation of the proposed constitutional referendum; reduction of the Cabinet by one-half; appointment of independent commissions on elections, the civil service, police, the

judiciary, and state media; freezing of all privatization for a period of twelve months; and a ban on the signing of new agreements with multilateral lending institutions.

Acceptance of the deal conceded to the JVP everything Kumaratunga had rejected during earlier talks with the UNP.

Amidst this political in-fighting, the GSL must contend with the duplicitous behavior of the LTTE. The ceasefires of 1989-1990 and 1994 are but two examples of LTTE overtures designed to provide an operational pause in combat operations, enabling the insurgents to reconstitute and further their separatist agenda. After decades of civil conflict, the GSL must find the political will to abstain from this self-defeating cycle of ceasefire, negotiation, and LTTE attack.

Despite these numerous domestic political hurdles, the senior political and military leadership of the nation would undoubtedly benefit from a clearly articulated national security strategy, and national military strategy. Heeding the immediate and continuing threat the LTTE has been to the GSL, and ever mindful of the security forces' limited resources, this strategy should revolve around the ongoing counterinsurgency. A clear strategy would be a milestone toward reaching a political consensus on the application of military power to coordinate a sustained, decisive campaign against the insurgents.

One positive but inconclusive step toward military consensus occurred in 1985 with the establishment of a Joint Operations Command, but the forum was not accompanied by the doctrinal or organizational changes necessary to vest sufficient authority in the new chain of command.⁹ By continuing to develop the nexus of civil and

military power, the processes of political-military coordination should improve dramatically.

Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning states, “campaign planning is an effective methodology for situations other than war.”¹⁰ Though the stated purpose of the reference is to guide the application of military power, the joint and interagency approach of the publication addresses the integration of the diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments of power, as well. In light of this fact, this thesis validates the use of JP 5-00.1 as an effective general methodology for analyzing counterinsurgency. Using the fundamentals of campaign planning as a framework for deconstructing GSL operations proved comprehensive and insightful.

There are lessons to be learned from Sri Lanka’s conflict for US practitioners of counterinsurgency. Some are revealed by the preceding limited analysis, yet many more would benefit from continued research. Ordinarily, America’s military is not predisposed toward unconventional approaches to warfare. Though the history of the US Army includes many more small wars than large-scale conflicts, our doctrine and focus has always been on the latter. In *The American Way of War*, Russell Weigley portrays Prussian theorist Carl von Clausewitz as the principal influence on American military strategy.¹¹ Clausewitz’s influence helps to explain why US doctrine overwhelmingly seeks to destroy our enemy’s military forces by concentrating our firepower and combat forces in decisive battle. His maxim, “The fighting forces [of the enemy] must be destroyed: that is, they must be put in such a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight,” has been the guiding principle for American maneuver warfare for over a century.¹² Indeed, in the insightful book *The Western Way of War*, Victor Hanson argues

that the US concept of decisive battle is inextricably enmeshed with our Western democratic heritage. Many military leaders see this “pitched battle” concept as “the only way to defeat an enemy,” where superior mass and firepower “find and engage [the enemy] in order to end the entire business as quickly as possible.”¹³ One can see the parallels between this approach and the GSL’s conflict with the LTTE, yet this may not be the only--or most effective--strategy for combating insurgency. When faced with an opponent that refuses to meet our conventionally superior forces on equal terms, but seeks to attack them indirectly, Americans react with a degree of uncertainty. The US neatly labels such enemies guerrillas, irregulars, or unconventional--a predisposition for overwhelming conventional might is apparent, and US experience has had mixed results.

The “pitched battle” concept was evident in Vietnam, as American forces--denied the clear-cut certainty of decisive battle--used body count to gauge when enemy forces would be “put in such a condition that they [could] no longer carry on the fight.” Even the strategic hamlet resettlement programs, similar in ways to successful British programs in Malaya and Oman, revealed a dichotomy in the American approach. Sir Robert Thompson (the principle architect of the successful Briggs Plan during the Malayan Emergency) advocated targeting the Mekong Delta region where the insurgents were weakest, in accordance with his principle of securing base areas before conducting a military campaign. Contrary to this advice, American resettlement targeted War Zone D northeast of Saigon, where the Vietcong insurgent infrastructure was strongest. Many leaders in the US Military Assistance Advisory Group favored this head-on approach.

The US preference for pitched battle has also manifested itself in our joint doctrine, where practical references to counterinsurgency tactics, techniques, and

procedures are rare. The capstone document for FID and IDAD--where much of US counterinsurgency doctrine is articulated--is JP 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)*. This publication is intended to assist in unity of effort at the joint task force level, and has little practicality below that level. The manual also reflects an extremely resource intensive US approach--an approach perhaps well-suited for waging decisive, conventional, maneuver warfare, but not always practical or effective for less-developed nations engaged in politically-charged substate conflict. Current doctrine, therefore, poses a risk to US military leaders conducting counterinsurgency operations--that of reinforcing the belief that hardware, firepower, and resources are a panacea for combating the primarily political problem of insurgency. This is a myth the Sri Lankan military is learning the hard way.

Currently, the US Army has no manual that addresses the practical aspects of conducting counterinsurgency. Although US Army Special Forces doctrine does address the mission in greater depth, this doctrine is formulated for units with unique training, equipment, and missions, and would prove of little help to conventional Army organizations tasked to perform counterinsurgency. In fact, not one Army field manual's title contains the term counterinsurgency. The closest reference is FM 90-8 *Counterinsurgency Operations*, which concentrates on tactics, but reflects somewhat dated AirLand Battle doctrine. The manual notes the difference in section 1-12:

There is a difference in the terms *counterinsurgency* and *counterinsurrection*. The internal defense and development (IDAD) program is geared to counter the whole insurgency. It does this through alleviating conditions which may cause insurgency. This program, which addresses both the populace and the insurgent, can be termed counterinsurgency. Counterinsurrection operations are geared to the active military element of the insurgent movement only. To this end,

counterguerrilla operations are viewed as a supporting component of the counterinsurgency effort.¹⁴

The principles discussed in *Counter guerrilla Operations* are cogent, reflect a strong foundation in Thompson's Five Principles (see table 2), and have drawn lessons from other successful efforts. The tactics, techniques, and procedures presented, however, do not differ markedly from other US Army light infantry doctrine. Similarly, SLA counterinsurgency efforts are operationally designed around fairly conventional military methods, but forces on the ground often found themselves conducting tasks far outside routine patrolling, roadblocks, or cordon and search operations.

The US Marine Corps has had considerably more success capturing its experiences in doctrine. The celebrated *Small Wars Manual* of 1940 reflects precisely the focus a conventional force should adopt when faced with such non-traditional missions. Many practical counterinsurgency concerns are addressed in the *Small Wars Manual*, including techniques for resettling noncombatants, utilizing animals for logistics operations in remote areas, and using native troops to assist in pacification. Even the Marines neglected this publication, however, for much of the century. When a Marine officer prepared a 1960 training manual, *Anti-Guerrilla Warfare*, he was unaware the 1940 manual existed.¹⁵

A recommendation of this analysis is that the US Army develop a publication concerning tactics, techniques, and procedures as a supplement to current US counterinsurgency doctrine. Perhaps using the Marine Corps' *Small Wars Manual* of 1940 for focus, the updated reference should also not overlook the benefits and limitations of utilizing emerging technology in counterinsurgency operations. Recent

operations in Afghanistan, in which precision-guided munitions were coordinated with satellite communications by Special Forces operators on horseback, should provide invaluable lessons--one hopes the experiences, positive and negative, are being captured.

Another important area for US attention is the effectiveness of unconventional intelligence operations during counterinsurgency, and the difficulty of interagency coordination. Sri Lanka's military performance during Operation Jaya Sikurui revealed shortcomings in its operational intelligence capabilities, but even the extensive capabilities of the US military have fallen short, at times. Early in the 1992-93 Somalia crisis, one Defense Intelligence Agency officer noted that the J2 Intelligence Officer attempted to apply the same techniques used to portray Iraqi order of battle during the Gulf War. He states:

When we entered Somalia in December 1992, we had a one-line database on the military forces there. Our attempt to use standard collection means and strategies was only partially successful because these conventional means could not deliver the kind of specific information we wanted. There were no Somali motorized rifle or tank divisions, no air defense system, no navy, and no air force.¹⁶

He concludes that military intelligence must pay more attention to geography, ecology, history, ethnicity, religion, and politics in their threat assessments. Although US military intelligence may not have focused on these topics during the decades of the Cold War, this officer's observation may hold great significance for American forces conducting future counterinsurgency operations. Until US forces become more adept at processing and using unconventional intelligence, we will be unable to remove the veil of anonymity that lends terrorists and insurgents their advantages. For this reason, it would be presumptuous for the US to ignore the potential lessons of Sri Lanka's counterinsurgency operations.

The future is full of uncertainty for Sri Lanka. More certain is the fact that insurgencies throughout history have been successfully countered by effective government responses. Unfortunately, the lessons and principles learned from these historical examples are seldom readily put into practice by conventional armies in the field. Concessions leading to a lasting peace are not easily come by in a conflict that has caused the amount of pain and suffering Sri Lanka has endured. The government's progress during Kiriinira--albeit slow--and more recent events leading to the December 2001 unilateral LTTE cease-fire currently in effect continue to provide some hope. Despite the British diplomat's comparison cited at the beginning of this analysis, if the GSL makes good use of this pause in the conflict to improve its operational methods, it may yet strike a decisively fatal blow to the LTTE dragon, and avoid the futile tailcutting that has plagued government forces in the past.

¹US Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), *Unconventional Warfare: Summary Sheet Packet*, 19.

²Beckett, *Encyclopedia of Guerrilla Warfare*, 125-126, 152-153, 235.

³Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 60.

⁴Vijayasiri, "Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign," 58.

⁵MSG Dave Shell, US Army Special Forces, US Special Operations Command, Pacific, Honolulu, Hawaii; interview with author, telephone interview, Seaside, CA, 10 August 2001.

⁶"Sri Lanka to Probe Police Raid on Army Hideout," *Reuters*, 14 February 2002 [article on-line]; available from <http://in.news.yahoo.com/020214/64/1gf48.html>; Internet; accessed on 14 February 2002.

⁷Rotberg, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka*, 31.

⁸Vijayasiri, "Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign," 48.

⁹*Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁰US Department of Defense, JP 5-00.1, I-6.

¹¹Russell Weigley, *The American Way of War* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), 210-212.

¹²Howard and Paret, *On War*, 90.

¹³Victor Hanson, *The Western Way of War: Infantry Battle in Classical Greece* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 19, xv, xvi.

¹⁴US Department of Defense, FM 90-8 *Counterterrorism Operations*, Department of the Army, 29 August 1986 [General Dennis Reimer On-Line Library]; available from <http://155.217.58.58/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/fm/90-8/Ch1.htm#s3>; Internet; accessed on 14 February 2002.

¹⁵United States Marine Corps, *Small Wars Manual* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1940; reprint, Manhattan Kansas: Sunflower University Press), xii.

¹⁶Jeffrey B. White, "A Different Kind of Threat: Some Thoughts on Irregular Warfare," *Studies in Intelligence*, Volume 39, Number 5, 1996 [article on-line]; available from <http://www.cia.gov/csi/studies/96unclass/index.htm>; Internet; accessed on 15 October 2000.

FIGURES



Figure 1. Political map of Sri Lanka. Source: Sri Lanka political map, 1999; available from <http://www.askasia.org/image/maps/srilan1.htm>; Internet; accessed on 14 February 2002.

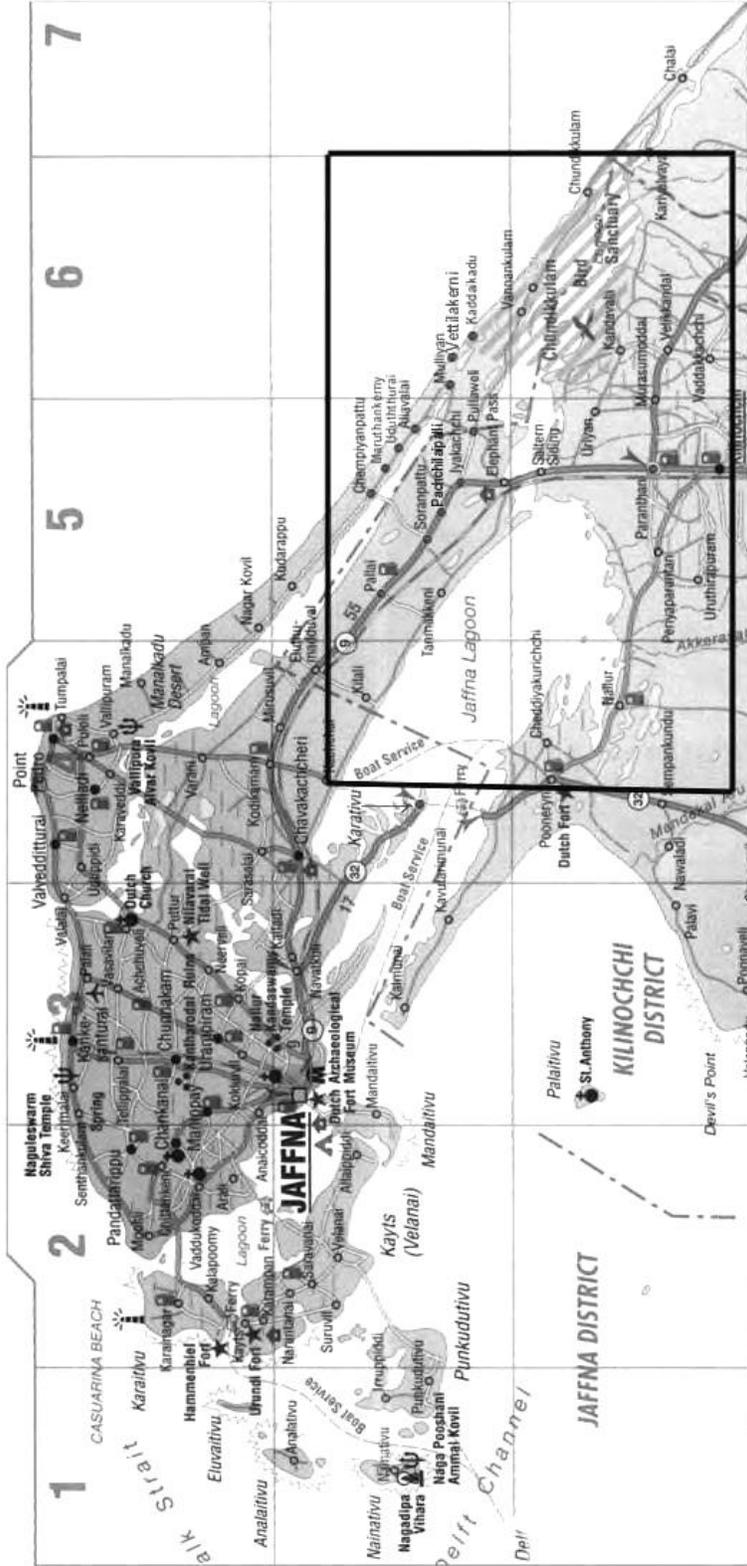


Figure 2. Map of Jaffna Peninsula. Source: Map of Jaffna Peninsula; available from <http://www.eelamweb.com/operation/waves3/map/north/>; Internet; accessed 15 May 2002.

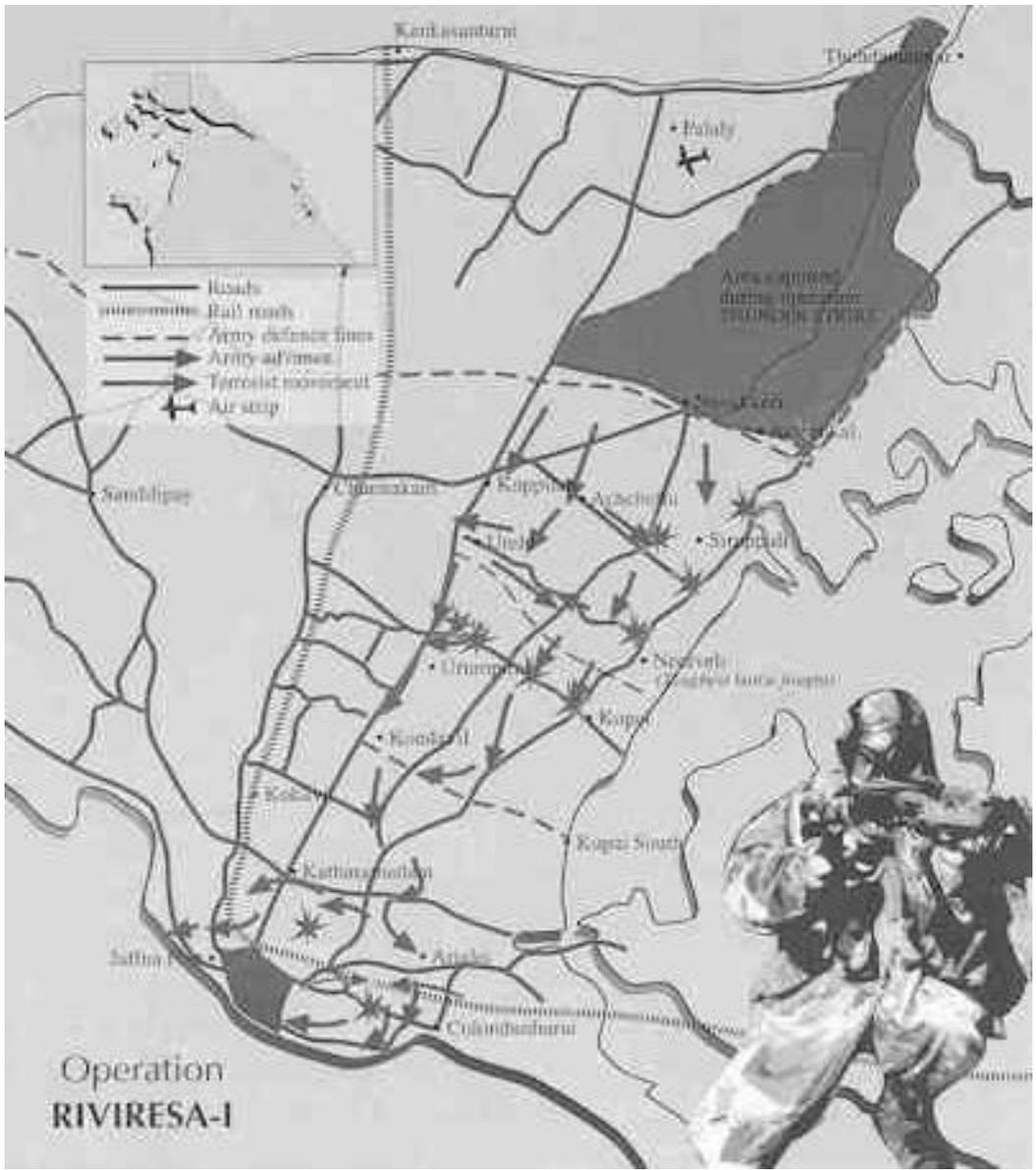


Figure 3. Operation Riviresa. Source: Sri Lanka Army, “Army in Operation: Eelam War III.”

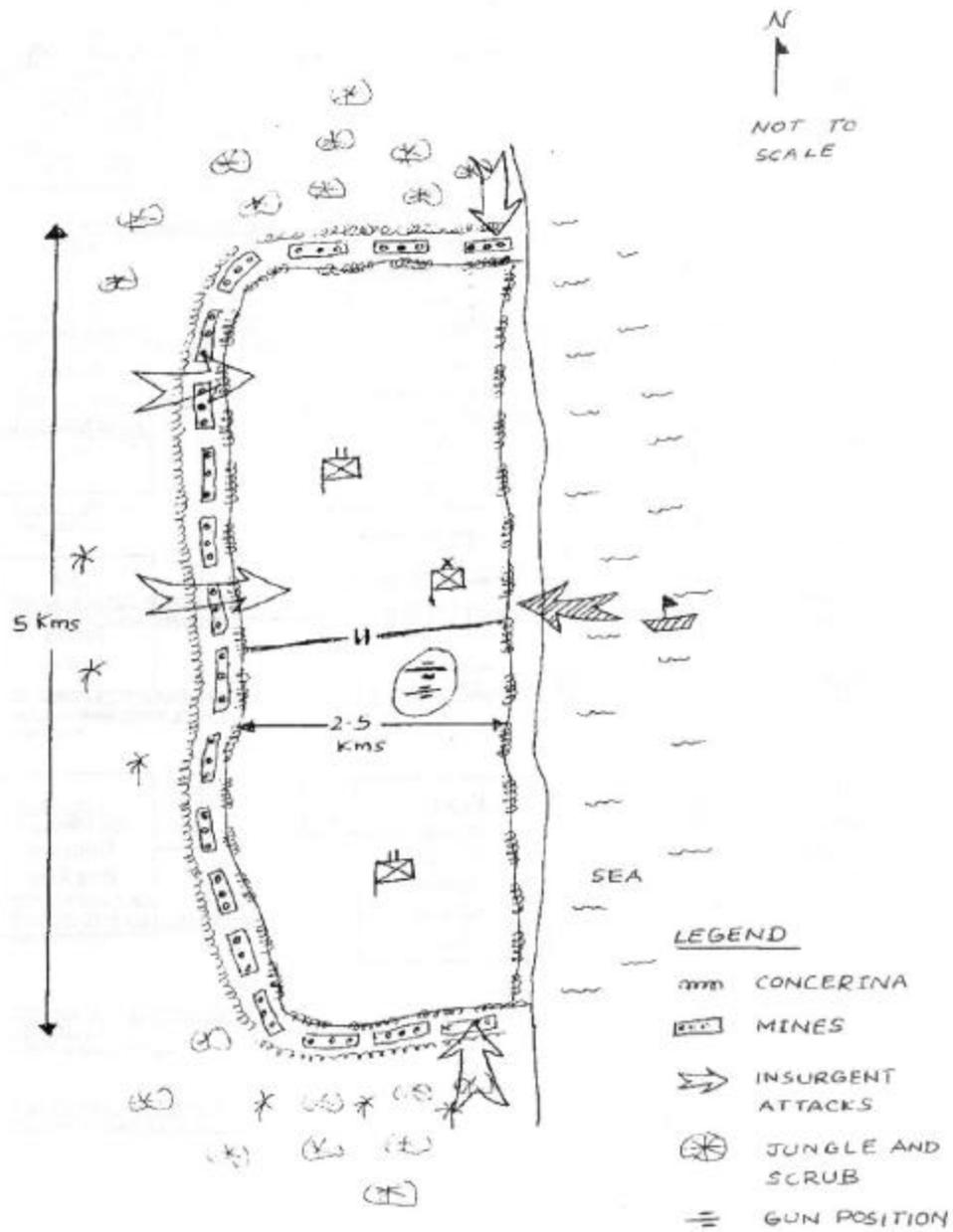


Figure 4. LTTE Attack on GSL Base in Mullaitivu. Source: Vijayasiri, "Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign," 106.



Figure 5. Map of Northern Sri Lanka (excluding Jaffna Peninsula). Source: Map of Northern Sri Lanka (excluding Jaffna Peninsula); reproduced from map, "Sri Lanka," Nelles Maps, 1:450,000 (Nelles Verlag GmbH, D-80935 München, Federal Republic of Germany).

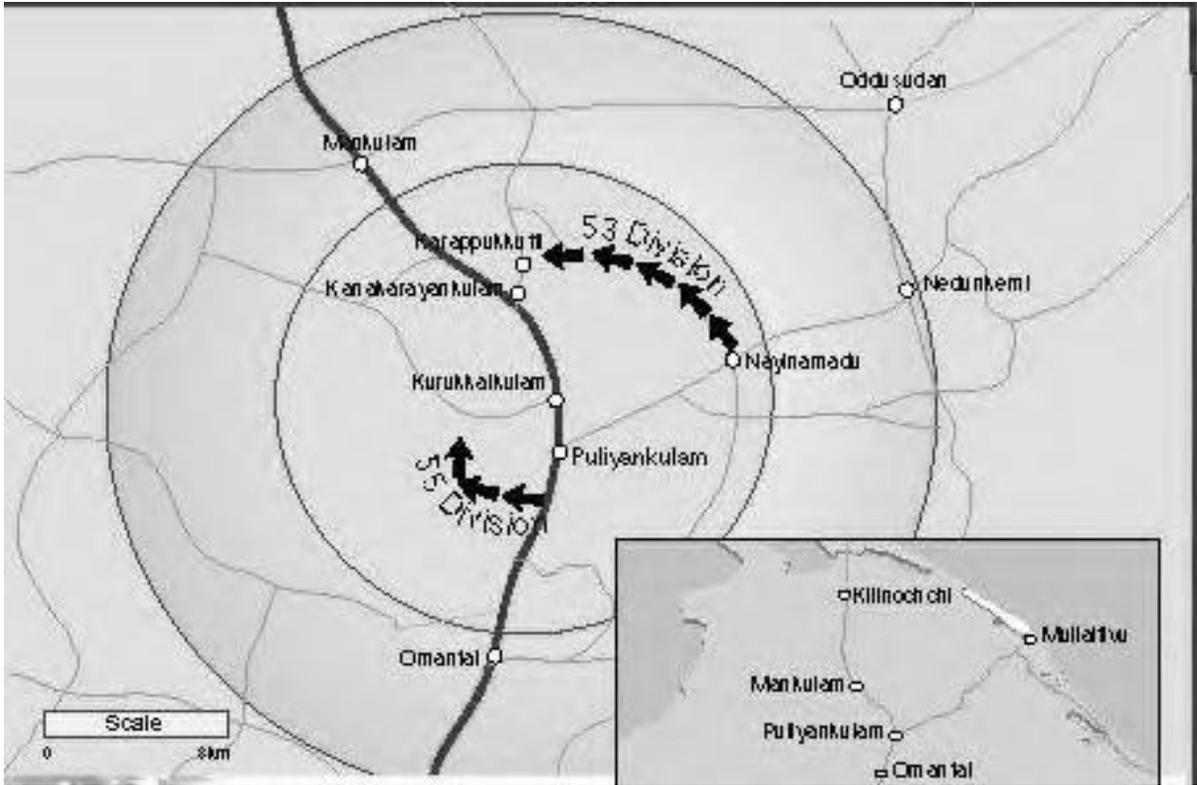


Figure 6. Operation Jaya Sikurui. Source: Athas, "Mortars Cause Highest Jaya Sikurui Casualties."

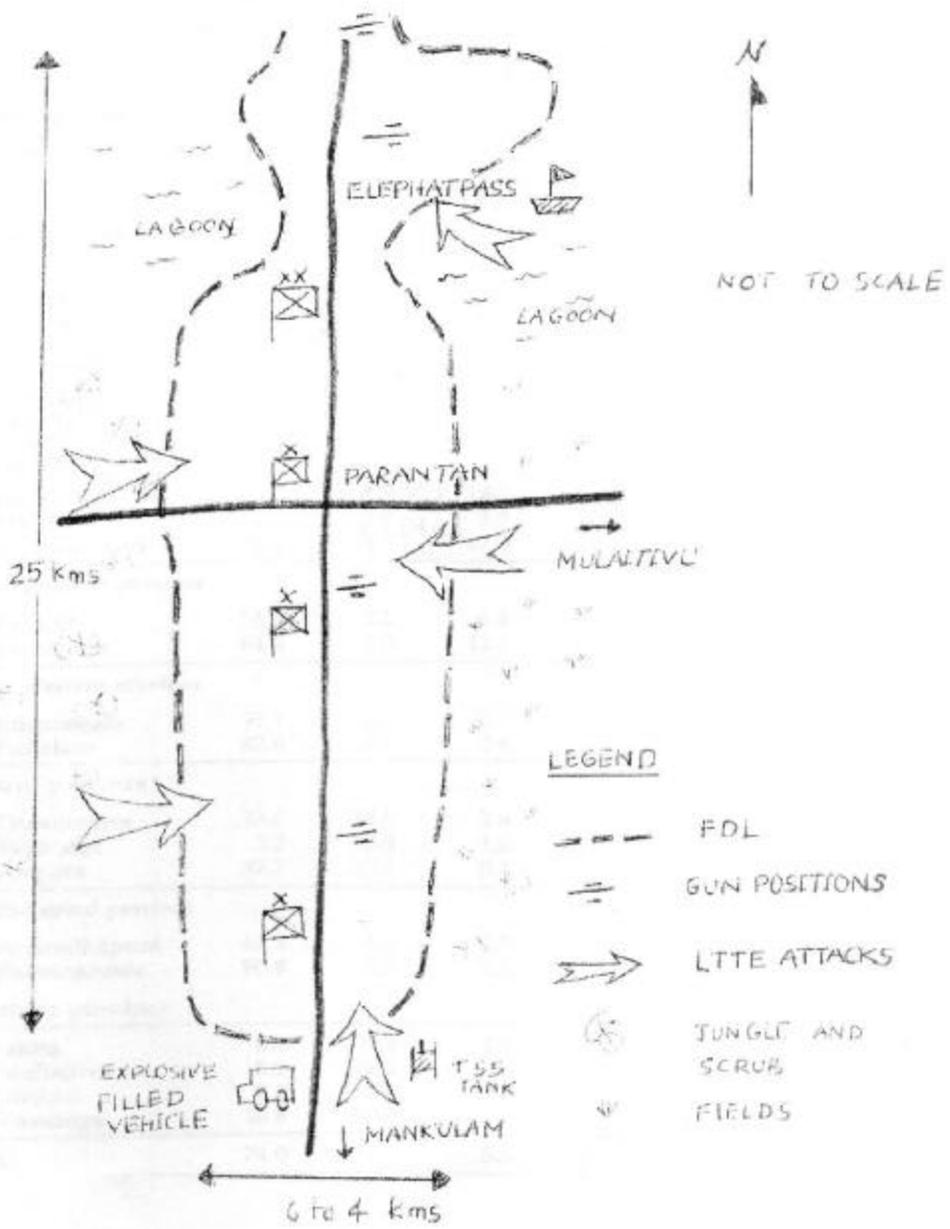


Figure 7. LTTE Attack on GSL Base at Killinochchi. Source: Vijayasiri, "Sri Lankan Counterinsurgency Campaign," 109.

TABLES

Table 1. Fundamentals of Campaign Plans

- Provide broad strategic concepts of operations and sustainment for achieving multinational, national, and theater-strategic objectives.
- Provide an orderly schedule of decisions.
- Achieve unity of effort with air, land, sea, space, and special operations forces, in conjunction with interagency, multinational, nongovernmental, or United Nations forces, as required.
- Incorporate the combatant commander's strategic intent and operational focus.
- Identify any forces or capabilities that the adversary has in the area.
- Identify the adversary strategic and operational centers of gravity and provide guidance for defeating them.
- Identify the friendly strategic and operational centers of gravity and provide guidance to subordinates for protecting them.
- If required, sequence a series of related major joint operations conducted simultaneously throughout the area of responsibility or joint operations area.
- Establish the organization of subordinate forces and designate command relationships.
- Serve as the basis for subordinate planning.
- Clearly define what constitutes success, including conflict termination objectives and potential post hostilities activities.
- Provide strategic direction, operational focus, and major tasks, objectives, and concepts to subordinates.
- Provide direction for the employment of nuclear weapons as required and authorized by the National Command Authorities.

Source: US Department of Defense, JP 5-00.1, I-3.

Table 2. Thompson's 5 Principles of Counterinsurgency

- Clear, political aim
- Function within the law
- Establish an overall plan whereby all political, socioeconomic, and military responses are coordinated
- Give priority to the elimination of political subversion
- Secure base areas before conducting a military campaign

Source: Beckett, *Encyclopedia of Guerrilla Warfare*, 235.

APPENDIX A

LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review of counterinsurgency in general, and Sri Lankan internal conflict in particular, reveals valuable insight and background information for this study. Of significant note is the Master's thesis of Lieutenant Colonel Raj Vijayasiri, a Sri Lankan military officer attending the US Command and General Staff College. The thesis, *A Critical Analysis of the Sri Lankan Government's Counterinsurgency Campaign*, provides a comprehensive, firsthand account of shortcomings in the state approach. His analysis primarily focuses on the government's lack of political unity, a general lack of intelligence on LTTE disposition and activities, and tactical deficiencies in the Sri Lankan military.

A number of prominent works, many by Sinhalese and Tamil authors, may be consulted for insight into the ethnic, political, economic, social, and historical origins of this conflict. An excellent, well-balanced account by A. Jeyaratnam Wilson (a former Sinhalese government official) is the recent, *Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (2000), which details the rise of Tamil nationalism. The prolific Dr. K.M. DeSilva has authored several works relating the Sinhalese, or state, perspective. His book, *Ethnic Conflict, Management, and Resolution* (1996), provides a concise, thorough review of the non-military origins of this ethnic conflict, and the government's attempts to preserve democratic institutions in the face of Tamil militancy. In *The Traditional Homelands of the Tamils: Separatist Ideology in Sri*

Lanka - A Historical Appraisal (1994), Dr. DeSilva evaluates the basis of the Tamil claim for a separate homeland from the state's perspective.

A number of sources provide balance to the Sinhalese outlook. Among them, Narayan Swamy's *Tigers of Lanka: From Boys to Guerrillas* (1994), powerfully presents the objectives and motivations of Tamil militants. *The Sri Lankan Tamil: Ethnicity and Identity* (1994), by Chelvadurai Manogaran and Bryan Pfaffenberger, details the Tamils' social, political, and historical claims for independence.

Any search for an unbiased account of this conflict should begin with the numerous works published by independent authors and observers. A good review of Tamil militant activity through 1988 can be found in *The Cyanide War: Tamil Insurrection in Sri Lanka 1973-88* (1989), by Edgar O'Ballance, a former officer in both the British and Indian armies. Journalist William McGowan visited government and LTTE military camps, as well as the offices of political officials, to pen his very balanced account of the political violence in Sri Lanka, *Only Man is Vile: The Tragedy of Sri Lanka* (1992). Finally, an excellent collection of essays published by the Brookings Institution, *Creating Peace in Sri Lanka: Civil War and Reconciliation* (1999) examines the nation's prospects for peace from economic, religious, ethnic, and political perspectives.

This thesis relies on US military counterinsurgency doctrine for historical analysis; however, because this doctrine reflects elements of different theoretical approaches, a number of seminal works on the subject are worth noting. In general, the study of insurgency enjoys a wealth of historical experience and empirical data, but a relative paucity of developed theory. Counterinsurgency theory varies in proportion to

theories on sources and causes of insurgency, of which there are several. One superlative analysis by Nathan Leites and Charles Wolfe, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (1970), refutes the idea of insurgency as predominantly a struggle for the hearts and minds of the people. Rather, they examine emergent insurgency as “a system and an organizational technique,” and discuss counterinsurgency “in terms of weakening its organization while strengthening the structure of authority.”¹ Thomas A. Marks similarly argues the importance of organizational dynamics. In a *Small Wars and Insurgencies* article, “Evaluating Insurgent/Counterinsurgent Performance,” Marks stresses that societal causes are necessary, but not sufficient to produce upheaval, a thesis he further develops in *Maoist Insurgency Since Vietnam* (1996).

Another perspective still common in many circles is presented by Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., in *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*. Summers denies that the North Vietnamese forces were an extension of the guerrilla effort, and posits that America failed in Vietnam by not prosecuting the military strategy to its fullest. His examination illustrates where the US strategically and operationally violated doctrinal principles of war. In direct opposition to this view is Larry Cable’s *Conflict of Myths* (1986), and Andrew F. Krepinovich’s *The Army and Vietnam* (1986). These authors assert that the US failure to understand the dynamics of insurgency led the Army to blindly follow a conventional warfare *modus operandi*.

Forrest D. Colburn takes yet another tack in *The Vogue of Revolution in Poor Countries* (1994), arguing that insurgency is first and foremost a war of ideas, where the personalities of revolutionary leaders are of paramount importance. Colburn views

revolution as sudden, violent political change, eschewing the concept of insurgency as a dynamic process. In *The Dynamics of the Armed Struggle* (1998), J. Bowyer Bell also extols the “dynamics of the dream” of the revolutionary.

Finally, Andrew J. Birtle’s historical analysis in *US Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine: 1860-1941* (1998), concludes that US doctrine employs facets of several approaches: hearts and minds programs that supplement, not supplant, strong military action; a belief that benevolence alone would not defeat an entrenched insurgency; the importance of using indigenous leaders and institutions; and unity of the political and military pacification effort under a military commander.

¹Nathan Leites and Charles Wolf, Jr., *Rebellion and Authority: An Analytic Essay on Insurgent Conflicts* (Santa Monica, California: RAND, R-462-ARPA, February 1970), 4.

GLOSSARY

The source for these definitions is JP 1-02 *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, US Joint Chiefs of Staff, 23 March 1994 (as amended through 1 September 2000). Many authors offer differing explanations of these terms; these doctrinal definitions are presented to provide a common point of departure for this analysis.

Campaign: A series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space. See also campaign plan.

Campaign plan: A plan for a series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space. See also campaign; campaign planning.

Campaign planning: The process whereby combatant commanders and subordinate joint force commanders translate national or theater strategy into operational concepts through the development of campaign plans. Campaign planning may begin during deliberate planning when the actual threat, national guidance, and available resources become evident, but is normally not completed until after the National Command Authorities select the course of action during crisis action planning. Campaign planning is conducted when contemplated military operations exceed the scope of a single major joint operation. See also campaign; campaign plan.

Centers of gravity: Those characteristics, capabilities, or localities from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight. Also called COGs.

Counter guerrilla warfare: Operations and activities conducted by armed forces, paramilitary forces, or nonmilitary agencies against guerrillas.

Counterinsurgency: Those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.

End state: What the National Command Authorities want the situation to be when operations conclude--both military operations, as well as those where the military is in support of other instruments of national power.

Foreign internal defense: Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. Also called FID.

Guerrilla: A combat participant in guerrilla warfare. See also unconventional warfare.

Guerrilla force: A group of irregular, predominantly indigenous personnel organized along military lines to conduct military and paramilitary operations in enemy-held, hostile, or denied territory.

Guerrilla warfare: Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces. See also unconventional warfare.

Infiltration: 1. The movement through or into an area or territory occupied by either friendly or enemy troops or organizations. The movement is made, either by small groups or by individuals, at extended or irregular intervals. When used in connection with the enemy, it infers that contact is avoided. 2. In intelligence usage, placing an agent or other person in a target area in hostile territory. Usually involves crossing a frontier or other guarded line. Methods of infiltration are: black (clandestine); grey (through legal crossing point but under false documentation); white (legal).

Insurgency: An organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.

Intelligence: 1. The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign countries or areas. 2. Information and knowledge about an adversary obtained through observation, investigation, analysis, or understanding.

Internal defense and development: The full range of measures taken by a nation to promote its growth and to protect itself from subversion, lawlessness and insurgency. It focuses on building viable institutions (political, economic, social, and military) that respond to the needs of society. Also called IDAD.

Line of communications: A route, either land, water, and/or air, which connects an operating military force with a base of operations and along which supplies and military forces move. Also called LOC.

Main supply route: The route or routes which the bulk of traffic flows in support of military operations.

Military operations other than war: Operations that encompass the use of military capabilities across the range of military operations short of war. These military actions can be applied to complement any combination of the other instruments of national power and occur before, during, and after war. Also called MOOTW.

National military strategy: The art and science of distributing and applying military power to attain national objectives in peace and war.

Paramilitary forces: Forces or groups which are distinct from the regular armed forces of any country, but resembling them in organization, equipment, training, or mission.

Sabotage: An act or acts with intent to injure, interfere with, or obstruct the national defense of a country by willfully injuring or destroying, or attempting to injure or destroy, any national defense or war material, premises or utilities, to include human and natural resources.

Security assistance: Group of programs authorized by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act of 1976, as amended, or other related statutes by which the United States provides defense articles, military training, and other defense-related services, by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.

Special operations: Operations conducted by specially organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic, or informational objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive areas. These operations are conducted across the full range of military operations, independently or in coordination with operations of conventional, non-special operations forces. Political-military considerations frequently shape special operations, requiring clandestine, covert, or low visibility techniques and oversight at the national level. Special operations differ from conventional operations in degree of physical and political risk, operational techniques, mode of employment, independence from friendly support, and dependence on detailed operational intelligence and indigenous assets. Also called SO.

Subversion: Action designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, political strength or morale of a regime. See also unconventional warfare.

Terrorism: The calculated use of violence or threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of goals that are generally political, religious, or ideological.

Unconventional warfare: A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes guerrilla warfare and other direct offensive, low visibility, covert, or clandestine operations, as well as the indirect activities of subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and evasion and escape. Also called UW.

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