THE STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE OF
THE ISLAND STATE OF SRI LANKA

by

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I certify that the thesis entitled:

*The Strategic Importance of the Island State of Sri Lanka*

submitted for the degree of:

*Master of Arts*

is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgement is given.

I also certify that any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any other university or institution is identified in the text.

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Date ……………………………………………………………………... ............
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ABSTRACT

The study is focused on an analysis of the major diplomatic documents from the mid eighteenth century to the present as regards Sri Lanka, or Ceylon as it was known till 1972. The objectives of the study are to identify the issues underlying these diplomatic documents. These include the political and strategic factors and other subsidiary issues like trade and commerce relevant at the time these treaties, agreements, and proposed treaties were formulated. It is also a geopolitical study as it relates to Sri Lanka’s geographical position in the Indian Ocean, and her possession of the Trincomalee Harbour on its east coast, which is one of the great natural harbours of the world. Over the centuries this harbour has had significant strategic value for naval deployments. The case study of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries studies the diplomatic documents against the political and strategic background for the French Revolution and actions of Napoleon, and the Anglo/French rivalry, spreading from Europe to North America and Asia. In the twentieth century the environment for studying the place of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean was created by the Russian Revolution, the failure to keep the peace of Versailles after World War I, the conflict and horrors of World War II which led to the disintegration of European colonial empires in Asia and Africa, and the tensions generated by the Cold War.

A study of the documents would reveal that in international relations what matters is the ability of a party to promote its interests, and this depends on its power. This realist approach contrasts to the idealist approach where policies are based on moral and ethical principles. For the realist the states should follow to protect their interests and to survive. To achieve this is to strive for a “balance of power”. To do so is to form a favourable alliance system.

As the documents examined cover a period from the mid-eighteenth century to the later part of the twentieth century, they reflect the changing
technologies that have had an influence on naval and military matters. For example, this period witnessed great changes in technology of energy utilized to propel warships, from wind, to steam, to fuel and finally to nuclear power. These changes had an influence in determining strategic policies involving weapon systems and communications within a global and regional setting.

The period covered was the beginning of the process described a “globalisation”. Its idea is not unique to this century; there were many attempts, in various times of history, to integrate societies within a global context. Viewed in this light, the Anglo-French rivalry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the indication of a global naval strategy, in which Sri Lanka was a major factor in the Indian Ocean region. This process was associated with the phenomena called the “expansion of Europe”. It covered all the oceans of the world and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to the founding of the largest maritime empire the world has ever seen: The British Empire. After World War I, the British naval strength (the basis of the British Empire) and her consequent position as a great power, was challenged by other powers like the United States of America and Japan. After World War II, the US Navy was supreme: and there was a close alliance between Britain and the USA. The strength of the US/British alliance was based on the navy and its bases, which were spread throughout the globe; to project power, and act as deterrence and balancing force. Sri Lanka, due to her strategic position, was a part of this evolving process, and was tied to a global strategy (with its regional connotations) from the eighteenth century to the present.
The Strategic Position of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an example of a small island state, strategically set in the Indian Ocean, which strives to follow an independent policy for its own security. It is an island off the south-east coast of India, and the Palk Strait and the Gulf of Mannar separate it from India. Between Sri Lanka and India there are a number (in a chain) of small islands, which is popularly called Adam’s Bridge. The total area of Sri Lanka is 25,332 square miles. From north to south of the island the widest length is 273 miles, and the greatest width is 137 miles. There is a mountain mass at the centre of the island. Within this the highest peak (Piduruthalagala) is 8,281 feet. All the rivers rise in the central mountainous region of the country. The longest river is the Mahaveli Gahga that empties itself into the Indian Ocean at Trincomalee, within the East Province. The commanding position of Sri Lanka at the southern most point of the mainland of Asia, on the world’s highways between East and West, had drawn to its shores divergent peoples from early times. Due to trade and commerce, it lured the Greeks, the Romans and Arabs; subsequently in the modern era, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British and the French. While these are in outline the main streams of relations in Sri Lanka with lands overseas, closer to home, its geographical position in relation to India steadily exerted a profound and enduring influence historically, socially and culturally.

The Trincomalee Harbour is the most valuable asset of Sri Lanka. It is one of the world’s great natural harbours, placed in a strategic point near the Bay of Bengal. This natural harbour is situated between Jaffna and Batticaloa. In purely physical terms the entrance to the harbour is four miles wide and five miles across east to west. The inner harbour (that lies in the North) covers about 12 square miles, and is securely enclosed by outcrops of huge
rocks and small islets. Its remarkable feature is the great depth of the inner harbour. During the period of the sailing ships its value was that it was the best harbour on India’s strategic east coast, where a fleet could be anchored, and operate during the monsoon season between October and March. Such a fleet was in the strategic situation of being able to dominate the Bay of Bengal and the Eastern Sea. Thus any power that controlled this harbour had a great advantage from a naval and strategic perspective. The British Admiral, Horatio Nelson had called it “the finest harbour in the world”. Its possession had enabled the British to control more effectively their Empire in India. During World War II it protected the British Seventh Fleet, as its rocky promontories, and bays, gave ample anchorage and protection. In the current day strategic context the Trincomalee Harbour is an ideal harbour for nuclear submarines, which are able to dive low within its inner harbour to effectively avoid radar, and sonar detection. It is, therefore, a strategic prize any power would like to possess. It is in this situation that the Trincomalee Harbour has played (and will play) a dominant role in the politics and diplomacy of the island state. The diplomatic relations of the Kandyan Kingdom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Indo-Sri Lankan relations in the post World War Two period, the present and future diplomacy and politics, revolve around how the Trincomalee Harbour issue will be resolved. The study shows that the issues of power and security interests were uppermost in the history and politics of Sri Lanka and the Trincomalee Harbour. Strategic issues far outdistanced others.

**The Dominant Position of India**

Central to this study is the view that India, due to its size, resources, and geography, is a hegemonic regional power. The predominance of India (which is both explicit and implicit) in turn influences, and shapes, the domestic decision making powers of those states in what Buzan (and Rizvi) describe as a “security complex”; of which south Asia is a good example. Under this concept there is the extra regional dimension which is the external force, the regional dimension, which is India, and the lowest tier
represented by small countries like Sri Lanka. This concept uses a realist analysis, with its dominant emphasis on power, and security interests. In order to understand (and appreciate) the broad framework of analysis of the Security Complex of south Asia it is vital to examine the security issues at each level. This enables a better understanding of the interaction at each level: global, regional and individual small states. The security complex forms the broad theoretical framework of the study. It is in this light that the key concepts are sought to be examined in interpreting the varying events of the study.

Throughout history Indian rulers (with the exception of the Chola kings in the deep south) had no proper understanding or appreciation of sea power. K.M. Pannikar and Kenneth McPherson have pointed to the fact the history of the Cholas illustrates the importance of maritime trade. McPherson sums this naval activity of the Cholas when he states:

“Even more spectacularly the Cholas launched an attack on Srivijaya in retaliation for Malay attempts to restrict passage through the Straits of Malacca.” ⁴

Most of the local rulers, like the Zamorin of Calicut, and the Muslim rulers of Gujerat, had naval forces which had only a local or coastal role to play. For example, the rulers of Gujerat had naval forces that protected Indian trade with the Red Sea areas that lay across that coast of western India. A similar policy was followed by the Zamorin of Calicut. In contrast to this the Chola rulers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries followed a definite oceanic policy in their extension of their reach to south-east Asia. They consciously followed a policy of establishing naval bases, such as in the Nocobar Islands. They virtually controlled the Bay of Bengal, and the exits into south-east Asia. In following this policy they clashed with the Sailendra rulers of the Malay Peninsula. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Cholas followed an imperial overseas policy, which saw them dominate Sri Lanka and the Malaya peninsular. The domination by the Cholas ended in the thirteenth century, and no other Indian dynasty followed their naval policy of projecting
their power via a conscious oceanic policy. The Indian subcontinent with its resources, size, and manpower, is the predominant factor in south Asian security history when there was political stability within India’s borders and it was able to project its powers as a hegemonic, regional power. 5 In this sense the political stability of south Asia as a region depends a great deal on the situation on the ground within the Indian subcontinent. This single fact shapes the policies of other states within the region, especially Sri Lanka, which is really an offshore island of the massive land mass of India.

**Historical Introduction**

The thesis of this study is that Sri Lanka has had its politics and foreign relations mainly determined by its strategic position in the Indian Ocean. 6 In addition, its closeness to India is a factor that ties it to the orbit of Indian defence planning when the naval deployment became a vital ingredient of the military balance. The naval dimension arose from the seventeenth century onwards when European naval powers, like the Portuguese, the Dutch, the British and the French, entered the Indian Ocean as part of the phenomena in history, now called “the expansion of Europe”. Naval rivalry as a part of the military clashes in Europe and the colonies in North and South America spread to all the oceans of the world including the Indian Ocean. This gave birth to the concept of a global naval strategy, which involved Sri Lanka due to its strategic geopolitical position. The evidence for my thesis is the major diplomatic documents pertaining to Sri Lanka from the mid eighteenth century to the present day. 7

From the arrival of the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean in 1498 naval power and rivalry became a major issue in the politics and diplomacy of Asian countries. 8 It introduced a new and dynamic element into the security and strategic considerations of the Indian Ocean area and, at the same time, in countries like India and Sri Lanka where European powers traded, and tried to control to safeguard their interests. It formed a part of a process whereby European power rivalry was becoming worldwide. In this sense Asia and the
Indian Ocean region was drawn into a wider conflict, mainly naval in manifestation, which covered the oceans of the world: the Atlantic, Pacific and the Indian Oceans. As far as Sri Lanka was concerned, from the seventeenth century, it became a part of this emerging world conflict and its politics.

Alfonso Albuquerque, the Portuguese admiral and strategist, established an approach to the Indian Ocean naval deployment, which was subsequently carried out by European powers which followed the Portuguese, culminating with the British, who by the nineteenth century completely dominated the Indian Ocean. The strategy evolved by Albuquerque was to establish and control strategic naval bases within the Indian Ocean so as to control the entry and exit points. Such naval bases were established at Malacca within the Malay Peninsula controlling the access to the South China Sea and the Far East, Goa on west coast of India, Socotra within the Arabian Sea, Colombo and subsequently the Trincomalee natural harbour on the eastern seaboard of Sri Lanka. Such naval bases were also established outside the Indian Ocean in Macau in China, within the South China Sea, and East Timor in Indonesia which was a convenient point to move between the Indian and the Pacific Oceans.

The basic principles followed by Albuquerque laid the foundation on which naval powers obtained control and mastery over the Indian Ocean. These principles however, derived from a global naval strategy. From the seventeenth century onwards, European rivalry within the Indian Ocean increased. The Dutch and the British trading ships entered the Indian Ocean followed by the French. The first Dutch fleet entered the Indian Ocean in 1595 with four ships, and they finally established themselves in Indonesia. In 1641 the Dutch captured Malacca from the Portuguese and in 1654 captured Colombo in Sri Lanka, and thereafter established their authority over the coastal maritime regions.
The East India Company that was formed in London in 1603 represented British interests in the Indian Ocean. Their attempts to trade with Spice Islands of Indonesia were foiled by the Dutch, and the British, thereafter, concentrated their efforts on India with trading stations in Surat and Masulipatnam. Dutch naval power was reduced in the Atlantic Ocean and in Europe by the British and the French under Louis XIV. Thereafter, the real naval powers that counted in the Indian Ocean were the British and the French.

Colbert, the French Minister of Finance, had a vision of building a French Empire in the East with Sri Lanka as its base. A large French fleet was dispatched in 1672 under Jacob de la Haye, and the French government secured an agreement from the King of Kandy to use the Trincomalee Harbour. However, by the time Jacob de la Haye arrived the Dutch had already taken control of the Trincomalee Harbour. During this voyage the French left Francois Martin, who established a base at Pondichery which became the headquarters of French power in India. Pondichery remained so till modern times. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, La Bourdonnais led French fleets into the Indian Ocean, and this was followed by Suffren’s victories over the British fleet in Indian waters. However, this was short-lived, and with the British naval supremacy in Europe and the Atlantic Ocean, especially after the Napoleon’s era, British naval interests were dominant. What followed was that the naval dimension of the Indian Ocean was tied to global strategy. It was against the background of European naval rivalry that the Trincomalee Harbour and Sri Lanka became vital from a military and strategic point of view: and continues to do so.

The British dominance of the Indian Ocean Region lasted for the whole of the nineteenth century, and in the twentieth century up to 1942; when the Japanese fleet entered the Indian Ocean. With this the vital importance of Sri Lanka, especially the Trincomalee Harbour, in the Pacific War during World War II was seen, and accordingly utilized as a naval base of the allies.
After World War II ended Sri Lanka was tied to the Western Camp during the period of the ‘Cold War’. The Defence Agreement between the United Kingdom and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1947 illustrated that Sri Lanka was part of the military (in this sense naval) posture to contain communism and oppose the USSR. After the British gradually pulled out of the Indian Ocean Region, beginning in approximately 1957, after the Suez Crisis, the US Navy replaced the British; especially in defending the vital middle Eastern Region.

From about the 1970s there was a rise of regional navies, like the Indian navy. This, along with a new phase of the ‘Cold War’, was the background that led to the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. It was an attempt to project Indian power within the Indian Ocean region. These events, in a historic context, formed the background to analysing the diplomatic documents given in the appendices. On the basis of their study it is proposed to examine the strategic significance of Sri Lanka in a global and regional setting.

**Key Concepts Used in the Study**

A realist approach and its associated concepts are used in my analysis of the diplomatic documents. As an approach, the realist school of thought argues that a country strives to perfect and promote its own national interests, and depends on its power. Without power a country is unable to achieve its objectives regardless of the justice or logic of its cause. This approach is in contrast to the idealist approach which holds that foreign policies should be based on moral principles as they are more effective and achieve more durable benefits. Idealists favour policies designed to win the minds of people instead of relying on force and coercion.

All realists agree that states seek protection achieved by a “balance of power”. The policy of a sovereign state is to improve its power potential that protects and advances its interests: more effectively by joining other states or by shifting its support to another, so that the balance will tilt in its favour. Another use of the term focuses on the aspect of equilibrium; on the notion
that a country’s security and protection of its interests calls for a relative balance with the power potential of a probable opponent.\textsuperscript{15} The realist school of thought is one of the main theories in the study of the relations between states and political entities. Its foundations and history can be traced back to India and Kautiliya, the Greek writers of history, Thucydides, the Chinese writer, San Tzu, the Italian, Machiavelli, and the Englishman, Thomas Hobbes. Some of the modern writers and practitioners of realism are Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold, George Kennan, and Henry Kissinger.\textsuperscript{16} The concepts associated with realism will be used in this study: specifically in interpretation of the diplomatic documents. As the period of study stretches from the mid eighteenth century to the present day, the evolving concepts of the realist approach to the study of international relations are used.

The study is a focus on the strategic aspects of the documents. This is an area that concerns the manner in which the main parties use their military strength, or capability, to achieve their political objectives. In this sense the approach falls into what may, broadly, be said to be the tradition associated with the German strategist, Clausewitz (1780-1831), who wrote in the nineteenth century. His writings on war focused on the connection between war and state policy. It is concerned primarily with military power and, therefore, its approach is realist and associated values. In this sense it is a policy science which was very relevant to the ‘Cold War’ period, studied in Chapter III and IV. During the period covered in these two chapters, strategic thinking was a major issue. For example the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the South East Treaty Organization, and the Warsaw Pact appear to be ideological alliances as revealed in their preambles. In the North Atlantic Treaty Organization it also specifies that it objectives were in keeping with the stipulations of the United Nations Charter. Yet, in fact, all these alliances are military in content and reflect the state system that is characteristic of the realist concept of international relations. They are ideological alliances of like states with similar political objectives. For instance, in the case of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the emerging
'Cold War' and the policy of "containment" was the real reason for its formation and policies. Its basic object is deterrence, as seen in Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Treaty; "the parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all". The study of international relations is more "classical" and less of what may be called a "social science" approach because of this realist situation. In this sense what is focused is predominantly security or war studies, which is why the realistic approach has been called the "power-politics" school. This has been a big and dominating factor in the area of international relations.

The realist school has a fair amount of critics. Its methodology is submitted to have no consistency. There is also a point that there is a lack of precision in its definition of key terms. Finally, there are the objections as to its ethics and morality in its overall policies. It has also been said that political realism does not quite explain the process of integration movements in Western Europe, which happened after World War II. Yet in the area of international relations states system prevails with its anarchic overtones, along with great power in a dominant position. K.N. Waltz (1979) in his work "The Theory of International Politics" has strived to re-establish the basic concepts of realism. The main feature of international politics relates to the distribution of power, hence it is the structural constraints of the global international system that really matters. Thus 'structural realism' points to the system rather than individual actors.

As Sri Lanka is a strategically situated island within the Indian Ocean, its geopolitics has to be a basis of any analysis of its history. Geopolitics deals with the subject of the relationship between geography and international relationships. In relation to land there were a number of persons who wrote on the subject of vital land areas: Sir Harold J. Mac-Kinder (1869-1947)  and Nicholas J. Spy-kaman (1893-1943). Both these writers spoke of the vital importance of the "heartland" of the whole international system which involved East Europe and Russia. The writings of Alfred Theyer Mahan
Mahan viewed the oceans as a link rather than a separate factor from land. Mahan’s submission was that control of the high seas was a vital factor. For this control he advocated a strong navy. States with world-wide interests should be in a position to project their power and influence at distant places, which involved the evolution of a naval strategy. Mahan (an American) saw the United States of America as an imperial power that had the potential to play a world-wide role. His two major works on the historical significance of sea power were “The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783” (1890) and “The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812” (2 vol., 1892). In these he argued that naval power was the key to success in international politics; the nation that controlled the seas held the decisive factor in modern warfare. Mahan’s work appeared at a time when the nations of Europe along with Japan, were engaged in a fiercely competitive arms race. His books were quickly translated into several languages and were widely read by political leaders, especially in Germany, where they were used as a justification for a naval build-up. In the United States, Theodore Roosevelt and other proponents of a big navy and overseas expansion were much influenced by Mahan’s writings.

Significance of the Study
No writer, to date, has studied the theme of the strategic importance of Sri Lanka in the light of its diplomatic documents. Writers have written a general history of the island, using varying aspects, but not the strategic aspect as revealed in the major diplomatic documents for this period. Only passing reference has been made, with stress on the general issues, which leaves a gap in the significant role the island state has played in this area of strategy in relation to security issues of the Indian Ocean: especially in the area of naval deployments.

The point of view of the Kandyan Kings has also not been studied. These views are to be found in documents held in the archives of the Kandyan
Court in March 1815 when the British forces captured the city of Kandy, and the King's palace. These documents and letters are mainly in the Tamil language containing the correspondence the Kings had with the British Governors in Madras and the French at Pondichery in south India. They were translated and a sessional paper published in 1935 by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. Except for Lorna Dewaraja in her book “The French Connection” of 1990, no adequate study or use has been made of these letters. This study uses these documents as a background to understanding the diplomatic and political issues of this period covering the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The main documents used in this study are reproduced in the appendices. These are the core documents which are to be examined. They are the proposed Treaty offered to the Kandyan King by Pybus (representing the British East India Company in Madras, south India); the letters written by the Kandyan Kings to the British Governor in Madras and the French Governor in Pondichery; the Kandyan Convention of 1815; the Defence Agreement between the United Kingdom and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in 1947; the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987 (the Gandhi/Jaywardene Pact); and the speech made by Velupillai Prabhakaran in 1987, as leader of the Tamil rebels as a response to the 1987 Agreement.

To understand the background of this period knowledge of the history of Sri Lanka is necessary. In order to choose the reading, H.A.I. Goonatileke’s - A Bibliography of Ceylon: a systematic guide to the literature on the land, people, history and culture, published in the western languages from the sixteenth century to the present day (Zug, Switzerland, 1970 - 1976) was most useful. This bibliography is a great aid to students and researchers as it provides a reliable source of information. As a broad introduction the following general books on the history of Sri Lanka were used:

• Phadnis, U., Sri Lanka (Delhi, 1973).

For the period of history covered by this study the following books were found to be particularly relevant:
• De Silva, Colvin, Ceylon under the British Occupation, 1795-1832 (2 vols., Colombo, 1941-1942).
• Jeffries, Sir Charles, Ceylon, the Path to Independence (London, 1962).

For a study of Sri Lanka’s foreign relations which is the focus of this study, these books were found to be a good guide:
• Gooneratne, John, A Decade of Confrontation - Sri Lanka and India in the 1980s (Lake House Printers, Sri Lanka, 2000).

For a general history of the Indian Ocean with its geopolitics the following books were informative:
• Pannikar, K.M., Asia and Western Domination (1961).

The primary documents for the study are located in:
• Tamilnadu Archives, Madras. Military Sundries, Vol. XVII. Sri Lankan National Archives.
• Jaffna Diary (Official Diary of the Collector of Jaffna from 3 December 1795).
• Digest of the Resolutions of the Dutch Political Council, MSS.
• Diary of John D’Oly, 1810-1815.
• The Kandyan Convention, 1815.
• The 1947 Defence Agreement - United Kingdom/Ceylon.
• Correspondence of the Kandyan Kings with the British and French in India.

Colombo Museum, Colombo, Douglas MSS.
India Office Library, London.
• Ceylon Factory Records, No. 1 (1762-1802).
• Dutch Records, Vol. 27 (1762-1802).
• Madras Correspondence, Letters from Madras and Despatches to Madras, Vols. 21-28 (1760-1803).
• Home Miscellaneous.
• Madras Military and Political Proceedings, Range 254, Vols. 59-75 (1795-1798).
• Madras Revenue Proceedings, Range 274, Vols. 77 and 78, Range 275, Vols. 1-30.
• Douglas MSS (1801).
• Secret Despatches to Bengal and Circular Despatches, Vol. 1.
• Colin Mackenzie Collection, Vol. VII.

• Original Correspondence (1798-1908): Despatches of the Governors of Ceylon.
• Original Correspondence (1794-1872): Documents relating to the conquest of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon and Madras Rule; Despatches of the Secretaries of State; Commissions and instructions to the Governor of Ceylon prior to 1834.
• C.D./54 - T.S.S. Sources.
• Foreign Office Documents - 371/50912 and 119/127.
British Museum, London.

- Proceedings of the Select Committee of Fort St. George (1781-1782).
- Wellesley MSS (Additional MSS. 13, 864-867).

It is proposed to do the study within a realist framework, bringing the naval significance of the island state within a global and regional context. To do so a study of Alfred Mahan (called “The Clausewitz of the Sea”), Carl von Clausewitz, Hans J. Morgenthau, and Robert J. Myers is relevant. In examining the principles of political realism it is proposed to follow the six principles as enunciated in Morgenthau’s book “Politics Among Nations: Struggle for Power and for Peace” (Fifth edition revised, New York, A. Knopf, 1978) and Robert J. Myers’ book “United States Foreign Policy in the Twenty-first Century” (Louisiana, State University Press, 2002). Myers sets out a history of political theory which touches on idealism and its theoretical counterpart of realism. Myers shows that it is only through a study of ancient and modern political philosophers that good statecraft can result based on the principles of political realism.

Finally, as the region of south Asia is considered, the study of “The Arthasastra” (the classical Indian manual on statecraft) is important. Kautiliya, its author, submits that human nature remains the same, and consequently that states behave as they always have done. The Kandyan Kings and the present rulers of Sri Lanka and India are inheritors of this tradition in politics and diplomacy. His views are realist and, therefore, a study of the basic theories of Kautiliya is relevant to understand the diplomacy and statecraft of India and Sri Lanka. Books 7, 11 and 12 of “The Arthasastra” was found to be useful (Kautiliya, Indian Penguin Books, 1992), specifically relating to the principles to be followed in interstate relations. It points to the unethical and lack of moral scruples, advocated in the interest of a kingdom or state which points to the realist view of politics.
**The Scope of Study**

The thesis will examine in detail the relevant security related diplomatic documents from the eighteenth century to the present. In particular it will study the significance of:

(i) **The First Draft Treaty of the British Mission to the Sri Lankan King - 1762**
- The Pybus Mission to the Kandyan kingdom, seeking a suitable harbour for the British Fleet (the beginning of the British interest in the strategic value of Sri Lanka).

(ii) **The Kandyan Convention of March 1815**
- when the British occupied the whole island and deposed the Sri Lankan Monarchy (the fulfilment of the British ambition to consolidate their hold over the island).

(iii) **The United Kingdom / Ceylon - Defence Agreement - 1947**
- prior to Sri Lanka attaining Dominion Status (start of the ‘Cold War’ era).

(iv) **Rajiv Gandhi / Jayawardene Pact - 1987**
- a security oriented Agreement in view of the Tamil separatist rebellion in the north and east of Sri Lanka (a heightened aspect of the ‘Cold War’ in relation to south Asia).
Summary of the Chapters

Chapter Two:
Explores the inter-relationship between naval and security policies between the British and the French in India, and the Dutch and the Kandyan Court in Sri Lanka. The period covered is from the eighteenth century up to the nineteenth century when the British emerged as the supreme power in the Indian Ocean as a naval power. The historical perspective is vital to understand the events that shaped the history of Sri Lanka during this period. This includes the study of Anglo/French rivalry as the background to the history of Sri Lanka.

Chapter Three:
This chapter examines the bilateral relations between the British and Sri Lanka, and the decision of the British to pull out of south Asia after World War II. The Defence Agreement is studied as a post World War II document in the context of the emerging Indian Ocean naval and defence policies of the great powers: especially the historic and strategic importance of the Trincomalee Harbour in the context of naval deployments. The post World War Two period saw the emergence of the Cold War and this development shaped Sri Lanka’s geopolitical position.

Chapter Four:
This chapter focuses on the role of emergent external powers in Sri Lanka, especially in the late 1970s and the 1980s. It examines the Indian Foreign Policy responses to events in the Indian Ocean, and its effects on the politics of Sri Lanka. It is the period of the end of the Cold War and the emergence of new forces on south Asia.

Chapter Five: Conclusions
This chapter aims to draw conclusions as to the important issues that shaped the island’s history from the eighteenth century to the present. The
whole study focuses on the significance of the island in terms of naval and strategic policies of powers interested in the Indian Ocean, set in a historical perspective. Ideological issues covered include those of security and interests of power and influence. The thesis concludes that naval strategic issues on a global scale, and high power politics, are what determined the history of Sri Lanka as reflected in these key documents.
End Notes


16 (a) Hans J. Morgenthau, Politics Among Nations, Knopf, New York, 1973, Chapters I and II.
(b) Kenneth Waltz / Joseph Grieco, Cooperation Among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-Tamil Barriers to Trade, Ithica, Cornell University Press, New York, 1990, Chapters II and III.
(c) Kissinger, Henry:


18 Spy-kaman, Nicholas J., Geographic Journal, United Kingdom.
19  Mahan, Alfred Thayer, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783*, Boston, 1890.


CHAPTER II

The Pybus Mission: Events Leading to the Conquest of the Whole Island State in March 1815

This chapter will examine the diplomatic relations of the Kandyan Kingdom up to March 1815, when the British took control over the whole country. This marked the end of an independent political state for the country, which thereafter remained a British Crown Colony until February 1948. The diplomatic relations to be examined are mainly those with the British authorities in south India who had emerged as a powerful political entity with their headquarters in Madras. Diplomatic relations were also maintained with the French whose centre (at this time) was in Pondichery. Until 1796 the Kandyan kings also maintained diplomatic relations with the Dutch, who were in control of the coastal or maritime provinces of Sri Lanka. The diplomacy centered around the concept of using Sri Lanka and its natural harbour of Trincomalee as a naval base to control India and the region. The Kandyan kings, being aware of this, used it as a bargaining point in their policy towards both the British and the French. The map showing the naval conflicts points to this (page 25).

The Pybus Mission from the British in Madras, South India to the Kandyan Coast in 1762

A plot was formed in Kandy, the capital of the Kandyan kingdom in Sri Lanka, in July 1760, to assassinate the Nayak king Kirti Sri Rajasinha. It was discovered and foiled by his father-in-law Narayanappa, and the conspirators were punished. He seems to have made the king believe that it was a Dutch plot formed in collusion with pro-Dutch elements in Kandy. ¹

The British attempted to utilise the dispute between the Nayak king, Kirti Sri Rajasinha and the Dutch for their own purposes. They opened negotiations with the king to acquire a trading settlement and concession in or around
Map of the Anglo/French Naval Conflicts in the mid-Eighteenth Century and Early Nineteenth Century - Indian Ocean
Trincomalee. The Dutch in Colombo, coming to know of the Kirti Sri Rajasinha’s negotiations with the British in Madras, south India, kept a close naval watch on the Kandyan ports. Therefore, the British could not send any official embassy to Kandy. However, they denied the Dutch claims of monopoly, and took their stand on the freedom of the seas and free mutual relations with Asian rulers.  

When the British decided to send an emissary to the Court of Nayak king Kirti Sri Rajasinha a new chapter opened in the history of Sri Lanka. John Pybus, who was chosen to go to Kandy, received his instructions in a document dated April 6, 1762. Pybus was then a member of the Madras Council. Pybus was a civil servant who had served in senior positions when the British held a province in south India. He had knowledge of dealing with local kings in India. The Pybus embassy in 1762 was the first diplomatic attempt on the part of the British to penetrate Sri Lanka. A letter Lord Pigot, as the Governor of Madras, wrote to Pybus on April 6, 1762, sets out his instructions. It began as follows:

The king of Kandy and Emperor of Ceylon having sent here Makandar Moodiar as an Ambassador to solicit and obtain our assistance to protect him and his country from the oppression and usurpation which the Dutch had long endeavoured to establish and to prevent which he has maintained wars against them these two years. We have considered the representations of his Ambassador of which you will receive a copy and resolved to send thither a trusting person to treat with the king.

Pybus was instructed to keep his mission a close secret lest it should alarm the Dutch. He was to accompany Admiral Cornish who was sailing to Trincomalee with a squadron and to land there without the knowledge of the Dutch. The king had already guaranteed him protection. The most important instruction was that, since the East India Company did not intend to enter into any definite arrangements with the king or to quarrel with the Dutch, Pybus was to avoid making any promise or offering any definite
proposals. Still, he was to act and speak as if the Company did intend to help the king seriously, and to learn from him what he expected of the Company and what he proposed to give in return.

Pybus was to secure the particulars of all the treaties and engagements that existed between the Nayak king and the Dutch. He was to ascertain whether the Dutch were empowered to protect all the ports and to ply a monopoly in Sri Lanka trade. He was also to study the country thoroughly for its political institutions, its economy, its armed forces, its trade and its roads. Pybus was to examine the nature of the government. He had to find out whether the Nayak King Kirti Sri Rajasinha was an absolute monarch, whether he was a man of enterprise and capacity, whether he took the field himself and whether he personally conducted the administration. He was also to learn whether there were any leading men who were likely to rebel against the king. In particular, he was to ascertain all about his revenue; whether it was in coin or species, how it was collected, and whether there were any royal prerogatives.

The envoy was also to learn whether the Kandyans had experience of navigation, whether they could build ships, and what materials they had for this purpose. He was also to study the climate and learn whether water was plentiful. “In short”, concluded these extraordinary instructions delivered to an ostensible diplomatic envoy:

You are to make all such observations and enquiries as may tend to convey to us a just idea of the nature and product of the country, the government, the forces, the revenues, the trade, the inhabitants, customs, dispositions and abilities in affairs of war.

Pybus, who sailed to Sri Lanka in a naval squadron under the command of Admiral Cornish, landed in Muttur, off Trincomalee, on May 5, 1762. He left for Kandy the same day and arrived in Gannoruwa, the ferry point on the Mahaveli Ganga, on the road to Trincomalee, on May 23. He was lodged in a house on the Gannoruwa side of the river. 5
An escort accompanied him on his journey. In a diary he kept, he explains the system of travel on the part of distinguished personages in the country. Village headmen:

Assemble the people from the Different villages to assist in any business of the king’s, who are to accompany those who demand them on such service to the end of their district, where they are exchanged or relieved by others summoned by the Head men of the next district for that purpose, and this is practised in each district as you pass through. 6

On May 24, Pybus had his first audience of the Nayak King Kirti Sri Rajasinha. Pybus’ account of this meeting fills many pages. He was a short tempered man by nature, and he resented the obligatory ceremony of presenting a letter to the king on bended knee. All that passed by way of diplomatic negotiations at this audience was an inquiry by Kirti Sri Rajasinha whether the British in Madras were his “steady and sincere friends”? Naturally, the British envoy replied that they were. The king said:

He esteemed my being sent to his court on the verbal representation of a Private Messenger from him, as a very great mark of our confidence in him, and that as he ever heard the English Nation were remarkable for their good faith, he had long been desirious of their friendship; concluding with desiring my opinion whether the Governor and Council of Madras were his steady and sincere friends, or not.

From this Pybus drew, rather hastily, the conclusion that the Nayak King would “grant us any priviledge to induce us to settle on the island, and assist him in driving off the Dutch”. After nine days, from May 25 to June 2, when “nothing particular” occurred, Pybus was taken to a house within Kandy. The officer in attendance told Pybus that “the more myself and servants kept within the house, the more pleasing it would be to the king; as, by walking the streets, my Servants might probably get into some dispute and quarrels with the Cingalese, which would give the king much uneasiness”. 7 Rightly did Pybus conclude that the Kandyans were “not willing I should be too well
acquainted with the place and its situation”. He promised that “I would be careful my servants should not be seen in the streets”. The court took other steps to isolate the envoy and his servants. A guard of ten or twelve persons from the palace, armed with “Europe Arms” was quartered on the house. The officials made it out that it was a compliment to the envoy. But “I am satisfied it was (to) prevent my having any communication with the inhabitants”. Further, “the Vackeel’s Brother, who had continued with me all the time I was at Gunnoor, was now forbid to come, but by particular order when sent for by the officers who visited me daily, to act as an Interpreter”.  

On June 4, Pybus was informed that the king, to show “his desire to make everything as easy to me as possible, had appointed a Council consisting of his Generals and other Head Men, to meet and enter into Business with me, who would acquaint him with that I might propose”. Pybus met the council for the first time at 9 o’clock that night. Thus began the tortuous negotiations with each side attempting to outsmart the other. But they were foredoomed to failure because the English had not the slightest intention of granting what Kirti Sri Rajasinha was very eager and anxious about. They merely wanted to find out whether they could get something for nothing.

That the Kandyans had not the slightest inkling of the British attitude was repeatedly clear from what the spokesmen of the Court said on many occasions. Now, before Pybus met the Council, a “General”, who, according to Pybus, “is a very sensible well-behaved man, a great favourite of the king’s and seems well inclined towards the English”, said in “a long Harangue” that the king had shown Pybus special favours (like the house in Kandy and permission to ride in a palanquin in town) because he wished “to enter into (an) Alliance and Friendship with the English Nation; the Regard which had been paid by that Nation to the Representation made to them by a Private Messenger of his only, without any Letter from him”.

Then began a contest of wits. The Kandyans asked “what particular matter or Business the Governor and Council of Madras had empowered me to
communicate to him” (The Nayak King of Kandy). Pybus replied that he had been sent on the king’s representation, to learn what proposals he had to make to the British and what he expected of them “but they declined giving me any answer upon these points to, alleging that their directions were to hear from me what I had to propose”.  

This was an impasse. Pybus broke it to some extent by asking whether the king would “grant the English liberty to settle upon this island, and upon what footing, or with what Privileges”. The Kandyans made no direct reply to this, but asked specifically “in what manner, and how far, the English could assist him (the king), both by Sea and Land, in his Enterprizes”, against the Dutch. The courtiers said that the king had:

Sent a person to Madras to represent to the Government and Council of Madras that the Dutch, who had been settled upon this Island for many years, had till very lately behaved themselves well towards the king, and complied with whatever he had recommended to them; that within this year and a half or two years they had observed a very different conduct, and shown no regard to the king’s orders or advice; whereupon he had commenced a war against them, and sent his armies by Land to punish them, which he was sufficiently well able to do.  

Pybus had his answer:

I was not impowered to make any promise or engagements, and could only in General Assure them, that the English were well inclined to enter Friendship and Alliance with the king.  

Strangely enough, Pybus is more frank in his official report than in his private diary on this point. The Kandyans, he says there, urged that “as they had made me acquainted with what his Majesty demanded from us on his part, it rested with me to let know what indulgences we expected in return. This appeared but reasonably …”. Pybus says he had two alternatives at this stage:
Though I saw the very little probability there was of entering into Treaty with them on such a footing and your Honour and (that is, the Governor of Madras and his Council) had furnished me with no directions on the subject, I had no other alternative left but of declaring my real sentiments, or of making some proposals that might carry with them the Appearance of an Intention on our parts to cultivate an Alliance and Friendship with them.  

Pybus proposed a draft treaty. In brief, he suggested that the English East India Company be permitted to establish “a settlement or settlements” in Trincomalee Bay, or Battaicalao, or Chilaw, or at any other place in the island which it might find convenient. It would have liberty to procure cinnamon, and the king would order his subjects to furnish the commodity to it on the same conditions under which they provided it to the Dutch. Pepper and betel nut should be sold only to the English. The people should be prohibited from trading with any settlement other than English. The English should be allowed to erect forts, warehouses and other suitable buildings. At any time when it was necessary for the English to help the king with troops, he should provide the troops with their needs at his charge and pay the officers the *batta* as followed on the Coromandal coast. The king should “make over to the East India Company certain countries or from whence they may be enabled to reimburse themselves for such charges” on military establishments and fortifications.

The articles would have placed an onerous burden on the king. He was to give the British a territorial foothold, a rigorous commercial monopoly, and access to the king’s resources if the need developed. Even as his articles were translated into Sinhala to be placed before the king, the Kandyans “pressed me very earnestly to declare whether or no, if the king should grant every thing I had proposed, I would take upon me to assure him that the Governor and Council would assist him against the Dutch”.


“When Pybus trotted out his stock reply, His Majesty might be assured the English were very desirous of cultivating his Friendship and Alliance, but I was not empowered to enter into any particular engagement with him, nor could I take upon myself to say how far you might approve of the proposals I had made, or others what you might have to make.” 17, the Kandyans replied very reasonably in Pybus’ own words:

… that as the Government and Council of Madras, in consequence of a representation made to them by his Majesty’s Vackeel of the situation his Affairs were in with the Dutch, and that he wanted our Assistance. 18

Pybus himself admits that “this method of reasoning carried with it some weight” and that his “inconclusive answers” made the Kandyans “little satisfied, as they had reason to be”. His lame answer was that this was because the Governor of Madras considered the proposals “a matter of too much consequence to leave to the management of one person”. 19

Pybus met the Kandyan negotiators again on June 7. He expected to learn what the king had to say about the proposals he had made. Instead, they “several times pressed for a positive answer, whether, if every thing I had proposed was complied with, the English would assist them”. Pybus replied that he could not say:

I had not come to determine anything conclusive, but to hear what the king expected from and what privileges he was willing to grant, the English Nation; That I had only in general mentioned such points as seemed to be of the most consequence; that the Government and Council would probably have alterations to make to these proposals. 20

When, dissatisfied with this answer, the Kandyans asked Pybus whether he had anything further to propose, he:

… answered no; but repeated, that I could not tell what the Government and Council of Madras might have further to offer. 21
The final meeting was held on June 19. The Kandyans, in discussing Pybus’ proposals, objected a long time upon the subject of the Cinnamon Trade; The difficulties that attended collecting it; acquainted me with the manner in which the Dutch collected it and with the method the king proposed (we) should be supplied with it. 22 The Kandyans also objected to the proposals that, in times of war, the king should bear all the expenses of the English army, “such as Stores, Batto to Officers, Xc”. To this Pybus replied:

… as nobody could answer for the fortune of war, should we undertake one in support of the King, it might perhaps continue as long as the War upon the Coast had done, the Expenses (sic) of which had amounted to an immense sum of money; and that it was not reasonable, if we undertook it, that the Company should bear the charge of carrying it on, as it would be done at the king’s particular request. 23

Pybus was not anxious to discuss the points. “It was to little purpose our saying much upon these subjects, as they would be fully and finally answered by the Government and Council of Madras”. This meeting ended at past three in the morning. All of Pybus’ conferences started late at night and lasted till early in the morning.

On June 24 Pybus obtained leave to depart. He was in Trincomalee on July 2. He sailed for Madras the same day on board “The Falmouth”, the flagship of Admiral Cornish. Pybus had asked for permission to leave by way of Batticalao, evidently to spy out the land, but he was not allowed to. All through his journey and stay in Kandy, he was under close observation. 24 Nevertheless, Pybus devotes more than half his report to an account of what he saw and heard. Naturally, he devotes much attention to cinnamon, which he calls the “most important Branch” of the “Trade carried on to and from this island by the Dutch East India Company”. 25 The article of “Beetlenutt is the next most considerable export this Island affords” and “pepper is the only other export of any consequence the Dutch company reserve to themselves”. 26 The Dutch also captured between a hundred and fifty to two
hundred elephants a year for export, though the Nayak king Kirti Sri Rajasinha allowed them to take between twenty and thirty.\textsuperscript{27} The imports, Pybus says, were silk, tea, sugar candy, chinaware, piece goods from the Coromandal coast and Bengal, iron and steel from Europe, and \textit{“Japan Copper from Batavia”}.\textsuperscript{28}

The draft treaty that Pybus proposed is preserved in the Tamil Nadu Archives, Madras. It contained fourteen articles. There are no records in Tamil Nadu Archives at Madras of the details about the arrival of the envoy from Kandy, the copy of the instructions given to Pybus by Madras office to which he refers, the contents of the letter he took to the king Kirti Sri Rajasinha or of the letter to him received on \textit{“The Falmouth”} on his return. The Report of Pybus is to the \textit{“Select Committee”}. It is possible that the Committee maintained secret archives which have not been preserved.

Pybus did his best to procure economic and other information as he had been instructed. This is embodied in the official report he submitted to the Governor of Madras on his return. But he was not a successful eavesdropper on Kandy. On the day Pybus arrived in Gannoruwa the Vakil who had accompanied him from the coast was replaced by his brother, who was appointed his companion. The new man was a Government agent who was set more to spy on Pybus than to give him information. According to Pybus this man was his main informant. Possibly, the agent supplied Pybus with misinformation at the orders of the King Kirti Sri Rajasinha. Further, the envoy was kept under strict confinement throughout his embassy. The Nayak king perhaps became aware that Pybus had instructions to spy. Perhaps also, he wished to keep Pybus’ presence in Kandy a secret from Dutch spies. Yet another reason why Pybus was not a good spy was that he was not a patient man. Difficult to please, he was prejudiced from the start of the embassy. He began to despair of it even when he was in Gannararuwa, on the way to the capital. He grumbled perpetually and was eager to find fault. He created a bad impression. That was the view of the Dutch spies.\textsuperscript{29}
For the information he brought back to Madras was vague and superficial, though, as far as it went, it was not very inaccurate. Pybus himself admits that what he learnt of local conditions was obtained with much difficulty and, what is more, only at second-hand. He says:

… No one was suffered to come near the House (in Kandy) where I lodged but such as had the king’s permission; no person allowed to converse with my servants in the Malabar language.  

The Pybus embassy was doomed to failure from the start because the company in Madras could not possibly commit the Directors in London or the British Government to a war against the Dutch, which would have been the result had they given armed help to the king. The king was bound to be disappointed. He and his advisers could not have been well informed if they expected British help in the then prevailing international situation. But the Madras Council had no objection to what was in reality a spying expedition.

The Directors of the East India Company in London, in a first letter from Madras which had reported the embassy, urged, in their reply dated March 3, 1763, caution, but gave tacit approval of what they had done. In a second letter dated December 30, 1763, which was in reply to a communication from Madras of November, 1762 they approved the Council’s action. They said that they proposed to refer the question of Dutch trade monopoly to a conference between Britain and Holland that was then in session to try and resolve their difference. But the British Government, to which the Dutch Ambassador in London made a representation, became angry with the Company. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Bute, reprimanded the Directors sharply. The Government was eager to be friends with the Dutch at this time. The Company’s action, he said, was prejudicial to the national interest.

The Directors in London were of the same view when they came to know of the embassy “long afterwards”. They hoped that Madras had not given any offence to the Dutch. They did not think that they could accept from the king
any grant of Dutch settlements, but they had no objection to any other part of
the king's dominion which was not under Dutch control. So long as the
Anglo-Dutch treaties were not contravened, they approved the initiative that
Madras had taken towards creating a foothold in the island. In fact, Madras:

… should lay hold of the opportunity to procure some cinnamon plants
which are ripe in the month of September and from which the tree is
cultivated. These could be sent to Bencoolen, Anjengo, Bombay,
where they may thrive.  

The Directors feared that the Nayak king would insist on military assistance
as the price for any concessions. The British could not offer this help without
violating the Anglo-Dutch treaties. The Directors wrote: “We should not
draw upon ourselves the odium of involving the nation in a new war”. The
Directors also feared that the Pybus embassy might lead to undesirable
consequences. If Madras did not help the king militarily, he might turn to the
French, and they would be only too willing to assist him. If, on the other
hand, the British did send military help to the king, the Dutch might declare
war against Britain and join hands with the French. The French danger to
the British had by no means ended in south India. Though Lally had been
defeated, there were many Frenchmen hoping to retrieve the situation.
Though the Directors and the Madras Council were one in hoping to utilise
the Pybus embassy as an opportunity to learn about conditions in the
Kandyan kingdom at first hand, the Council seems to have been oblivious of
the possible international implication and consequences of what they had
done in deputing Pybus to Kandy. The diplomatic situation in Europe was
such that there was no dispute between the British and the Dutch
governments. At this point of time the British, who wanted to maintain a
balance of power in Europe, by opposing French objectives, did not want a
do not want a
dispute with a friendly nation on the continent of Europe.
Boyd’s Mission from the British in Madras to the Kandyan Court in Sri Lanka, 1782

The main factor in international relations, in the years between 1762 and 1782, was the attempt of the French to take revenge on the British for their humiliation in the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763). Both in India and in North America, the main centres of conflict, the French had been worsted. Their ambition of founding a colonial empire had been destroyed. Instead, it was Britain which was building an empire. Revenge was an objective of Duc du Choiseul, who was Foreign Minister of France from 1763 to 1777. He reorganised the navy and expanded trade, for he saw that Britain’s security and economy were beginning to depend on its overseas empire so that it was vulnerable to superior sea power. It appears that his plan, in the event of war, was to keep the British Navy confined to its ports by a part of the French navy while another would range over overseas waters and create diversions. The Royal Navy would, at this juncture, be compelled to rush to the endangered area, and that would leave Britain open to an invasion.  

The opportunity to strike at Britain, which France had been hoping for, came with the outbreak of the War of American Independence in 1775. At first the French only supplied the rebel colonists with arms and money. But when, in 1777, the American victory in Saratoga showed that they were winning, they entered the war on the side of the colonists. Their intervention proved decisive. When in 1780 Britain declared war on Holland it had an impact on Sri Lankan affairs. The British were insisting on searching neutral ships sailing to the American colonies in an attempt to prevent any warlike supplies reaching the American forces. This action ranged almost all of Europe against them. At the initiative of Catherine the Great, of Russia, many European countries, in 1780, formed the “Armed Neutrality” to defend the right of neutral shipping against British search. Among its members were Russia, Holland, Prussia, Austria, Naples, Portugal, Sweden and Denmark.
Britain’s war against Holland resulted not only from the dispute over searching neutral ships for articles of war but also from the French prodding and encouragement. Though, during the Seven Years’ War, Britain had been very careful not to hurt the Dutch susceptibilities in Sri Lanka, and it was mainly due to this policy that the Pybus embassy failed utterly, the relations between the two had deteriorated. The demand to search ships had created anti-British feeling in Holland and the French took advantage of it. The outbreak of the American war exacerbated this anti-British mood. The intellectuals in the country, who were coming under the influence of the French Encyclopaedists like Diderot, felt affinity with the young nation across the Atlantic which, like the Dutch themselves against the tyranny of Phillip II of Spain in the seventeenth century, was struggling for freedom against despotism. The Dutch possessions in the Caribbean and South America became centres of a flourishing clandestine trade in contraband with the American rebel colonists. The British seized some Dutch ships on the ground that they were carrying contraband. The Dutch Navy was too weak to prevent this action. Finally, in 1778 Britain intercepted papers relating to secret negotiations which the Dutch authorities were holding with American representatives in Paris, Franklin and Lee.

It was through India that the effects of these developments, so far away from Sri Lanka, were felt in the island. Though the Treaty of Paris of 1763 had established the British power in India, there were many unofficial Frenchmen at the Indian courts who were prepared to make a bid for French recovery. They were encouraging some of the Indian powers, like the Nizan of Hydrabad, to oppose the British. They were chiefly active in Srirangapatna, Tippu Sultan’s capital, and in Pune, the Maratha capital. But they were also to be found in many other courts and centres of trouble.

The French were in even a stronger position in the seas outside India. They had a superb naval base in Mauritius. The British had, at the time, nothing like it in this region. Their principal base was Bombay. But Bombay, on the western coast of India, is far removed from the Coromandal Coast, which
was where the decisive struggle for supremacy between the British and the French forces was to take place. Trincomalee, of course, was a splendid natural harbour. But at this time it was in the hands of the Dutch, who maintained their neutrality. A serious threat was hanging over the British in India and Sri Lanka as long as the French could use Mauritius and the British had to make do with Bombay and could not use Trincomalee. This threat became a reality in 1782 when the French sent a land expedition under de Bussy and a naval expedition under Suffren. Both were launched from Mauritius.

Lord Macartney, the British Governor of Madras, resolved to send an expedition against the Dutch in Sri Lanka. He also decided to send an official Hugh Boyd, on a embassy to the Kandyan king to serve as a kind of diplomatic support to his scheme to capture the Dutch settlements in south India and in Sri Lanka. He brought this mandate with him. As J.F. Ramsey writes: “When Lord Macartney arrived in Madras on the 22nd June, 1781, he brought with him news of the war with the States General (Holland), and authority to operate against the Dutch settlements on the coast”. ³⁸

On January 8, Hugh Boyd arrived in Trincomalee on his embassy to the king in Kandy. As indicated earlier Macartney sent Boyd to Kandy as a kind of diplomatic support to his naval and military plans against Dutch Sri Lanka. He wrote to the Directors:

As Edward Hughes intends to attack Trincomalee and as the arrival of troops under Medows may enable us to take further enterprise against the Dutch in the island of Ceylon, the President (of the Madras Council, that is Macartney) has judged it proper that a gentleman of ability should be sent on the part of the Company to negotiate with the king of Kandy and conciliate him to our interest. ³⁹

Boyd was in Trincomalee when Hughes’ expeditionary forces had taken both the forts there, Frederick and Ostenberg. The burden of the instructions that he had received from Macartney was that he should negotiate with the king
of Kandy so as to “conciliate him to our interest”. He was to conclude a treaty of defence by which the British would provide the king military help against the Dutch, while the king would supply the British troops left behind in the island with their needs.

Having learnt from Pybus’ boorishness twenty years earlier, Macartney advised Boyd to observe every form of ceremony required of an envoy at the Kandy court. He was to make friends with the inhabitants through kind treatment. He was appointed the Company’s agent in Trincomalee. Boyd had an early intimation that he would not be welcome to go to Kandy. In Trincomalee he had to wait for three weeks for a reply to a letter he had written to the king. It was returned to him unopened. Undeterred he set out all the same. He left Trincomalee on February 5, 1782 with an entourage of 173 persons. His route was almost the same as that of Pybus. But he had a hard journey. Provisions were scarce for his large entourage; the local inhabitants, evidently under orders, would have nothing to do with him; and the officials were obstructive and evasive. Boyd wrote to this, “It was some comfort in our starvation to find that it was rather from scarcity than neglect. Rice had not been plentiful and quantities had been collected higher up” the road to Kandy. 40

There were some good reasons why Boyd’s journey was a difficult one. Since his entourage was so huge, the inhabitants must have thought that it was the vanguard of a hostile army, and so they made themselves scarce. Secondly, this part of the countryside was in a ravaged condition at the time. In all probability, this was due to the recent Dutch war or to the Nayak King’s deliberate policy to interpose barren territory between his kingdom and Trincomalee, by which he hoped to isolate the Dutch garrison. Thirdly, there is reason to think that it was at the instigation of the faction at the court that was friendly to the Dutch and opposed to the Nayaks that difficulties were placed in Boyd’s path. Matale district, which Boyd traversed for most of his journey, was under a Disawa who was a member of the pro-Dutch clique. 41
Boyd began to suspect the ministers and generals at the court of being supporters of the Dutch at the first audience itself. He said that the negotiations should be conducted quickly. But, in the words of his report, “the latter part of what I said was lost in the Sinhalese channel it passed through, for his Highness, without taking the least notice of it, proceeded to ask me whether I wish to retire”.  But at the second audience, which followed, the king was more forthright than he had been at the first. For, he said that the Governor’s letter had given him the greatest satisfaction, and he asked Boyd to convey to Governor in the strongest manner his friendly attitude towards the English and his approval of the overtures now made to him.

However, the ministers, who were determinedly pro-Dutch, continued their tactics of obstruction when they met Boyd for the second meeting after the second audience. Boyd asserted that the Governor of Madras was quite competent to conclude a treaty with the king. The ministers retired to consult among themselves. When they returned, they completely changed the subject and went on to expatiate on the misdeeds of the Pybus embassy. They then proceeded to subject Boyd to a searching cross examination on questions that had nothing to do with the proposals he had brought. They asked about the military plans of the English in India and their military activities in Trincomalee. They were more concerned to extract information from Boyd rather than to carry forward his suggestions to an agreement. They scrupulously refrained from entering into any concrete discussions of Boyd’s offer.

Finally, the Boyd Mission was doomed when the king said that a proposal for a treaty should come directly from the king of England. All this while the king could not have been unaware of the precise diplomatic status of the Governor of Madras. One of his own predecessors had been perfectly willing to conclude a treaty with an earlier Governor of Madras in the previous century. Perhaps the new king, Rajadhi Rajasinha, was new to his job. He did not want to take any decisive decision till he was sure of his
position. Hence, he used this as a way of avoiding any diplomatic commitment.

It was patently a pretext to get rid of Boyd. It was true that the king’s reply did not apparently mean that the Madras offer had been rejected. But, in fact, Boyd had failed because time was of essence to him in relation to the projected British expedition. He left Gannoruwa on March 17 and reached Trincomalee nine days later. There he found that the British fleet had left on the approach of Suffren. He set out in a hired vessel, but was captured by a French frigate, *La Fine*. He was taken, first, to Mauritius and then to La Réunion. Later, he was released. Subsequently he died on October 19, 1794, in his forty-eighth year. 43

Why did his expedition fail? Considered in the light of later history, the Boyd embassy was not a total failure. It was followed by a British military expedition which resulted in the capture of Trincomalee, the first British territorial acquisition in the island. With this a new era had begun. The British were no longer unwilling to seize Dutch possessions as they had been in the previous century. William Pitt, the Prime Minister of England, wrote to Governor-General, Lord Cornwallis “to seize Trincomalee from the Dutch, so soon as hostilities began, in order that the French might not use it as a base, and the English might possibly for an attack on the cape of Good Hope”. New developments in Europe allowed them to take Dutch territories where they could. “Out of this event sprang the movement which led to the British conquest of Ceylon. Boyd, therefore, not Pybus, was the real pioneer of British power in Ceylon”. The Directors themselves wrote, “We have made the first step towards the connection with that Ministry which we trust we should soon have an opportunity of improving”. 44
The Andrews’ Mission to the Kandyan Court sent by the British in Madras, 1795 - British conquest of Trincomalee and the Maritime Provinces

Following the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789, the revolutionaries were keen on spreading their ideas abroad. In 1792 General Dumouriez invaded Holland, but the results were not lasting. However, three years later, a second invasion followed, and the French occupied Holland. A Batavian Republic was proclaimed. The British considered it a puppet regime under the thumb of the French. They had to consider the possibility that the insurrection might spread to the Dutch overseas possessions and that the French, under pretense of support to the Dutch revolution, would seize them, or at least to gain access to them. Britain’s war against revolutionary French, thus, became a colonial war; Sri Lanka became enmeshed in this conflict. When the French revolutionaries, under Pichegru, invaded Holland and over ran it in 1794-1795, the Stadtholder fled to England and was installed in the Kew Palace, near London. The Patriots, now triumphant, abolished the Stadholderate and proclaimed the Batavian Republic. The Republic took over the administration of the overseas possessions of the Dutch East India Company, now practically moribund. These developments placed the Dutch colonies, Sri Lanka included, in an anomalous situation. The British government might legitimately attack them if their control vested in the Batavian Republic. However, if they remained loyal to the exiled Stadtholder now in England, the British policy would be difficult to decide. It was known that the French were attempting to seize the Dutch colonies. 45

Lord Grenville, the British Minister for Foreign Affairs, conceived a plan to involve the Stadtholder in a scheme to place the Dutch colonies under British protection. 46 The Stadtholder agreed to issue the order on condition of an “assurance in the most authentic form possible, that everything that is ceded will be restored to the State”, that is, Holland, at the conclusion of a peace. Then, on February 2, 1795, the British Government undertook:
... in the most formal manner possible that any vessel, fort or place whatever which will place itself under his (the King of Britain’s) protection as a result of the said order will be held in trust and restored to the Republic of the United Provinces (Holland). \(^{47}\)

Accordingly, the Stadtholder issued the following instructions, under date February 7, 1795 to J.G. van Angelbeek, the Governor of Dutch Sri Lanka in Colombo:

> We have deemed it necessary to address you this communication and to require you to admit into Trincomalee and elsewhere in the colony under your rule the troops of His Majesty, the king of Great Britain, which will proceed there, and also to admit into the harbours or such other places where ships might safely anchor. \(^{48}\)

The responsibility for action against the Dutch Sri Lanka was entrusted to the Government of Madras. The Governor then was Lord Hobart who held the position from 1794 to 1798.

The Stadtholder’s letter was sent to him with the following instructions:

> As the conquests lately made by the French in Holland will of consequence be followed by an endeavour to secure the distance possessions of that Republic, particularly in the Eastern seas. \(^{49}\)

Apart from sending an expeditionary force to Sri Lanka, Lord Hobart dispatched an emissary to the court of the King of Kandy to negotiate a treaty of defence and friendship. He did this on his own initiative. Neither the British Government nor the Court of Directors nor the Supreme Government in Calcutta had asked him to. This emissary was Robert Andrews, a Company servant in Madras. \(^{50}\)

Andrews received his letter of instructions on July 21, 1795. He landed in Trincomalee on August 13 and arrived in Kandy on September 27. His letter of instructions said:
The importance of establishing British influence upon the island has upon former occasions attracted the attention of the government, but no justice of circumstance has ever offered so favourable an opportunity of accomplishing this object as the late subversion of the government of Holland. 51

The attitude of the Dutch towards the King of Kandy lent hope that the latter would accept an alliance with the British. Andrews was authorised to conclude a treaty on the most favourable terms. What these terms were to be would depend on the actual situation. If the British became protectors of the king they would undertake to abstain from any hostile actions against the king which would not preclude any commercial pacts. The proposed treaty was to be a preliminary to another, a more comprehensive one of alliance and commerce, which would have to be submitted to the Board of Control for Indian Affairs in London.

If the Nayak King should complain about the British having captured Trincomalee without his permission, as his predecessor had done to Boyd after the first capture, Andrews was to say that it was meant to prevent a civil war and to forestall its seizure by the French. He was to impress on the king the dangers he would face from the French, emphasising the “detrimental tendency of French principles, and particularly the zeal with which they are endeavouring to propagate them in all parts of the world”. He was to secure detailed information about Kandy’s relations with the Dutch along with copies of their treaties. He was also to obtain the Nayak King’s permission to construct a factory in a convenient location in order to trade and to erect fortifications to defend the factory. The land so granted should belong to the King of England forever. Once the land was ceded, the British would discuss with the king terms of trade in cinnamon. Hobart hoped that, when the king compared these offers with the “narrow trading habits” of the Dutch, he would accept the British proposals.
Andrews was given two alternative letters to be delivered to the Nayak king. He was to judge which of the two he was to hand over, depending upon the circumstances. In the first letter Hobart said that the British wished to free the king from oppression by the Dutch and to save him from their ally, the French, who were proposing to invade Sri Lanka in order to “take away your life, as that have done that of their own king”. The British had invaded Dutch Sri Lanka to save the island from that calamity. The king was invited to conclude a treaty with them; this would be a preliminary to a perpetual alliance of friendship between British and Sri Lanka. The letter included a request to supply provisions to the British troops in Trincomalee. The second letter, to be delivered to the king if the Dutch surrendered their forts without any resistance, contained an additional promise that the British operations would not extend beyond the Dutch territories. Since the Dutch did resist, it was the first letter that the Nayak king received.

Andrews arrived in Kandy on September 27, 1795, and remained there till October 14. He had an audience with the Nayak king and several meetings with the ministers. Difficult as his task was, he unwittingly embroiled himself in the political intrigues that were raging in the court. When on his way from Trincomalee to Kandy, he met Denegamuwa, the Disawa of Uda Palata, and nephew to Arawwawele, the Second Adigar and rival of the First Adigar, Pilima Talauva. Denagamuwa told Andrews that his uncle, whom he called “Prime Minister”, was a friend of the British, and that everything needed to make a success of his mission to Kandy would be done. What he should do, he was advised, was to communicate with the court solely through Arawwawela. Denagamuwa offered Andrews the draft of an undertaking to this effect. Ignorant about the situation at the court (in fact, he confused the nephew for the uncle, thinking that Denagamuwa was the treasurer, whereas it was Arawwawela who held that post), the envoy offered an alternative draft. Denagamuwa accepted it, and Andrews signed an undertaking that he would not “ever accept or listen to the advice of any other minister or people of distinction in the island”. He realised quickly that he had been misled when he interviewed two other ministers, Migastenne
(Senior), the Disawa of the Four Koraless, and his son, Migastenne (Junior),
the Disawa of Sabaragamuwa and, later, of the Seven Koraless. The father
was a son of Pilima Talauva. The result was that, all unknowingly, Andrews
had offended the First Adigar. 52

Andrews’ discussions related mainly on the possible return on the Dutch to
Sri Lanka. The Kandyans said that, if the proposed treaty with the British
was to be useful to them, the Dutch should not be allowed to return.
Andrews was not much interested in this aspect; all that he wanted at the
moment was the king’s assistance against the Dutch. The king produced a
draft treaty according to which the British “would not allow the Dutch
government by any treaty a footing on the island and should repel by force
any attempt which they make to re-establish themselves on the island” and,
further, “it was incumbent on the (British) Company to guard and protect the
king and religion of the country against all its enemies”. Andrews suggested
the deletion of the first demand and the addition of an article providing that
the British should, if the Dutch wished to regain their former possessions on
any, pretext, prevent “even a foot of such ground” being returned unless the
king’s permission was first secured. The ministers agreed to the
modification and, at Andrews’ request, preparations were made to send an
embassy along with him to Madras to conclude a preliminary treaty. But the
king declined to sign the draft treaty. Therefore the article had to be
dropped. 53

The British Government headquarters in Calcutta saw that the proposed
treaty would create difficulties in Europe or in India. Hobart himself replied
to Shore in a letter, stating that the latter’s objections “have shown to the
utmost pitch of possibility every imaginative evil which human ingenuity
could devise”. The proposed treaty was essential to the British both then
and in the long run. There would be no international or local difficulties were
their possessions restored to the Dutch. It would not be easy for them to
turn the British out of the island. Further, without a treaty, it would not be
possible to obtain what the British forces in the island wanted most of all,
supplies. As the forces continued their movements, they would need the supplies even more. Hobart had a note included in the minutes of the meeting in which he said that it was important for the Company to have a satisfactory establishment in Sri Lanka to secure the trade and commerce of the company in south India against likely invaders. The suggested treaty offered good commercial prospects. Therefore, this was a good opportunity to obtain what the previous Governments in Madras had attempted to secure, revenue from the conquered provinces, trade concessions, and help from the king in return for protection against the Dutch.  

The two Kandyan ambassadors who arrived in Madras on December 29, met Hobart two days later and handed over to him a letter addressed to him by the king enclosing a draft treaty. Andrews had to tell them what the Supreme Government in Calcutta had directed the Madras Council to do. They were angry and accused the British of making false promises. Andrews suggested that Calcutta might change its attitude with further British military successes in Sri Lanka. The envoys agreed to stay if a treaty could be concluded.

Prolonged haggling took place when the negotiations were resumed on January 13, 1796. Though all these efforts were ultimately to prove ineffective, it is necessary to trace the negotiations. An article of the Kandyan draft ran, “Company may erect forts and warehouses in such places as may be pointed by the king out of his gracious pleasure agreeable to the purpose of stationing troops for constant protection and trade”. Hobart would have none of any “gracious pleasure” but asserted that, by the right of conquest, the British were entitled to all the possessions of the Dutch, to whom Kandy had ceded them in the past. The envoys replied that the Dutch were only the king’s “watchers” he had employed to protect the kingdom and that he could replace them at will. But Andrews replied that it was not for the king to grant Dutch possessions to the British.
The envoys proposed an alternative, the “Company shall not interfere but at places as the king may cede to them”. Andrews suggested a modification; “the Company should not interfere with any part of the present possessions except such as shall henceforth be ceded to them by the treaty”. The Kandyans rejected this. Andrews now suggested:

… the company shall investigate the subject as soon as they had captured the Dutch possessions and restore to the king on conclusion of the war and should they remain in permanent possession of the Dutch settlements such internal situations as he may appear to have just claim to.  

Andrews submitted a draft treaty with this amended clause. The envoys accepted it after adding a clause, “notwithstanding the preceding article, as soon as the Company becomes possessed of the Dutch settlements on the island, they shall restore to the king the situation upon the coast for the sole and express purpose of procuring an adequate supply of salt and fish for the consumption of the people”. The ambassadors were persuaded to accept this only after much hesitation. Finally, on February 12, 1796, they did so.

It is not easy to understand their attitude. The draft treaty was not only far less harsh than the one the Dutch had imposed on Kandy in 1766, but also had provided the Kandyans with a source of supply of salt and fish under their own control and, in addition, a base and outlet for their external trade, on which they could employ ten ships. It appears that the envoys insisted on the myth, or legal fiction, that Kandy exercised sovereignty over the Maritime Provinces, where the Dutch were only the King’s “watchers”. The Dutch treaty of 1766 had expressly said that it was the Dutch who exercised sovereignty over these regions by right of conquest from the Portuguese. The British did not know of this treaty at this time. But it was only a question of time before they did.

The Madras Government resolved in July to “send a force to Trincomalee under the command of Colonel Stuart for the purpose of securing that
important place against any attempt on the part of the French”. Stuart’s force consisted of the 72nd Regiment, 748 strong, under Major Fraser; the flank companies of the 71st and 73rd Regiments, 351 strong, under Major Dalrymple; forty-two men of the Royal Artillery under Captain Lieutenant Dixon; two companies of the Madras Artillery under Captain Carlisle; the 1st Battalion Native Infantry, consisting of fourteen Europeans and 643 Sepoys, under Captain Fergusson; the 23rd Battalion, with fourteen Europeans and 643 Sepoys, under Captain Campbell; a pioneer corps of 221 men under Lieutenant Dowse; and six companies of gun Lascars. There were twelve staff officers. The invasion fleet to Trincomalee consisted of a squadron of three ships of the line under Rainier; the Suffolk (seventy-four guns), the frigate Bombay, the store-ship of the same name, Bombay, and the packets Swallow and John. Rainier considered the possession of Trincomalee so important that he “determined to proceed thither himself”. 60 All the remaining Dutch settlements in the island were included in the surrender. Troops occupied Galle, Matara and Kalutara. There were difficulties with the Kandyans in Kalutara. They had already occupied it before the capitulation was signed in Colombo. But ultimately a British force occupied it without disturbance. “Such was the inglorious end of the Dutch regime”. 61

Andrews went to Kandy again in August, 1796, to secure the Nayak king’s ratification of the treaty. But the king asked for more ports. Andrews would not agree, and the treaty remained unratified. To the British this did not matter, for, by this time they had conquered all of the Maritime Provinces, including Colombo, and soon they came to know of the 1766 treaty. 62 They realised that they were the legal successors of the Dutch in the Maritime Provinces. As for the king, he had now for neighbour not a weak power, but a strong one, which, if it wished, could easily conquer the entire island.
British Relations with the Kandyan Kingdom in Sri Lanka
from 1796 to 1815: The Kandyan Convention

Period of Governor North

When Governor North assumed charge of the Maritime Provinces, he was very particular, over the country, in annexing the Kandyan kingdom. He was interested in consolidating the British hold, especially the interior of the island. This is reflected in his letter to the Nayak king, Wikrama Rajasinha. Pilima Talauva, the First Adigar who enabled Wikrama Rajasinha to ascend the Kandyan throne found to his dismay that the king could not be treated like his puppet. Therefore, he decided to dethrone him. When Talauva met Governor North, in 1798, the latter made it very clear to him that the treaty of 1769 was null and void since it was not ratified in time. The talk between them, at that time, was inconclusive.

During subsequent meetings Talauva unfolded his plan to dethrone Wikrama Rajasinha with the help of the British and occupy the throne himself. North was averse to the idea. He was willing to consider it however, if the transition was smooth and the king Wikrama Rajasinha’s life was spared. At the end of one such meeting between them it was agreed to send an embassy to Kandy to negotiate a new treaty. Major General Hay Macdowall was sent to Kandy, escorted by the British troops, in March 1800, to meet the Nayak king. Macdowall proposed that the king should agree to station a British garrison in his country to protect him. The Kandyan officials rejected it stating that the native soldiers of Kandy were sufficient to do that job and it was the duty of the English to defend the coasts from all the enemies. Macdowall was disappointed and left Kandy without achieving anything. However he learnt a lot about the topography, the climate and how the roads were deliberately kept in bad shape by the Kandyans. This knowledge helped the British forces when they invaded Kandy in 1803. The justification for the invasion was indeed a flimsy one. In July 1802, the Kandyan officials had seized some stock of arecanuts from the Moors belonging to the coastal
area. The British demanded adequate compensation from the Kandyans. When it was not forthcoming, they decided to invade. It is probable that Pilima Talauva was responsible for this development in the hope that it would eventually help him.

The British forces managed to reach Kandy. They found to their surprise no one in the capital except a few dogs. The king, Wikrama Rajasinha and the entire population of Kandy had by then left, with their valuables, to an unknown place. General Macdowall on learning that the king might be located at a palace eighteen miles away from Kandy dispatched his troops to find him. When they reached the palace they were disappointed again. The king had already fled from there. In utter disgust the British troops set fire to the palace and returned to Kandy. In the meantime Governor North threatened to support a rival claimant to the throne if Wikrama Rajasinha refused to come to terms with him and grant the concessions sought by the British.  

He proclaimed Muttusami, one of the brothers-in-law of the late king, Rajadhi Rajasinha, as the new king of Kandy. Prior to this Muttusamy was paid a small pension by Governor North and was left in-charge of the Collector of Jaffna. He was brought to Kandy and installed as the king. In return he was forced to cede a large part of the Kandyan territory to the British. Muttusamy was convicted of fraud in the past. As per Kandyan custom he could not occupy the throne. Consequently he was ignored, not only by the influential chiefs in the kingdom but also by his ordinary subjects.

The prolonged stay at Kandy increased mortality and sickness among the British troops, a problem faced by all the Europeans who had invaded Kandy. General Macdowall left the troops at Kandy in charge of Major Davie and returned to Colombo to persuade Governor North to evacuate the survivors of the garrison. It was clear at this stage that it was difficult to avoid the impending disaster. The political outlook was also bleak. North’s mistake in sponsoring Muttusamy was becoming obvious. North asked the
British troops to vacate Kandy and return. But, before North’s instructions could reach Major Davie at Kandy the Kandyans descended on their capital in large numbers. The British troops, outnumbered by the Kandyans, found it impossible to repulse the attack. Major Davie decided to surrender.

Governor North made Major Davie a scapegoat for the disaster. The fate of Davie was not known to the British then. When it was known, North neither attempted to get in touch with him nor find out ways to get him released. The Kandyans continued to harass the British in coastal areas also. Retribution from the British followed. The British forces came out of their fortifications to repulse the Kandyan attack. The atrocities committed by the British during these operations were extensive. They raided unguarded villages and burnt them, destroyed the paddy and killed as many Kandyans as possible.

In May 1803, Major General David Douglas Wemyss succeeded General Macdowell, the last link the island had with East India Company at Madras, as commander of the British forces. Wemyss sent an expedition to Kandy in the same year under Captain Arthur Johnston. Johnston reached Kandy with his troops. When he realised that the expected reinforcements might not reach Kandy in time he decided to return to Trincomalee to avoid the fate of Major Davie’s troops.

**Governor Maintland**

In 1805 Governor North was recalled and Major General Sir Thomas Maintland, “the rough old despot”, assumed charge. Instead of wasting his energy and the slender resources of the island Government by involving himself in the Kandyan affairs he decided not to continue the war with Kandy, cut the military expenditure and bring order in the fiscal matters. Although Maintland was not very keen on a treaty with Kandy, he did try on one occasion to negotiate a treaty. With the assistance of John D’Oyly, the Chief Translator and the head of the British intelligence in the island, he got
in touch with Moratota, the Maha Nayaka Unanse (head of the priesthood) a man known to the Nayak king Wikrama Rajasinha and his First Adigar, Pilima Talauva. Nothing came out of this effort but Sri Lanka enjoyed peace for the next seven years under Maintland’s Governorship.

During this period, in his grim struggle again Pilima Talauva, the king Wikrama Rajasinha emerged as a ruthless autocrat. When the office of the Second Adigar fell vacant, it passed on to Ehelepola, Pilima Talauva’s nephew. Upset by the king’s hostile attitude towards him, Talauva was constrained to remind Wikrama Rajasinha that it was he who placed him on the Kandyan throne. He was annoyed about the king’s failure to take his advice. The king, true to his nature, told him that he was not to be led by his chiefs but they were to be directed by him. The First Adigar also found fault with the king for the public works undertaken in recent years, making use of Rajakarya, which caused hardship to the people. The flash point in their relationship was reached when Talauva proposed a marriage between his son and the grand-daughter of the late king, Kirti Sri Rajasinha. The king saw in this alliance a direct threat to his authority and rule. The neglect of some minor official duty by Pilima Talauva was used by the king to remove him from his office and exile him to his home Province. Stung by this insult, the old Adigar struck back. He fomented a rebellion in the Provinces and bribed the head of the king’s guard to assassinate the Nayak king. Both plans misfired. Pilima Talauva, his son-in-law and some chiefs were promptly arrested and the king ordered them to be beheaded. King Wikrama Rajasinha was now really concerned about his life. He tried to counteract the power of the chiefs by strengthening the village administration and the provincial committees. He curbed corruption among the officials and leaned on the common man for his support. He protected them from the tyranny of the unpopular provincial officials. Ehelepola, late Pilima Talauva’s nephew succeeded his uncle as the First Adigar. It is strange that this happened in spite of the king’s suspicion about Ehelepola’s involvement in the plot to overthrow him. Subsequent developments prove that the king’s suspicion about Ehelepola’s loyalty was correct. The First Adigar was in
touch with the chief of the British intelligence, D'Oyly. D'Oyly had substantial funds at his disposal to collect information about Kandy and engage in subversive activities against it.  

**Governor Brownrigg - The British Conquest of the Kandyan Kingdom and the Kandyan Convention**

Ill-health forced Governor Maintland to lay down his office in 1811. He was succeeded by Lieutenant General Sir Robert Brownrigg on 11 March 1812. Maintland made it a point, after his return to England, to inform the British Government that his successor should not meddle in Kandyan affairs. The Government instructed Brownrigg accordingly, as soon as he assumed office. It would be evident from the events narrated below that Brownrigg decided to ignore the advice, but waited for a valid excuse to intervene militarily in Kandyan affairs. After Pilima Talauva’s execution, events moved rapidly, partly because of the king Wikrama Rajasinha’s actions. In his attempt to root out opposition to his rule, he alienated all sections of the population; first the nobles, then the clergy and finally the peasantry. It nullified the goodwill he gained when he introduced reforms in the administration, controlled the price of food and cloth and thus eliminated profiteering.

The lingering suspicion about Ehelepola forced the king to take action against him. He charged him with extortion and misappropriation. We are not sure whether these charges were fabricated by him to fix the Adigar. The king was childless by his earlier marriages and he took two new wives in 1813. Wikrama Rajasinha found fault with Ehelepola for presenting unworthy gifts at his wedding. Humiliated by the king, Ehelepola left for his native province. He immediately wrote to D'Oyly. He requested the British officer to send him a gift - a shot-gun. D'Oyly responded to Ehelepola’s letter with enthusiasm. He agreed to make enquiries about the gun and wrote to Ehelepola, on 6 September 1813: “Ourselves also being anxious to promote in the happy island of Lanka the Prosperity of the World and
Religion, I shall rejoice to receive from you an explicit communication by what Means you propose to accomplish the beneficial Object”. Ehelepola replied to D’Oyly and urged him to act “without Delaying”. D’Oyly hinted to Ehelepola that the British might help if a large scale rebellion broke out in the Kandyan kingdom.

King Wikrama Rajasinha was aware of what was going on between his First Adigar and the British. Ehelepola was also capable of predicting, correctly, what the king might do in such a situation. Anticipating that the king might deprive him of his office, he fomented a rebellion in his home province and sought the help of the British. It is unfortunate that the First Adigar had not learnt any lesson from the fate of his predecessor in office. Governor Brownrigg had his own doubts about the outcome of the revolt. He kept quiet. Ehelepola’s supporters also did the same. In such a situation the king was always alert. He quickly dispatched one thousand men, under his court official, Molligoda, to Sabaragamuva, the home province of Ehelepola. The encounter with the rebellious forces resulted in driving their leader, Ehelepola, to the British territory where he sought refuge. Ehelepola’s disloyalty aroused the violent nature of Wikrama Rajasinha’s character. From now on his treatment of his subjects was almost bordering on near-madness. He let loose retributive terror. Unable to trust any of his Sinhalese officers, he depended on his Nayak kinsmen for support. He resorted to the use of brutal force to silence his opponents and thus retain his throne.

For their part in the rebellion the Dissawa of Matale Province, Ehelepola’s brother-in-law (son of the Dissawa of Uva Province), a priest and several headmen were summarily tried and executed by the king. Banking on the Sinhalese aversion to ill-treatment of women, his former First Adigar did not take any steps to move his family out of Kandy before raising the banner of revolt against his king. It was a miscalculation. The king showed no mercy to his family. Now a point of no return was reached in Kandy. The British decided to prepare for an invasion and waited for an excuse. Some traders
of Colombo were robbed of their goods in the Three Koraless Province. They were accused of being spies and tortured at Kandy. Seven of them were killed. The three survivors reached Colombo with their limbs hanging around their necks.  

After this incident Governor Brownrigg saw no moral objection to an invasion of Kandy. To start with, he sent an advance force to occupy a forward post and then plunged into further action. King Wikrama Rajasinha responded by mobilizing his men. He also smuggled into his kingdom some Tamils from the coastal areas. Ehelepola joined the troops sent in advance by Brownrigg and moved forward with Major Hook towards Kandy. Similar columns of troops were instructed to reach Kandy from different directions. Molligoda, the man who suppressed Ehelepola’s rebellion earlier was in command of the king’s troops. True to the nature of Kandyan officials who served the Nayak kings of Sri Lanka in the past, he did not fail to get in touch with D’Oyly, the chief of the British intelligence. He also met Major Hook secretly and promised not to offer resistance to the advancing British troops. When he succeeded in bringing his family members out of Kandy, where they were held as hostages by the king, he surrendered to the British. With little or no resistance, a column of British troops reached Kandy without difficulty.

When Governor Brownrigg was informed about the capture of the king, he ordered Major Hook to take the king to Colombo without touching Kandy. At Colombo the king was lodged in a spacious house. Wikrama Rajasinha, the ex-king of Kandy, was surprised by the treatment given to him by the British. His fortitude appealed to many in the British Camp. On 24 January 1816, Wikrama Rajasinha embarked the ship “Cornwallis” for Madras with his wives and relatives. He was accompanied by William Granville, a civil servant. The four weeks voyage to Madras enabled Granville to develop first hand knowledge of the king. Granville was impressed by the king’s intellect, sound judgment of character and ability to view his defects dispassionately. Even in adversity the king retained his affability and sense of humour. Strangely the same king was described later
as “having no qualification for majesty except a portly figure and scarcely a single virtue to palliate a thousand crimes”. Wikrama Rajasinha’s detractors ensured that he was not given credit for what he did to improve the living condition of his subjects but were keen to perpetuate the memory of his crimes, earlier it was Governor Brownrigg, in recent years, it is the Sinhala chauvinists of the island. But one must realize that he was far from being alone in his ruthlessness and cruelty.

The last Nayak king of Kandy was taken to Vellore, now in North Arcot district, Tamilnadu, from Madras. There he led a peaceful life in exile and died on the 30th January 1832, aged fifty-two years and leaving one son. His son died in 1843. The former Nayak king’s relations are living at Vellore even today.

At Kandy the transition was smooth. In a glittering ceremony, held in the ornate hall of the former Nayak king, the “convention” was held. Attended by the nobles of the former ruler and the British, led by the Governor Brownrigg, the convention to establish a new order in the island under the British crown was signed on 2 March 1815. The Union Jack was formally hoisted. The Nayak rule in Sri Lanka came to an end. John D’Oyly, the brain behind the bloodless British victory, was appointed as the Resident of the newly annexed Provinces. With this the British captured the centre of the island, which was not achieved by the earlier European powers like the Portuguese and the Dutch. This helped them to consolidate their position and thereby ensure their free use of the strategic harbour of Trincomalee. If not, other European naval powers (like the Dutch had succeeded in the past), would continue to strive to get a foothold and then dislodge the British by developing diplomatic relations with a local power. Now such a possibility appeared remote.
Summary

The period covered by this chapter was one of Anglo-French rivalry for the domination of India. Sri Lanka was drawn into this conflict due to the strategic Trincomalee Harbour on its east coast, an area legally claimed by the Kandyan Kings. The Kandyan Kingdom was the only local Kingdom in existence. Both the British and the French tried to develop diplomatic relations with the Kandyan kings with acquiring Trincomalee as their prime objective. They both wanted to secure it as a naval base and thereby, consolidate their hold over India. For the Kandyan Kings (whose Kingdom extended to the eastern province) Trincomalee Harbour, and its hinterland, was vital for the external relations (including trade and commerce). It was also a bargaining point to be used to drive the Dutch out of the coastal regions of Sri Lanka, and to ally themselves with a strong European naval power, which would give them long-term security.

This factor was what made them approach both the British and the French for assistance. Their diplomatic moves (including the letters they wrote) demonstrate their motives. The advent of the Tamil Nayakkar dynasty to the throne of Kandy in 1739 had its own political impact by having the door opened to south Indian influences. There were four kings of this dynasty, Sri Wijaya Rajasinha (1739-1747), Kirti Sri Rajasingha (1747-1780), Sri Rajahhi Rajasinha (1780-1798), and Sri Wickrama Rajasingha (1798-1815). With this there were two political factors that emerged: apart from looking to south India for assistance against the Dutch, the internal political situation was undermined with a dissatisfaction of the local Kandyan nobles against the Nayakkars. Both these factors favoured the British, who were emerging as the most powerful factor in south Indian politics. They were able to intervene in Sri Lanka, and once they expelled the Dutch in 1795, from the coastal regions, were able to undermine the King’s position within the Kandyan Kingdom. They were cautious at first as the political vicissitudes of Europe shaped their policies and manoeuvres in Sri Lanka. The British were
gaining ground in India, and so naturally, they operated in Sri Lanka through their strong position in Madras due to its close proximity.

The events in this chapter are part of the Anglo/French clash, which began at the end of the eighteenth century and ended in 1815. This clash was due to the French attempt to dominate Europe, especially under Napoleon, and thereby upset the ‘balance of power’. The defeat of France and Napoleon in 1815 settled this problem. In 1815 the British attained dominance over the whole of Sri Lanka with the downfall of the Kandyan Kingdom. This date coincided with the defeat of France and the Congress of Vienna that followed which restored the ‘balance of power’ in Europe.

In the next chapter (Chapter III) it is proposed to examine the strategic significance of the 1947 Defence Agreement between the British and the then, Sri Lankan political leaders. In doing this it is proposed to trace the development of the British Empire between 1815 to the twentieth century and the events of World War II and the Pacific War, where Sri Lanka (and her strategic harbour of Trincomalee) was a pivotal naval base and point of operation against the Japanese. It was also an important transit point of assistance to the Soviet Union by the Allies via the Middle East part of Basra and Persia (Iran). After World War II (at the time the Defence Agreement was signed), Britain had firm global strategic commitments which involved the Indian Ocean, the Middle East (a vital source of oil for the Western World) and East Africa. The Defence Agreement is to be studied as a part of the global western strategy in the newly emergent clash between the West (led by the United States of America) and the USSR called the ‘Cold War’. It is also proposed to examine in Chapter III the strategic significance the Defence Agreement had for Sri Lanka, and India’s perceptions of this as a newly independent pivotal state within the south Asian region.
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CHAPTER III

The Defence Agreement between Britain and Sri Lanka (Ceylon as it was then called) in 1947: Its Significance as a Part of the Western Strategy after World War II to Contain the Soviet Union and the Spread of Communism on a Global Basis

Introduction
This Defence Agreement is to be studied in the context of the emerging ‘Cold War’ situation in international affairs that arose after World War II. The ‘Cold War’ can be broadly described as the conditions of international tension that was characteristic of the relations between the United States of America (leading the western group of nations) and the, then, Soviet Union and their allies. During this period of the ‘Cold War’ (beginning in 1946, after World War II) these two antagonistic camps engaged in military engagements in peripheral areas without direct involvement of both superpowers, which led to an escalation of the arms race, diplomatic confrontations and ideological hostility. During the period of the ‘Cold War’ there was a new trend in strategy. It was asserted that conventional military, strategy was outmoded, and with it national strategy. This point of view was put forward by Sir John Slessor who wrote:

Strategy today is world strategy and it is no more possible to shape it merely to suit the limited interest of one particular country than it is to confine a typhoon to a potato patch. ¹

At this point in time on a global naval strategy the United States of America (USA) deployed her navy in the Atlantic, the Pacific Ocean and in the Mediterranean Sea. ² As far as the Middle East and the Indian Ocean were concerned the prime role was left with the British navy. This was due to the fact that British power was dependent on her powerful navy that was the basis of her great maritime empire. Therefore, a brief history of Britain’s
expansion within the area of the Indian Ocean and the adjacent south-east Asia is relevant to this study of the strategic significance of the Defence Treaty of 1947 with Sri Lanka. This pertains to the rise and development of the British Empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Apart from examining Sri Lanka’s perception of the Defence Agreement, it is proposed to study India’s reaction to it. Surrounded by the Indian sub-continent to the north, East Africa in the west, Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia in the east and the frozen continent of Antarctica in the far south, the Indian Ocean covers an area of 2,850,000 square miles with an average depth of 12,900 feet. The Red Sea approach to the Suez Canal, oil rich Persian Gulf, the Strait of Malacca, and the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of the African continent makes Sri Lanka and its natural Harbour of Trincomalee a strategic point in the whole region, having global significance in this modern age. In this context, India, as the largest state in south Asia, has a vital interest in Sri Lanka.

The Growth and Development of the British Empire in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
In the Indian sub-continent the conquest of local states continued after 1815 as a part of British expansion within the Indian sub-continent. The Maratha states were subjugated in 1819. The whole of the Punjab came under British domination by 1850. This process was continued by them in the north of India, and Baluchistan was taken over in 1875. In 1877 Britain formalised paramountcy over India when Queen Victoria was proclaimed Empress of India. ³

A similar policy of expansion was followed in the eastern part of the Indian Ocean. In 1824 Singapore was taken over by Stamford Raffles which was situated on a strategic point of the Straits of Malacca. It was an island the British took over from the Sultan of Johore. Malacca was also taken over by the British from the Dutch, who controlled the islands of Indonesia. British
power and supremacy spread in the Malay Peninsula by the end of the
nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth century British
paramountcy was accepted by the sultans of Malaya. Through a degree of
coercive diplomacy the British were able to get the King of Siam in 1909 to
handover four Malay states situated in the south of the country. Between
1824 and 1885 there was British expansion into Burma. During this period
there were three wars, and at the end the British got control over Burma.\(^4\)

A policy was expansion and dominance was also undertaken on the western
side of the Indian Ocean. Aden and the strategic island of Socotra were
secured by the British in 1839. With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869
the area of the Red Sea became a vital strategic waterway. Following these
developments in 1882 the British gained dominance over Egypt and the
Suez Canal. In South Africa a similar policy of expansion was followed.
Natal, a Dutch Boer republic, was taken over in 1843. This move was to
prevent other Dutch Boer republics in the south of Africa from having an
outlet to the Indian Ocean. The Boer War fought between 1899 and 1902
resulted in the take over of the Boer republics of which resulted in a unified
South Africa under British control. At the same time a forward policy was
followed as regards East Africa. In 1890 Zanzibar was converted into a
British Protectorate, and Kenya (which was run by the British East Africa
Company) was taken over directly by the British government.\(^5\)

The British settlement and colonisation of Australia, the west coast of which
faces the Indian Ocean, was also significant. In specific terms, the
settlement of Western Australia was a strategic move to prevent the French
occupying this vantage point in relation to the Indian Ocean region.\(^6\)

Once these conquests were made, Britain emerged as the undisputed power
within the Indian Ocean. From then onwards the Indian Ocean emerged as
a ‘British Lake’. This supreme position continued for the nineteenth century
and the first half of the twentieth century. Its position was seriously
challenged in a naval sense only in the 1940s when Japan entered World
Map of the British Empire in 1815
Map of the British Empire in 1920
War II. Britain’s paramountcy over India and the Indian Ocean region was quite an achievement which had no comparison in world history and strategy. No power had achieved the acquisition of such a large maritime Empire controlled from Europe. During the nineteenth century Britain’s only challenge to its Indian Ocean Empire was from Russia, in a thrust from Central Asia through India’s ancient invasion routes from the north-west frontier. From the twentieth century the challenge was from Germany. Germany developed a Navy but this was mainly deployed in the Atlantic Ocean. The Indian Ocean was not a significant theatre of Naval conflict during the course of World War I. At this point of time the challenge from Germany was perceived as a land challenge, an example being the proposal to build the Berlin to Baghdad railway. Such a proposal was seen as a challenge to the British position within the Persian Gulf area.  

In 1904 the British Navy made a significant technological change when it decided to use oil as its main fuel instead of coal. This move made the Middle East and the Persian Gulf a vital and strategic area. To the mid-nineteenth century Britain had a virtual monopoly of coal as a primary producer of coal. In order to procure this basic energy for her Navy and merchant fleet it had a world-wide network of coal fuelling stations which included the strategic Trincomalee Harbour in Sri Lanka. From Britain’s point of view now, her interest in the Middle East was paramount as a source of fuel and energy to keep her navy afloat.  

It is therefore not surprising that Britain further consolidated and added to its hold over the Middle East and its approaches after World War I. Britain was the main shareholder of the oil company in Persia (Iran): the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. This factor was seen in Britain’s military manoeuvres during World War I in this area. For example, the British Army (with a large component of her Indian Army) took possession of the Shatt-el-Arab. This also included the strategic town of Basra. Britain got more strategic land within the Middle East and East Africa after World War I.
With defeat of the Turkish Empire (the Ottoman) within the lands of the Arabs, the British got control of Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan. Britain also got the German East African territory of Tanganyika. These territories were acquired on the basis of ‘mandated territories’, under the provision of the League of Nations.  

**Sri Lanka’s Strategic Position during the Period of British Dominance over the Indian Ocean Region**

The British government in London (that laid down the global policy of naval deployment) at times paid no attention to Sri Lanka and her strategic Harbour of Trincomalee after 1822. This was mainly due to Britain having no major challenge to its naval dominance over the Indian Ocean and its paramountcy over India. However, when the possibility of a major conflict arose in the Indian Ocean region or in the East, Sri Lanka and the Harbour of Trincomalee were given attention. For example, in the nineteenth century, during the course of the first Burma War and the first China War, the British navy used Trincomalee as an important forward base. When the sailing ships gave way to steam power the importance of Trincomalee further declined. During the period of the sailing ships it was the only harbour within the eastern coast of India that provided shelter during the adverse monsoon season, especially during the months the North Eastern Monsoon prevailed. In 1860 Trincomalee was once again a centre of attention due to the possibility of war breaking out. Accordingly, the Indian Station was given an Admiral and a decision was made to transfer the naval establishment situated at Malacca Straits from the China Station to Bombay. This situation caused more ships to use the Trincomalee Harbour. In 1864 the electric cable was connected to Trincomalee which made it a vital base for naval operations. Trincomalee Harbour was also used as a stores and coal depot. In addition the harbour was an appropriate venue to carry out naval exercises. The harbour was large enough to try out in the exercises the recently introduced methods pertaining to propulsion and the new weapons systems coming into vogue. In 1905 Trincomalee was closed, the garrison
was withdrawn. The only other significant event was that in 1920 the railway was linked to Trincomalee. In 1923 the dockyard was again re-opened of the Trincomalee Harbour.  

During World War I the Indian Ocean saw no major conflict. However, damage was caused to commercial ships operating within the Indian Ocean as the British had only a few warships stationed to patrol the Indian Ocean region as most of the Fleet were deployed in the Atlantic Ocean and North Sea. This situation enabled certain German cruisers (earlier stationed in China as part of the Far Eastern Fleet), like the “Emden”, to cause considerable damage to commercial shipping within the Indian Ocean region. It took quite a while before these armed raiders were located and destroyed. Due to this lack of British warships, even the Australian troops assembled at Albany in Western Australia had to be escorted by Japanese warships (mainly destroyers) in terms of the Anglo-Japanese Naval Agreement concluded in 1904. Against this background Sri Lanka and her strategic harbour did not play a decisive strategic role in World War I.

**Sri Lanka and World War II**

During the early part of the war in Europe there was military action in the Middle East and in East Africa. There was an invasion of British Somaliland by the Italians and clashes along the Eritrean-Sudanese border. Both the British Indian Army and South African troops were deployed against the Italians. By 1941 East Africa was cleared of the Italian military threat.

At this point of time the combined German Italian troops in North Africa threatened the vital Suez Canal region. Rommel, the German General, was the Commander who spearheaded these military actions. At the same time the German influence was felt both at Iraq and in Persia (Iran). British forces entered Iraq when the USSR was attacked by Germany. Both British and Russian forces entered Persia and replaced the pro-German Ruler, Reza-Shah. This was done to secure the supply route to the USSR. For these
purposes the Port of Basra in Iraq was used, and the Trincomalee Harbour was a vital transit point of supply.  

However it was only after December 8, 1941 that the position in the Indian Ocean became critical after Japan entered the war on the side of the Germans with an attack on Pearl Harbour. The start of the Pacific War had an adverse effect on the naval situation within the Indian Ocean region. Following the Japanese attack on the US Fleet at Pearl Harbour the Japanese entered the Gulf of Siam. They then forced the Thai government to agree to the entry of Japanese troops, who would use Thai land routes to attack Burma and Malaya. Attacks were also mounted against the Philippines, under American rule, and the Netherlands East Indies, which was then controlled by the Dutch. Once they overran Malaya and captured Singapore in February 1942, the Indian Ocean region and India faced a real danger. In December 1941, before the capture of Singapore, the Japanese sunk the two major British Warships: “The Prince of Wales” and the “Repulse”. After this victory the Japanese Carrier Fleet, led by Vice-Admiral Nagumo, entered the Indian Ocean. From here it was easy to destroy Dutch power in the Netherlands East Indies, which was achieved when Japan was victorious at the Battle of the Java Sea on the 27 February 1942.

With the Japanese entry into the Indian Ocean, British and allied shipping and sea communications within the Bay of Bengal came under attack. At this point the British Wartime Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and the Chiefs of Staff, were concerned at the potential loss of the British naval command of the strategic area of the Bay of Bengal and Sri Lanka, which now was the base of the British Eastern Fleet. Trincomalee was the main fleet anchorage. Addu Atoll, which lay 600 miles from the south-west of Sri Lanka and a deep water lagoon in the Maldives Islands, were all developed to act as a makeshift fleet base with an air field adjoining it. Further to the south within the Chagos Archipelago was a minor base at Diego Garcia. In addition there were bases in the Seychelles and Mauritius. Yet Sri Lanka
Map of South Asia in mid 1942
Map of Trincomalee Harbour
was the main base for the British and allied naval strength within the Indian Ocean. Winston Churchill made the observations:

Nothing must be taken from Ceylon (Sri Lanka) which endangers the naval base or deters the Fleet from using it. 15

With this developing situation every effort was made to rush forces and military equipment to Sri Lanka. For example, 16th and 17th Brigades of the 6th Australian Division (on their return from the Middle East) and the 16th Brigade of the 70th British Division (which was on its way to India) were directed to land in Sri Lanka. The aircraft carrier “Indomitable” was used to bring aircraft. A decision was made by the British War Cabinet in London the defence of Sri Lanka and her naval base should receive the highest priority. Following this decision on the 10 March 1942, the Vice-Admiral, Sir Geoffrey Layton, who was then Commander in Chief of the Eastern Fleet, took over the command of all the forces in Sri Lanka. The civil administration of the country was also under his direction and control. Sir Geoffrey Layton’s command and control was extended to cover the Maldives Islands as well. In March 1942 the Japanese took over the Andaman Islands and shortly afterwards Admiral Somerville arrived in Sri Lanka and took over command of the Eastern Fleet. It appears that the Fleet was not quite prepared for any worthwhile naval operations as evidenced by the telegram sent by Admiral Somerville to the American Admiral Nimitz:

My fleet consists of the greater part of ships that have been employed almost exclusively on independent duties or are newly commissioned. I am engaged in giving them intensive fleet training and hope before long to report them fit for offensive operations. 16

Shortly thereafter began the Japanese air attacks on Sri Lanka, based on its carrier based fleet now in the Indian Ocean. They were targeted on specific installations, like the Colombo Port, and the oil installations and air fields around the Trincomalee Harbour. British and allied ships were also attacked and sank. The carrier based fleet of the Japanese that undertook these raids on Sri Lanka wanted to inflict the maximum damage to the British
military and naval forces and installations around Sri Lanka, and thereby assist the Japanese invasion of Burma by sea. During these operations there was considerable damage and consequent disruption to the established British communications and logistics within the area of the Bay of Bengal. It was also timed to disrupt traffic which was carrying military equipment to the Soviet Union through the Indian Ocean with its approaches (Arabian Sea) to the Middle East and from ports in the Middle East. The seaward approach through the Mediterranean Sea was difficult due to the German and Italian presence and the Cape and Indian Ocean was one that was mainly used. All the ports from South Africa, India and Sri Lanka were crowded with transit traffic resulting in considerable congestion. 17 The Map (page 77) gives an idea of the Japanese operations in the Indian Ocean during the raids on Sri Lanka. This once again points to Sri Lanka’s strategic position when there was a major naval and military conflict in the Indian Ocean area and more so in the Bay of Bengal.

The World Naval and Strategic Deployment during and after World War II: Britain’s Role Within the Indian Ocean Region and the Middle East

In order to evaluate the significance of the 1947 Defence Agreement within a strategic framework it is proposed to examine the naval strategy of Western Powers at the end of World War II. In real terms the US Navy had played a vital role in the Allied Victory and the strategic structure evolved during the course of the war had an immediate bearing on the policies evolved at the time the Defence Agreement was concluded. In this sense the Defence Agreement was part of a broad strategic stance that the Western Powers (mainly the USA and Britain) took in the deployment and use of their respective navies. During the course of World War II the United States’ naval representation in Britain emerged to a close one of cooperation and coordination between their navies during the time of 1941 to 1946. For example in 1940 the US President Roosevelt agreed to exchange fifty over age destroyers for US rights to establish naval bases in British bases in
Map of the US Military Base Requirements following World War II
Map of the Principal British Bases in 1947
Map of the Key United States Bases Abroad
Europe and the western hemisphere. This resulted in the start of a joint
deployment strategy. This was based (at that time) on the basis that the US would enter
the war. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941,
the US entered the war and the strategy had to be modified to meet the
needs of the Pacific War. However in 1942 the Anglo-American discussions
decided the policy control and command structure for the Allied Powers in
their common objectives against Germany. One such decision was to
establish a Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington DC. This body was to
determine the strategy and in the process the senior US Officers would
represent the US and be stationed in London.\textsuperscript{18} For example, Admiral
Harold Raynsford Stark was appointed Commander (US) of naval forces in
Europe. After the war the US Navy remained in Europe and other parts of
the world to watch their interests in the emerging global political and world
strategic setting. In the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean Sea, where the
British Fleet had dominated before World War II, the lead role was now
taken by the US Navy. For example, the diaries of Jules James (reference
to the period December 1945 to June 1946) deals mainly with his command
of the US Naval Fleet in the Mediterranean, with duties in Naples, Palermo,
and Italy, in relation to Naval Administration.\textsuperscript{19} This points to a US takeover
of an earlier British naval function. Hence, although the Eastern
Mediterranean had traditionally been regarded as being within the British
sphere of influence when the US Government learnt of the British decisions
to withdraw support for Greece and Turkey, President Truman proposed to
Congress that: \textit{“It must be the policy of the United States of America to
support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed
minorities, or by outside pressure.”}\textsuperscript{18}

Congress accepted this concept, which becomes known as the Truman
Doctrine and provided a $400 million aid-package for Greece and Turkey.
This was the beginning of the ‘Cold War” era, a term used by journalists, like
Walter Lipmann, who strove to explain world politics, strategy and
international relations as being neither in a state of peace nor war. It was
broadly used to describe the relations between the western (non-communist)
and eastern (communist) blocks after World War II. It created a bipolar world which shaped the international political scene. It led to the extension of an alliance system which led to a global trend in the 1950s. This involved both bilateral and multilateral alliances at times, called ‘pactomania’. Bilateral Treaties were concluded by the USA with Japan, South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan. The Defence Agreement between Britain and Sri Lanka in November 1947 fell into this category of treaties and agreements that had strategic implications.

20

The Strategic Aspects of the United Kingdom Defence Agreement of 11 November 1947: Its Contents and Implications

The agreement was signed by Henry Moore on behalf of the British government, and by D.S. Seneyake on behalf of the Government of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). In its preamble it states as follows:

Whereas Ceylon has reached the stage in constitutional development at which she is ready to assume the status of a fully responsible member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, in no way subordinate in any aspect of domestic or external affairs, freely associated and united by common allegiance to the Crown.

And whereas it is in the mutual interest of Ceylon and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland that the necessary measures should be taken for the effectual protection and defence of the territories of both and that the necessary facilities should be afforded for this purpose.

The Agreement specifically relates to the grant of self government (Dominion Status) to Sri Lanka, and following this the Agreement is solely for defence and security interests of the parties to be maintained. Sri Lanka’s independence was granted on the 4 February 1948. The Defence Agreement was an essential pre-requisite to independence.
The next part to the Agreement refers to the specific implications of the Agreement:

*Therefore the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ceylon have agreed as follows:*

1) *The Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ceylon will give to each other such military assistance for the security of their territories, for defence against external aggression and for the protection of essential communications as it may be in their mutual interest to provide. The Government of the United Kingdom may base such naval and air forces and maintain such land forces in Ceylon as may be required for these purposes, and as may be mutually agreed.*

2) *The Government of Ceylon will grant to the Government of the United Kingdom all the necessary facilities for the objects mentioned in Article 1 as may be mutually agreed. These facilities will include the use of naval and air bases and ports and military establishments and the use of telecommunications facilities and the right of service courts and authorities to exercise such control and jurisdiction over members of the said forces as they exercise at present.*

3) *The Government of the United Kingdom will furnish the Government of Ceylon with such military assistance as may from time to time be required towards the training and development of Ceylonese armed forces.*

By Article (2) of this Agreement the government of Sri Lanka provided the needed facilities for Britain which included the use of naval and air bases, ports, military establishments and telecommunication facilities. It can be inferred, therefore, that the country's total security assets were placed within
the use of the British military authorities. This gave the British free use of the naval base at Trincomalee and the air-force base at Katunayake. In addition, if required, access was available to the other ports of the country like that in Colombo, Galle (in the southern province), Kankesenturai which is in the north of the island, in addition to a number of airports like Palaly in the Jaffna District and Hingurakgoda in the Polonnaruwa District. In addition to this the total telecommunication facilities within the country were also made available. Sri Lanka’s situation was such that it was ideal for communication purposes due to its location, and this move to hand over the telecommunication facilities had strategic and security implications. These facilities could therefore be used by the British to further their security interests, not only in relation to the defence of Sri Lanka but also for any military deployment within the Indian Ocean region or outside it.

What the British got in the Trincomalee Harbour was:

a) The Royal Navy dockyard;

b) The Royal Air Force Runway and China Bay Camp; and

c) The Oil Tank Farm.\textsuperscript{21}

The British abandoned the idea of an Oil Tank Farm in Singapore before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 due to the massive military threat posed by the Japanese in the Far East. Hence, the British set their sights on constructing an Oil Tank farm at their base in Trincomalee which has the finest natural harbour in the world and is adequately protected by nature.

The British commenced the construction of the Oil Tank Farm, which is the largest in Asia, in 1938 and completed it in the latter part of the Second World War (only fifty-five tanks were in operation). By the time the war ended the British completed eighty-five tanks while sixteen were still under construction. The balance was completed after the Second World War. Each tank is numbered. Each oil tank can hold 15,000 tons of oil. These facilities were available for any navy (that was allied to the British) to operate within the Indian Ocean area.
Map of the Problem of the Middle East
The Defence Agreement of 1947 between Britain and Sri Lanka and Its Strategic Connection to the Global Development: 1947-1957 Sri Lanka as a Part of the Western Alignment

As Britain and the USA were close allies in the post World War II evaluation of a military, political and economic strategy, it is proposed to examine such alliances. There was this new emergent structure in international relations, creating a bipolar world. These alignments and alliances were designed to increase each member's security against perceived potential foes: it was global in reach, though they specifically covered only regions. This applied to naval deployments of fleets, communications and transport of military equipment where Sri Lanka’s location within the Indian Ocean region was a significant factor. Hence it is appropriate to examine the rise of such military, political and economic agreements. 22

Before examining the provisions of the global network of military agreements that connected Sri Lanka to the Western Camp, it is appropriate to examine two speeches which gave a theoretical and ideological basis in policy formulation. This was Winston Churchill’s now famous Fulton Speech, and Truman’s address to the US Congress. As William Fulbright wrote:

More than any other factor the anti-communism of the ‘Truman Doctrine’ has been the guiding spirit of American foreign policy since World War II. 23

This policy statement was to be the basis of American foreign policy as much as providing the main framework of the ‘Cold War’ as it emerged on a global scale. In his speech in March 1947 to the joint session of Congress a request was made for $400 million as aid to Greece and Turkey. Truman requested (and it was approved) and he stated:

It must be the policy of the United States’ to support free peoples who were resisting subjection by armed minorities or outside pressure. 24

By this the President of the USA not only got Congress approval to commit troops to foreign countries, but also economic aid to Europe: the Marshall
Plan. This was a complete departure from past policies followed by the US during peace time. From 1947 onwards military and economic aid was committed to prevent the spread of communism in any part of the world.

As early as 1946 Winston Churchill, in his speech at Fulton, appealed to the Western Powers to form a defensive alliance within the framework of the United Nations. Ernste Bevin, the Foreign Secretary under Clement Atlee government, delivered a similar speech in the House of Commons. This led to the Brussels Treaty and logically, from here, was what led to the North Atlantic Treaty. Britain and the USA were close allies in developing a global world military strategy. As Sri Lanka was militarily aligned to Britain by the 1947 Defence Agreement it is proposed to trace the rise and development of military and political alliances where Britain and USA played a key role. While the Defence Agreement was operative Sri Lanka was a part of this new emergent military and strategic structure. These alignments and alliances were designed to increase each member’s security against perceived potential foes: it was global in vision and planning though it specifically covered only regions. This was so in regards to naval deployment of fleets, the transport of military equipment, and the evaluation of a command and communication structure spread on a global scale. Here Sri Lanka’s location was an important factor. Hence it is appropriate to trace the rise of military and political agreements on a global scale, especially those that pointed to strategic issues that had significance. It is only then one can see the significance of the 1947 Defence Agreement on a global scale of naval and military deployment of the West.

**The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation**
The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) evolved from the Brussels Pact, which was signed in March 1948 by Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxemburg. The primary objective of the Brussels Pact was to prevent a resurgence of German militarism. The advent of the Cold War, however, soon shifted the emphasis toward European defence against
Soviet expansion. Lacking resources for such a task, the Pact members invited the United States and Canada to participate. The two countries came in initially as observers. Before long, in view of the increasing power of the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe and in divided Germany, a new, wider arrangement gained support among all the participants. In April 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed, initially by the five signatories of the Brussels Pact, and by Canada, the United States, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, and Portugal. In 1952 Greece and Turkey were admitted, and in 1955 the Federal Republic of Germany became the fifteenth member. Spain joined in 1982, bringing the membership to sixteen.

Over the years, quite elaborate structures and procedures have been developed to coordinate strategy, force requirements, weapons development, and detailed tactical plans, which are constantly updated. These arrangements provide the means for coordinating the defence efforts of the individual members, identifying weaknesses, and facilitating a continuous exchange of information and views among officers from different (national) military establishments. All this is unique in the annals of history; never before have partners in a military alliance agreed willingly to exchange detailed military information and submit their own national military policies to the scrutiny of others. The principal objective of NATO is to convince the Soviet Union that any attempt to change the status quo in Western Europe by military action will result in a military confrontation with the United States. It was one of Europe but it has global implications and formed a structure where other treaties fitted in.

**Baghdad Pact (February 1955) and Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO)**

The Baghdad Pact was partly the result of British efforts to maintain its position as the leading power in the Middle East. In 1945 British power in the region was based on the Suez Canal, but efforts to renew the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty failed and the Egyptian government rejected a British
proposal in 1951 to create a Middle East defence organisation. British had a loyal Arab ally in Iraq, where there were British air bases. In February 1955 Iraq’s Prime Minister, the conservative Nuri el-Said, signed a treaty in Baghdad with Adnan Menderes of Turkey, another pro-Western Middle Eastern state. In April Britain linked itself to this arrangement by signing a new Anglo-Iraqi treaty. When Pakistan and Iran joined, the British had formed an alliance of all states in the ‘northern tier’ of the Middle East, forming a barrier against Soviet expansion.  

**South-East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO), September 1954**

A treaty to protect south-east Asia had first been proposed by the US in spring 1954, during the last stages of the First Indo-China War. An alliance was signed on 8th September in Manila. Most newly independent nations in the region refused to take part, and it were therefore made up of Western states (US, Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand) and their close allies (the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan). SEATO had a central headquarters in Bangkok, held joint military exercises and included intelligence co-operation against Communists.  

**The Importance of the Middle East and the Gulf Area: Britain’s Interest in 1947: The Defence Agreement with Sri Lanka in 1947 Aided Naval Deployments to Cover this Vital Area**

The Middle East has always been a strategic area. It is situated between three continents. Further, after the construction of the Suez Canal in the mid-nineteenth century it has been a route to the Far East. The Suez Canal was completed in 1869 by the French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps. However, Britain acquired the major stake and virtual control of it due to its growing maritime Empire in Asia. The map (page 88) points to the strategic importance of the whole area.  

The vital area has been a centre of conflict and disputes, especially after the collapse of the Ottoman (Turkish Empire) at the beginning of the twentieth
century after World War I. It has resulted in constant conflicts over religion, political disagreements and rival doctrines. So long as the Ottoman Empire held control over this area other nations, such as Russia, were not in a position to take over. It was with the decline of the Ottoman Empire that other countries sought to gain control of the region, resulting in conflict and confusion. The location of the Persian Gulf has given that region an economic and strategic position. The region has played a very sensitive role in world security. Within a historic perspective this region had been made use by big powers from the fifteenth century to make use of this waterway and its bases. During the period of the ‘Cold War’ the area acted as a third strategic front, with Europe and south-east Asia being the first and second fronts.  

The next most important strategic development was the discovery of oil in this region. In 1911 Winston Churchill caused the Royal Navy to be changed from coal to oil, and followed this up by getting the British government to purchase the shares in the Anglo-Persian oil company. Perhaps his decision at this point was influenced by the possibility of war breaking out with Germany. As the World War progressed and there was the increasing use of the internal combustion engine, especially in the motor industry, there was a rush to get oil concessions within the Gulf Area, especially in Kuwait, Bahrain and Nejd. It was therefore found by the British that the vital Suez and Gulf area had to be secured not only as a strategic waterway for naval deployment in Asia, but also for the security of oil supplies. It was supposed to contain the largest known oil deposits. Due to French and American pressure Britain gave up her exclusive right to exploit the area of oil wealth. In this context American and French companies ended up by joining the British in the Iraq Petroleum Company. In Bahrain and Saudi Arabia the American companies got concessions to exploit oil resources. Due to pressure for better royalties’ rates by the local states a fifty-fifty basis was agreed to with Aramco’s Agreement with Saudi Arabia in 1950. This became the model to be followed by foreign petroleum companies in the Middle East.
At the end of World War II Britain was the dominant power in this region. The former Italian colonies of Cyrenaica and Tripolitania were added to her Middle Eastern Empire. Britain had control of Iraq and half of Persia (Iran). In the task of holding sway over this vital area (in terms of the broad Western Strategy) a good naval base within the Indian Ocean was needed. The American presence was not yet well established. Diego Garcia, the American base that now serves its fleet, was not yet built. Therefore the port facilities in Sri Lanka were needed, especially the Trincomalee Harbour. During this period Ernest Bevin was Foreign Secretary in the Labour Government. He strove to formulate a new imperial policy. In this he was more in accord with the then American aims and objectives. He wished to bring in a new empire based on partnership and at the same time based on strategic considerations. These strategies were based on the basis of a suspected Soviet expansion in which the Middle East played a very significant role. 

In understanding the realist aspects of the 1947 Defence Agreement it is best to examine the views and policies enunciated by the leading British politicians, who had a decisive effect on the formulation and development of post-World War II policies. The 1947 Defence Agreement was between Britain who, at that period of time, considered herself a ‘big power’, and a small country about to be given independence in the south Asian region. In this sense it can be described as an ‘unequal treaty’. Further, Britain had emerged as a victor in a world war, in partnership with the USA. In this historic context it is appropriate to examine the now famous “Fulton Speech” of war time Prime Minister of Britain, Winston Churchill, and the documents that reveal the mind of Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, under Clement Atlee, who headed the Labour Government in the first post-World War II government. This formed the strategic approach on a global scale. Europe was the centre, but the implications were global.
The Fulton Speech: The Basis of Anglo-American and Western Policies

This speech was delivered by Winston Churchill at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. Its basic message was the achievement of peace through strength and though there have been big changes in the whole geopolitical situation in the world it appears to be yet relevant as it is a realist though conservative approach.

Spencer Warren in an article entitled “Churchill’s Realism: Reflections on the Fulton Speech” had this to say:

Churchill’s ‘Sinews of Peace’ speech, delivered in the gymnasium of Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri, on 5 March 1946, is renowned as one of the greatest and most significant speeches of the twentieth century. It was made at a pregnant moment in history, as America’s wartime alliance with Stalin’s Soviet Russia was beginning to turn in the direction of Cold War. 34

The strategic concept of his speech is clearly seen in his speech at Fulton when he stated:

Now, while still pursuing the method of realising our overall strategic concept, I come to the crux of what I have travelled here to say. Neither the sure prevention of war, nor the continuous rise of world organisation will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking peoples.

British Strategy after World War II: A Pointer to the Strategic Aspect of the Defence Agreement with Sri Lanka in 1947

A study of the archives of British documents of this period demonstrates that the British officials, along with their counterparts in the USA, had fears and concerns of the growing power and influence of the then Soviet Union. While both the British and Americans shared this concern at this point of time they, at times, had divergent objectives. This points to the relevance of
the realist approach which has the focus on each individual state (though joined in an alliance): having their national interest as paramount in international relations and diplomacy.

A study of the documents also reveals that there was a bipartisan policy that evolved between the Conservative and the Labour government in the area of strategic postures. Both Winston Churchill and Ernest Bevin had near similar aims and objectives in the broad strategy followed.

This once again points to the fact that a state’s foreign policy is in its own national interest as perceived and hardly any weight or real consideration is given to ideological factors. Even if they are referred to, they play a subsidiary role in the fundamental reasons that prompt a state’s foreign policy and diplomacy. John Kent in his article “British Policy and the Origins of the Cold War” has examined these issues with reference to the archival materials. 35

Kent refers to the break-down of the Anglo-Soviet World War II alliance:

The area initially most affected by the rival claims of British and Soviet imperialism was the Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. Russian expansion in the Balkans and the Turkish Straits had always threatened what was a predominantly British sphere of influence in the Mediterranean. But in 1944 the Foreign Office was committed to a policy of cooperation with the Soviet Union, although this commitment was to change by the summer of 1945. 36

Originally the British position was to allow the Russians (the Soviet Union) into the Mediterranean. This was the position taken up by Winston Churchill during the discussions prior to the ending of the War:

The spheres-of-influence approach was epitomized by the infamous October 1944 percentages deal in which Stalin and Churchill agreed on a 50-50 division in Yugoslavia and a 90-10 arrangement in Britain’s
favour for Greece; as Churchill explained, the latter was necessary because Britain “must be the leading Mediterranean power”. 37

The British had a reversal to this policy when they perceived that the Soviet Union had its aims to dominate the Middle East, which the British felt at that time to be their exclusive sphere of influence, and tied to their objectives as a continuing world power. Kent says this to illustrate this point:

The underlying assumption among strategic planners was that the Soviet Union presented a potential threat to British interests and could not therefore be accepted as a friendly power. This also became the prevalent attitude within the Foreign Office, not because of events in eastern Europe, but because of Soviet desires for greater influence in the eastern Mediterranean. In the summer of 1945, these attitudes produced a policy of no deals or concessions of any kind to the Soviet Union. 38

British policy as pointed out by Kent had a two fold objective: to regain her position as a World Power, and to prevent any independent agreement between the Americans and Russians. These twin objectives are revealed by Kent when he states:

As has been suggested earlier, the preservation of Britain’s Middle Eastern position was deemed essential to the long-term goal of regaining equality with the United States and the Soviet Union. Another threat to this goal was Soviet-American cooperation, based on an assumption that Britain was now very much a junior partner in the alliance, and in July 1945 British representatives in both Moscow and Washington voiced their fears of this. 39

Britain wanted to hold the Middle East as a key to control Africa and to exploit its resources. This was the only way to keep her great power status in the world. This was the path to British economic recovery:

But with attention being given to the economic and strategic importance of Africa, it could be argued that Britain’s position in the
Mediterranean and the Middle East was necessary for the defence of the continent. 40

The development of British policy by 1947 is important to understand the importance of the Defence Treaty of 1947 with Sri Lanka. What Britain felt and perceived is what formed the background:

Between 1945 and 1947, Bevin and his officials aimed to preserve and strengthen British influence in the eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East; they then sought to develop European and African resources in an attempt to regain Britain’s economic independence and re-establish a position of global power and influence equal to that of the Americans and Russians. 41

Another writer who dealt with Britain’s imperial and security policy was Anthony Clayton, in the “Oxford History of the British Empire”. His argument is that America wanted a strong relationship with Britain as a partner, and that this would be extended by Security Treaties making it a global and international partnership. In this perspective the Defence Agreement between Sri Lanka and Britain in 1947 takes on a global significance:

The new relationship with the United States also reflected the importance that the Americans attached to a politically strong Britain as a partner in the cold war. It amounted to a grand strategy, never formally set out but tacitly agreed upon, that the United States would not complicate British colonial policies provided these were liberal. Policies would be followed that aimed at independence, which would come sooner for client states and later for colonies. All would be linked, if possible, in American, British, and Dominion security treaty systems. 42

Gradually this stance of the British was lessened due to economic factors. Britain could no longer keep her world-wide commitments. It was a gradual process and by 1957 (the date the Navy left Sri Lanka) this was becoming obvious. A series of defence policy reviews made this clear:
In 1950 a British ‘Global Strategy’ paper was conceived in terms of a deterrent phase in the cold war secured by an American nuclear umbrella in the form of American bomber squadrons based in Britain.  

The Suez Crisis in 1956 not only brought down the British Prime Minister, Anthony Eden, but pointed to Britain’s dependence on the USA. The then US President, Dwight D Eisenhower, and the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, did not support Britain and France in their attempts to invade Egypt. The lack of US support led to failure and this proved that Britain was no more a world power: its only way to maintain its strength and world status was by a close collaboration with the USA. Eden himself said:

> We must review our world position and domestic capacity more searchingly in the light of the Suez experience, which has not so much changed out fortunes as revealed realities.

### The British Withdrawal from Sri Lankan Bases in 1957

When S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike came to power in 1956, he requested the British forces in Sri Lanka to leave. This request coincided with the British policy (not yet formally announced) to pull out of Asia, especially after the Suez Crisis of 1956. John Gooneratne had this to say:

> Even in this, Sri Lanka and Britain parted as friends. So much so, the question used to keep cropping up in later years whether the Defence Agreement was ended, or in abeyance or just inactive, especially at times when Sri Lanka felt any sense of vulnerability during its periodic bouts of disagreement with India.

J.R. Jayawardene, the President of Sri Lanka (from 1978 to 1989), took the view that the Agreement was yet operative:

> During Mrs Thatcher’s visit to Sri Lanka in April 1985 to inaugurate the Victoria Dam Project, at the opening ceremony President Jayawardene said he wished to remind the British of the Defence Agreement, which had not been abrogated yet.
This was a period when Sri Lanka’s relations with India were not satisfactory, especially after the ethnic riots of July 1983, and also due to misunderstanding over foreign policy issues which had strategic significance. In this context Jayawardene felt that British assistance, as provided in the Defence Agreement, would be a counterweight to India and act as a balancing factor. This was a view that Sri Lankan leaders had developed due to the smallness of their country and its proximity to India. It had been from India that the invasions came prior to the period when European powers and their respective navies arrived in the Indian Ocean region, from the sixteenth century onwards.

Mick Moore, a British Scholar attached to the Sussex University, had this to say on the British withdrawal from Sri Lankan bases:

For two decades after the last British bases were closed at the end of the 1950s there was a tacit but effective consensus that international powers would keep their hands off Sri Lanka and that India had a special role as Umpire and Guardian.  

His argument underlines the strategic importance of Sri Lanka, and the fact that India had become the pivotal state within the Indian Ocean region.

The Strategic Concepts of the USA: the Voice of America Agreement with the Sri Lankan Government in 1951 - a Part of the Western Post World War II Strategy

It is appropriate that the strategic concepts of the USA are analysed after World War II as Britain was closely allied with the US in a global sense. After the 1947 Defence Agreement with Britain Sri Lanka, in 1951, signed an Agreement which allowed the United States to install and operate short wave transmitters in Sri Lanka by the Voice of America (VOA). This Agreement was renewed and revised many times till in 1983 it ran into controversies with the Indian government.
These Agreements appear in the Official USA Treaty Series as follows:


Treaty Series No. 5 of 1954. Exchange of Notes between the Government of Ceylon and the Government of United States of America concerning the extension of the facilities agreed to under Treaty Series No. 3 (1951) for the broadcast of “Voice of America” programme over Radio Ceylon.

Treaty Series No. 1 of 1963. Exchange of Notes between the Government of Ceylon and the Government of United States of America concerning the extension of the facilities agreed to under Treaty Series No. 3 (1951) for the broadcast of “Voice of America” programme over Radio Ceylon.

These facilities were used for broadcasting to Asia and Central Asia. Further, the facility could have been used as a command and communication centre for the deployment of naval and military purposes.

To understand some inner aspects of US strategic policy and it is proposed to examine the views of Melvyn P. Leffler, who wrote after studying released declassified documents. These documents were from the US intelligence and military sources. 49 Leffler’s view was that the new policy followed by the US was a consequence of what transpired in World War II. It was a positive policy in response to what was then perceived as the strategic postures of the then Soviet Union. In this process the US feared that consequent to world socio-economic problems communism would spread to the
decolonising nations (especially in African and Asian countries) from the weakening of British power, after the independence given to India and the consequent lack of a real power within the Euro/Asian region, which writers like Mackinder (and other strategists) had pointed as vital from the point of view of attaining global dominance.  

Leffler pointed to the strategic thinking of American leaders in 1945 when he said:

*In October 1945 the civilian leaders of the War and Navy Departments carefully reviewed the emerging strategic concepts and case requirements of the military planners. Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal and Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson fully endorsed the concept of a far-flung system of bases.*  

The US opposed any attempt by the Soviets to control what was perceived by them of strategic value in the south-east of Europe, the Middle East and in the Far East:

*From the closing days of the Second World War, American defence officials believed that they could not allow any prospective adversary to control the Eurasian land mass.*  

There was also a fear that the then Soviet Union would get at vital resources on which they would expand their power and military might. A report from the US Embassy in Moscow pointed to this:

*Soviet power is by nature so jealous that it has already operated to segregate from world economy almost all of the areas in which it has been established." Therefore, Forrestal and the navy sought to contain Soviet influence in the Near East and to retain American access to Middle East oil.*  

There was a persistent fear that growing economic crisis would favour the Soviet Union and enable it to gain ascendancy in many countries. The Americans feared that rapid decolonisation and a decline in British power
would lead to move favourable governments emerging which would favour the Soviet Union and oppose western countries. This would not be favourable to the position of the USA:

*During 1946 and 1947, defence officials witnessed a dramatic unravelling of the geopolitical foundations and socio-economic structure of international affairs.*  

During 1946 and 1947, defence officials witnessed a dramatic unravelling of the geopolitical foundations and socio-economic structure of international affairs.  

Increasingly the US was formulating a global policy whose strategy was wide-ranging. It was not only military and security that was given priority but also economic aid to give a push at countries so as to prevent them from falling into the Communist ideology and thereby aiding Soviet power in the world:

*The priority accorded to Western Europe did not mean that officials ignored the rest of Eurasia. Indeed, the sustained economic rejuvenation of Western Europe made access to Middle Eastern oil more important than ever.*  

The priority accorded to Western Europe did not mean that officials ignored the rest of Eurasia. Indeed, the sustained economic rejuvenation of Western Europe made access to Middle Eastern oil more important than ever.

It is therefore relevant to really examine what the strategic objects of the US were in a global context, how an attempt was made to translate their strategic plan at the ground level, both to safeguard their strategic objectives as much as to project their power within a given region. This forms the real meat in their policy pursued after World War II which formed part and parcel of their ‘Cold War’ strategy. This is clearly pointed out by Leffler:

*The dynamics of the Cold War after 1948 are easier to comprehend when one grasps the breadth of the American conception of national security that had emerged between 1945 and 1948. This conception included a strategic sphere of influence within the western hemisphere, domination of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, an extensive system of outlying bases to enlarge the strategic frontier and project American power.*  

The dynamics of the Cold War after 1948 are easier to comprehend when one grasps the breadth of the American conception of national security that had emerged between 1945 and 1948. This conception included a strategic sphere of influence within the western hemisphere, domination of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, an extensive system of outlying bases to enlarge the strategic frontier and project American power.

This sums up the real situation of the ‘Cold War’. Sri Lanka was at this time a part of the western strategic build of bases and a vital communication
centre as revealed in the base facilities and the Voice of America Agreements.

**With a British Withdrawal from the Indian Ocean and the US Moves into the Indian Ocean to Fill the Gap: Diego Garcia as a US Naval Base and the Super-Power Clash of Interests and Search for Bases**

The changing nature of British power in the region caused London and Washington to devise a strategy to uphold the interests of both nations. In 1965, during talks with a Mauritian delegation, the British government made it clear that the island's independence was dependent on the transfer of the Chagos Archipelago and the transfer of sovereignty to Britain. On November 8, 1965, the British government then created the Crown Colony of the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). The BIOT consisted of the Chagos Archipelago, earlier administered from the British Crown Colony of Mauritius; and the Aldabra and Farquhar islands and Île Desroches, previously administered from the British Crown Colony of Seychelles. In 1966 Britain leased the approximately eighteen-kilometre island of Diego Garcia in the Chagos Archipelago to the United States for a fifty-year period until the year 2016, with a twenty-year extension available if neither London nor Washington opposed continuation. For political and security reasons, the indigenous population of 1,200 who lived on Diego Garcia were resettled in Mauritius and Seychelles, and received US$8 million in compensation from the British government. The controversy surrounding these actions never has disappeared; even in 1993, the Mauritian government periodically attempted to reassert its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago, especially Diego Garcia.  

When the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War between Israel and Egypt cause the closure of the Suez Canal, shippers had to transport their goods around the Cape of Good Hope. This increased the importance of Madagascar, Comoros, Seychelles, and to a lesser extent, Mauritius, all of which had the potential to command the Cape route. After the Suez Canal reopened in
1975, these islands retained their significance because, to carry petroleum more economically over the longer route, many shippers had built supertankers that were too large to pass through the canal.  

In early 1968, the strategic situation in the Indian Ocean changed again when the British government announced its intention to withdraw all its military forces from east of the Suez Canal by 1971. Two months after this declaration, the Soviet Union deployed four warships to the Indian Ocean, and arranged for them to call at ports on the Indian subcontinent, the Persian Gulf, and the East African coast. After 1969 Soviet naval units regularly visited the region. Throughout the 1970s, Moscow also succeeded in gaining access to several naval bases around the littoral and increasing the number of Soviet intelligence, research, and fishing vessels operating in the Indian Ocean. As a result, the number of Soviet naval craft in the area often exceeded those of the United States.

The British pullback from east of Suez also led to an increased United States military presence in the Indian Ocean. In 1972 a new agreement allowed the United States to build a naval communications facility on Diego Garcia for British and United States use. Also, in 1972 the United States naval element, Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC) extended its operational area to cover most of the Indian Ocean. In 1976 the United States transformed Diego Garcia into a naval support facility with deep-water docks and an expanded runway.

These steps were taken due to strategic neglect of the Indian Ocean region. This was due to this area still being patrolled by British Navy. This was mainly due to Britain’s feeling of being yet an imperial power, which was badly damaged by the Suez crisis, and in 1968 Britain announced a total withdrawal of its imperial forces east of the Suez. This created a temporary power vacuum which led to substantial deployments of Soviet naval and airforces within this region. From Moscow’s perspective, the Soviet Indian Ocean Squadron performed a defensive mission against the United States,
and promoted Soviet foreign policy in the region. Apart from access to naval facilities in Seychelles, Mauritius, and La Réunion, the Soviet Union also conducted long-range maritime surveillance flights over much of the Indian Ocean. Despite this activity, Moscow avoided a military confrontation with Washington in the Indian Ocean, largely because it lacked modern, high-performance aircraft carriers and the ability to defend long sea and air lines of communications to and from the region. 61

With these developments the Indian Ocean naval bases, such as Trincomalee Harbour in particular, again became important. It is of historical interest to note that whenever there was a clash of strategic interest, the importance of Sri Lanka became focused at some stage in the struggle. When the ‘Cold War’ strategy was extended into the Indian Ocean region this was the case. Therefore, though the British left the country in 1957-1958 period, the US moved into the Indian Ocean and thereafter, whenever there was a clash or impending conflict, it had its effects on Sri Lanka, who got caught up in this process of military and naval deployments. 62

The Problems of Indians in Sri Lanka: the Basis of the Fear of India
The Indians were brought by the British, from the mid nineteenth century, to work on the plantations (coffee, followed by tea and rubber) and for infrastructure work involving the building of the railways, roads, and the operations of the major ports and harbours. By the twentieth century they formed a sizable section of the population, especially within the central province which fell within the former Kandyan Kingdom. 63 With the extension of the franchise in the 1930s, under the Donoughmore Constitution, they were able to return elected members to the then Legislature and, by virtue of this fact, were considered to be a part of the permanently settled population of the country. This development was resented by the majority ethnic group, the Sinhalese, especially those from the former Kandyan Kingdom. They perceived the Indians as a new element
in the politics of the country, who would oppose their interest. Hence, the extension of the franchise was a contentious issue in Sri Lankan politics.  

After the economic depression, and consequent problem of unemployment, there was a cry for ‘Ceylonisation’, that was directed primarily against the Indians. Administrative acts, like the discontinuance of Indian workers in the Port of Colombo, and an appeal to stop Indian migration were the first steps of the anti-Indian campaign. In 1933 S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, a Sinhalese leader (who later became Prime Minister in 1956) led a campaign to restrict Indian immigration to the country. He brought a resolution before the State Council to control Indian immigration. Subsequently, the State Council passed a motion that due preference should be given to Ceylonese, and those from outside the country (mainly Indians) should be recruited only if persons within the country did not have the requisite qualifications. This was followed by another resolution sponsored by Bandaranaike that the Governor should appoint a Royal Commission to examine the issue of non-Ceylonese workers, due to the problems of Ceylonese unemployment and to prevent further immigration into the country. H.W. Amarasuriya proposed another resolution the year following, which requested a Royal Commission to consider restrictions on Indian immigration.

This resulted in the Jackson Commission which examined the problem of Indian immigration. The terms of reference were wide ranging. The Commission’s Report was quite specific that Indian immigrant labour was still needed for the country’s development. Special mention was made to the need for Indian labour in the plantation sector. In conclusion the Jackson Report highlighted the significant part played by Indian labour in the economic development of the country. These views were not acceptable to the majority ethnic community, the Sinhalese. Therefore it was not surprising that the Board of Ministers did not view with favour the views expressed by the Jackson Commission.
In 1939 certain Ministers gave notice of dismissal to Indian daily paid workers. At that time the number of Indians involved was about 800. This aroused considerable concern with the then Indian political circles. At all levels it was construed as an anti-Indian move. The Indian reaction was to ban all Indian non-skilled workers from immigrating to Sri Lanka. The Indian National Congress (a government in “waiting”) was concerned at these developments of an anti-Indian sentiment. The Indian National Congress sent Pandit Nehru (who was later the first Prime Minister of India) to Sri Lanka to resolve this problem. During his stay in Sri Lanka, Nehru met leaders from the Board of Ministers as well as leaders of the Indian community settled in Sri Lanka. On Nehru’s suggestion the Ceylon Indian Congress was formed to voice the sentiments of the Indian community in Sri Lanka, and also to look at their welfare. These discussions and policies taken were a step towards mobilising the Indians living in Sri Lanka. Hence, the majority of the ethnic group in Sri Lanka (the Sinhalese) viewed with concern these developments, and furthered their fear of India as giant at her doorstep. Therefore, it is not surprising that there was no serious objection to the Defence Agreement with Britain and the stay of the British navy within its ports and harbours. In this sense the British were looked upon as defenders of Sri Lankan interests from a possible threat from India.

**Sri Lanka’s Direct Security Benefits from the Defence Agreement**

The benefits under the Agreement for Sri Lanka were set in the preamble to the Defence Agreement that stated that the United Kingdom was to give the military assistance for the defence of Ceylon’s territory, defence against aggression, and the protection of essential communications as it was in the mutual interests of the two governments to provide. In practical terms it permitted the British to use the naval and air bases, ports, military establishments, and telecommunication facilities. Mr D.S. Senayake, the first Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, had this to say in Parliament:

> I ask honourable members to be honest with themselves and their constituents. They know as well as I do that we cannot defend
ourselves ... Let us confess that our defence depends upon someone or other undertaking to help us defend ourselves.  

Accordingly the Sri Lankan government at that time allowed Britain to keep its vital naval installations within the Trincomalee Harbour. A military air base, developed during the course of World War II, was retained at Katunayake (within the Western Province, near the capital, Colombo), and it was further developed to land larger and more modern planes. From the time of independence the British government assisted in the expansion of the Sri Lankan military. There were about 12,000 Sri Lankans in the army during World War II, but they were mainly confined to non-combat units which involved transport, service and maintenance functions. There was a plan in 1949 to recruit about 1,000 men and later increase it to 3,000. The plan involved Sri Lanka taking over responsibility for the defence of the Colombo Harbour. The nucleus of this new force was the small number of officers and men who had previously served in the combat units of the British Army. The defence plan of the Sri Lankan government was to have a small military that would by sufficient to hold an enemy till assistance came from the government allies abroad; at this period from the United Kingdom. 

Under Articles three and four of the Agreement there was provision for the British to train the Sri Lankan Army and to have regular consultations. Sri Lankan Officers were trained at home in Diyatalawa (established by the British) and in Britain in institutions like Sandhurst, Aldershot, Dartmouth and Cranwell. There were joint consultations on Sri Lankan defence issues between British officers and those from the Sri Lankan military. Plans were developed for the defence of Sri Lanka. Naval manoeuvres and exercises were undertaken, especially off the Trincomalee Harbour. 

Under the Defence Agreement the cost of the Defence Budget to the newly independent Sri Lanka was minimal. Before 1956 the Defence Budget did not go above four percent of the National Budget and at the beginning there were years when it did not exceed one percent of the national expenditure.
This was in contrast to other countries in south Asia; for example, Burma spent thirty to thirty-five percent on defence. Defence on the cheap enabled the government to direct its expenditure to other worthwhile national projects, such as the Gol Oya multipurpose irrigation scheme, and the construction of a National Residential University in Kandy, and inaugurating a free system of education from primary to University levels.  

Opposition parties representing the Marxists (the Communist Party and the Lanka Samasamaja Party) opposed the Defence Agreement. Their opposition was based on ideological grounds. These parties took a radical stance of interpreting international affairs from a purely Marxist perspective. From their perspective the Agreement brought Sri Lanka within the Western imperialist camp which was out to exploit the resources of Third World countries. Their argument was that the British and the Commonwealth of Nations had evolved from the Empire and it was the Western Imperialist Forces that caused war and conflict.

However, upon the accession to power of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party-led regime in 1956, British base facilities were withdrawn (in 1957), in line with Britain’s gradual withdrawal from “East of Suez” at this time. Despite this, the “mutual defence pact” remained unabrogated, at least formally.

The Indian Perceptions of the Defence Agreement
India, at the time she attained an independent status in 1947, had no worthwhile Navy. Exploits of the Indian army were recognised; both in World War I and II, but India had no navy. India’s naval security was provided by the Royal Navy. Hence, it was not surprising that strategic thinkers in 1947 saw the need for a continued British Naval presence in the Indian Ocean to provide this security. K.M. Pannikar was a historian who also helped formulate an Indian naval policy as a part of its defence policy. In 1945 he wrote an essay on the influence of sea power on Indian History. When India achieved freedom Pannikar was given great responsibilities: he represented
India at the 1947 sessions of the UN. In 1948 he was appointed India’s Ambassador to China. Subsequently he served as Ambassador to France. His views, therefore, represent the official Indian views at that time when India had no navy. He wrote:

*With the islands of the Bay of Bengal with Singapore, Mauritius and Socotra, properly equipped and protected and with a Navy based in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) security can return to that part of the Indian Ocean which is of supreme importance to India. It need hardly to be said that such an Oceanic Policy for India is possible only with the closest collaboration and association with Britain.*

Other Indian writers on strategy stressed the importance of Sri Lanka in relation to the naval defence of India. Ramachandra Rao was one who wrote:

*India has very real interests in ensuring that no hostile power should establish itself in Ceylon. Foreign air strips and naval control of Trincomalee would unbearably expose the Indian peninsula to air and sea bombardment and assault along her extensive coasts. Ceylon is within Indian defence area, at the very heart centre of the Indian Ocean defence.*

Hence, it was paramount to Indian defence in 1947 that a friendly power should control the defence of Sri Lanka. Britain at that time was viewed as a friendly power. Therefore the British Navy, in occupation of Trincomalee Harbour, and the British Air Force, in the Katuweyake Air Base was construed as a positive factor. To this extent Sir Lanka was secure, and the Indian central government had nothing to fear as long as the United Kingdom-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement was in operation.
Summary

This chapter traces the rise and development of the British Empire in the Indian Ocean area that gave to her a Maritime Empire (based on her strong navy) dominance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though World War II decreased British power the United Kingdom yet conserved its role as a premier one based on her Middle East, East Asian and south-east Asian possessions. The Defence Agreement was conceived and signed in these circumstances. In this it was appropriate to analyse the Fulton Speech by Churchill and Bevin’s policy.

The three parties who were concerned with the Defence Treaty had their own interests to conserve and preserve. For Sri Lanka it was a defence against a foreign power: in this instance India, seen from a historical perspective at that point in time. For Britain it yet thought of itself as a naval power, and had to project it while maintaining its interests in the Middle East, East Africa and in south-east Asia. It was a major naval partner with the USA after World War II, and in the era of the Cold War. India had the perception of a big power that was not able to project itself at that time. However, it was able to do so later on, which is to be examined in Chapter IV. Raju Thomas (“India’s Security Policy”, Princeton University Press, 1986) points to this when he states:

> Advances in technology often define defence needs. In effect, India’s extended strategic interests in the Middle East, South East Asia, and the Indian Ocean arises as much from India’s growing military reach, based on an autonomous arms build up, as from the perspectives of indirect threats prevailing in distant theatres of war that may affect the sub-continent.

These facts point to the fact that the Defence Agreement was an Alliance at that period of time by two countries to use jointly military means to defend or advance their interests. The parties to such agreements are usually
required, under the terms of the treaty, to come to the aid of the other facing an attack. However, the conditions were changed after the late 1950s due to the changed international politics, especially in south Asia and Britain’s strategic objectives. These point to the real issues at the time and period the diplomatic document was signed.

The Defence Agreement of 1947 was (in essence) mainly a strategic document of naval significance in relation to the Indian Ocean. Apart from its importance to Sri Lankan Defence and Security, its further significance was in the context of British Naval deployment and the interests of Western Defence postures. In the context of naval strategy it followed the concepts of Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), the American strategist in the naval sphere, who is considered as one of the most influential military theorists of all time. Mahan’s main submission was that control of the seas led to success in international politics. Mahan's main message was that the United States must make a greater effort to exploit its abundant maritime assets, making a greater investment in maritime technology. A country that controls the maritime environment will dominate the world. Great Britain was the best example. In this sense the Defence Agreement was a step towards Western naval pre-eminence in the Indian Ocean region and the vital Persian Gulf zone with its growing importance to the Western World due to its oil resources. Towards this broad objective the Defence Agreement was seen as a major input. From a British point of view this was an active component till the late 1950s. At this point the USA took control of Western interest (in a naval sense) within the Indian Ocean, and, with the gradual development of the Indian Navy, India tended to stake a claim as a pivotal regional power in south Asia. By 1972 this position was recognised and the significance of the Agreement had to be assessed in these changed circumstances. The policies that were pursued by Sri Lanka were based within these realist parameters.

In global terms Chapter III deals with the inception of the ‘Cold War’. Sri Lanka was part of the Western Alliance System by the Defence Agreement.
The Defence Agreement was not formally abrogated and the Joint Naval Exercises in Trincomalee (called J.E.T.) continued even after the 1950s.

Chapter IV deals with another phase of the ‘Cold War’. It also covers a period when India was asserting her power and influence as a ‘regional power’, especially after 1971 and the dismemberment of Pakistan - her chief rival in the south Asian region. This was a period that saw an intensification of the ‘Cold War’ with events in Eastern Europe (Poland), and the occupation of Afghanistan in 1979. India had entered into a Friendship Treaty with the then Soviet Union in 1971, and in 1974 exploded a nuclear device. The US responded to these events by a larger presence in the Indian Ocean: an aspect of this was a renewed interest in Sri Lanka due to her strategic situation and her natural harbour of Trincomalee. These strategic postures and concerns are what led to events which are dealt with in Chapter IV.
End Notes


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7 Vali, *Indian Ocean Region*, pp.16-17.


   • Denoon, Donald with Marivic, *Australia and the Western Pacific*, pp.624-664.
10 (a) Public Records Office, Admiralty 1 - 6579 SA 298, No. 559 enclosed 2.
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   • The Nineteenth Century, Vol. III, Editor: Andrew Porter.
   • Denoon, Donald with Marivic, Australia and the Western Pacific, p.318.

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22 Political/Military Pacts:
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(b) Warsaw Pact 1955: Soviet Union and Seven Eastern European Countries.
(c) Baghdad Pact 1955: Britain, Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Pakistan.
(d) South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO): signed by Australia, France, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand, Britain and USA in 1954.
(e) ANZUS Treaty 1952: signed by Australia, New Zealand and USA.


24 President's Speech to Congress on 12th March 1947.


26 Map showing USA and USSR Commitments: clearly points to the global significance of all defence agreements.

28 Lefeber, *America, Russia and the Cold War*, pp.185-186.

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32 Louis, *The British Empire in the Middle East*, pp.493 and 504.

33 (a) Cabinet Papers (inet) 129/2CP/45, 17th September 1945.
(b) Cabinet Papers 131/2, Dominions - Office (46), 27th DO (46), 40 of 2, 13th March 1941.


35 Bevin and his Permanent Under-Secretary from early 1946, Sir Orme Sargent.
(a) Sargent memo, 11th July 1945, Foreign Office 371/50912; Bevin to Attlee, 16th September 1947, Foreign Office 800/444; Cabinet papers 129/123 C.P. (48)6, 4th January 1948, Cabinet papers 129/23; Cabinet papers 128 C.M. (49)2, 8th January 1948, Cabinet papers 128; Public Record Office, London.
(b) Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series 1, Vol. I, 1945, Clark Kerr to Eden, 10th July 1945.


46 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, p.119.


50 (a) Mackinder, S. (1869-1947) Claim that Eurasia was the “heartland” of the international system.
(b) The American geopolitician, Nickolas J. Spykman (1893-1943) revised Mackinder’s theory by shifting the emphasis to the ‘rim lands’: Western Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South Asia and East Asia, which surround the “heartland”.


64 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, pp.22-23.


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CHAPTER IV

The Rajiv Gandhi / Jayawardene Agreement 1986: An Attempt to Project Indian Power and an Aspect of the Cold War Confrontation within the Indian Ocean Region

Introduction
The Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement was, ostensibly, to resolve the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. In real fact the Agreement had strategic implications, set within a global and regional context. At the time the Agreement was concluded, the ‘Cold War’ was at a phase of conflict after a period of “détente”: which can best be described as a relaxation of tensions. The period of détente led to a number of significant treaties: the Outer Space Treaty in 1967, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968, the Seabed Pact of 1971, the Biological Warfare Treaty of 1972, and in 1972 the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. This period also witnessed an increase in trade between the United States of America (USA) and the Soviet Union. In 1975 there was the Helsinki Agreement, which followed the European Conference on Security and Co-operation, which was recognition of the existing territorial status of the USA. ¹

However the process of détente was in serious trouble because of a number of reasons. Soviet actions in Africa were a cause for alarm: using Cuban troops the USSR was involved in many African States including Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia by 1979. Action by the Soviet Union in the ‘Horn of Africa’ was sensitive because it lay so close to the oil supply routes from the Middle East. In December 1979 the USSR invaded Afghanistan. This led to condemnation of the USSR in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly and world-wide protests: grain embargo on the USSR and there was a boycott of the 1980 Olympics held in Moscow. With the election of Ronald Reagan as President of the USA there was a growing determination
to respond to what was perceived as a growing Soviet Threat. Afghanistan in particular was seen as proof of the Soviet World Domination Plan.  

It was in this background that the Indo-Sri Lankan relations deteriorated. In 1977 the UNP government of J.R. Jayawardene returned to power in Sri Lanka. His policies, both domestic and foreign, were pro-western and backed the US. These policies led to confrontation with India and this stoked up the ethnic conflict which was utilized by India to actively interfere in the domestic politics of Sri Lanka. It was these conflicts and the ‘Cold War’ process at that time which formed the background to the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. It is proposed to analyse the Agreement of 1987 with this in mind as it points to the strategic dimension of the Agreement, as it mainly involved naval deployments of vital powers in the Indian Ocean region.

The Peace Agreement consisted of three parts:

(a) “The Agreement” signed by the two leaders (the Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka) consisted of three main clauses and several sub-clauses.

(b) The “Annexure to the Agreement”: This is a description of what it is intended to signify.

(c) Two letters also dated 29 July 1987 which state certain understandings reached between the President and the Prime Minister.

“The Agreement” sets out the proposals in the form of “resolutions” for settling the Tamil problem. “The Annexe” describes certain procedures to be adopted in regard to the elections to the Provincial Councils and the surrender of arms by the militants and monitoring the cessation of hostilities. The letters exchanged record understandings reached, in regard to issues of foreign policy, between the two countries.
In analysing the Defence Agreement in a strategic sense, its framework, apart from its realistic approach, relates to the broad issue of Sea Power and Strategy in the Indian Ocean region. This is because no great local power has been recognised within the Indian Ocean region and, for all practical purposes, real military power for the last 150 years has been that of the British, and prior to this, the Dutch and the Portuguese. During the period of the 1980s US naval policy was to project naval power in furtherance of its interests. In this process the most vital area of the Indian Ocean Region for the US was the North West region, which covers the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea and Peninsula, and the Strait of Hormuz. The US policy for the 1970s, after the British withdrawal, was to project its strong naval power over long distances, so as to protect its interests. Naval power was vital at this time than in the Indian Ocean. The following paragraph, written by Geoffrey Kemp, illustrates the US involvement in Sea Power, especially at this point of time:

*Today, both the United States and the Soviet Union face limitations on their respective abilities to operate their blue-water navies when and where they like. For, although both countries possess global navies, both - but especially the USSR - have an inadequate world-wide infrastructure to support much more than presence missions or one-shot encounters. In this regard, the United States is still better-endowed to conduct contained, high-tempo operations in areas such as the South China Sea and even the Indian Ocean.*

The Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987 in its strategic perspective, is not merely a bilateral Agreement between two south Asian countries, but has a wider ramification; closely tied to the ‘Cold War’ process at that time. India, closely allied to the Soviet Union, was striving to control Sri Lanka by getting it to accept India as the pivotal power in south Asia, and to wean Sri Lanka away from a US connection which was not in the interest of India and the Soviet Union. It also points to the importance of the Indian Ocean Region to the USA.
The Strategic Issues of the 1987 Agreement

To locate the real strategic issues of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement an examination of the Exchange of Letters, dated 29th July 1987, is necessary:

EXCHANGE OF LETTERS

President of Sri Lanka

29 July 1987

Excellency,

Please refer to your letter dated 29 July 1987, which reads as follows:

Excellency,

1 Conscous of the friendship between our two countries stretching over two millennia and more, and recognizing the importance of nurturing this traditional friendship, it is imperative that both Sri Lanka and India reaffirm the decision not to allow our respective territories to be used for activities prejudicial to each other’s unity, territorial integrity and security.

2 In this spirit, you had during the course of our discussions, agreed to meet some of India’s concerns as follows:

(i) Your Excellency and myself will reach an early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel with a view to ensuring that such presences will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

(ii) Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India’s interests.
(iii) The work of restoring and operating the Trincomalee oil tank farm will be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka.

(iv) Sri Lanka’s agreement with foreign broadcasting organisations will be reviewed to ensure that any facilities set up by them in Sri Lanka are used solely as public broadcasting facilities and not for any military or intelligence purposes.

Each of the issues referred to in this letter are fundamental to a strategic understanding of this crucial Agreement.

Employment of Foreign Military and Intelligence Personnel: Part of the US Embassy in Sri Lanka

The most controversial of the foreign intelligence personnel who worked in Sri Lanka were the Israelis. They worked through the US Embassy in Sri Lanka as an ‘Interest Section’. A study of how this came about would indicate a close relationship between the US and Sri Lanka at all the negotiating stages to the agreement that brought in the Israelis.  

Prior to this agreement, which brought in the Israeli operatives to Sri Lanka, there was little diplomatic or trade relations between the two countries. In 1957 (after Israel was recognised by Sri Lanka in 1949) formal diplomatic relations were established. In 1957 the Israeli Ambassador to Burma was also accredited to Sri Lanka. At the same time Sri Lankan Envoy in Rome was accredited to Israel. Shortly, thereafter the level of representation was raised to that of an Ambassador. In 1970, when the Sri Lanka Freedom Party was returned to power under Mrs Bandaranaike, diplomatic relations were severed. This was in accordance with the policy of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party as declared in their Party Manifesto before the Election.
In July 1984, J.R. Jayawardene was able to obtain Israeli assistance. An ‘Interest Section’ was opened at the US Embassy in Colombo, and all the steps taken towards this were assisted by the US. For example, a Senior US Official, General Walters, assisted in the whole process of formulating an Agreement between Sri Lanka and Israel. It was also observed that Vernon Walter (the US Ambassador in the UNO) assisted in the early stages of the negotiations. All this pointed to the fact that the US was assisting Sri Lanka to negotiate with the Israelis. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi on this subject clearly pointed to this when he wrote:

_The Case of Sri Lanka is one example of Israeli involvement in the Third World that was instigated by the United States. Without the United States Israel would never have gotten involved with aiding the Sri Lankan government in its struggle against the Tamil minority._

Israel assisted Sri Lanka in a number of ways. These included training the military, internal security training, and assisting in upgrading the whole intelligence system. Israel also became involved with medical assistance in the area of those persons (mainly military personnel) wounded in course of the war. A considerable amount of military equipment was also bought from Israel: naval boats like the Davoras and Super Davoras.

During this period there were significant contacts between Israeli and Sri Lankan political leaders. In September 1986 a Senior Israeli Foreign Ministry Official (an Under Secretary) visited Sri Lanka. Earlier, in 1986, the then Prime Minister of Israel, Shimon Peres, met with the Sri Lankan President Jayawardene in Paris. Finally in November 1986 the President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, visited Sri Lanka. These contacts point to a growing relationship between the two countries, where Sri Lanka sought and got substantial aid to combat a separatist civil war within the country.

There was considerable opposition to this growing diplomatic and aid contact, both at a domestic and foreign level. There were a number of protests from local Muslim organisations within Sri Lanka. To prevent it
spreading, the government was forced to involve the provisions of the Public Security Act under Emergency Regulations to impose a censorship of news as regards the Israeli work in Sri Lanka. A number of Middle Eastern countries lodged their protests: Libya, Iran, Iraq, Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and Saudi Arabia had planned to open Embassies in Sri Lanka, but this was postponed. Saudi Arabia had indicated that it would assist through a contribution of $50 million towards the development of the Madura Oya multi-purpose irrigation project under the Mahaweli Ganga (River) project. This project was aided by a number of countries, including the US and Canada. Aid from Saudi Arabia was promised under the Saudi Fund. After the Israeli aid to Sri Lanka the aid from Saudi Arabia was stopped. 12

India was not happy with this Israeli connection. Perhaps India viewed this as another positive indication that Sri Lanka was in the Western Camp, especially with the US making strategic and military deployments in south Asia and the Indian Ocean region. Mrs Indra Gandhi, Prime Minister of India in 1986, and subsequent Rajiv Gandhi who followed her as Prime Minister, voiced their protests. The US had, from 1947, strong military ties with Pakistan, and this attempt to establish a pro-western government, ready to obtain military aid, was therefore viewed with a degree of suspicion as becoming a power in a military build up against India. 13

**British Mercenaries in Sri Lanka**

Britain did not agree to give any direct military to Sri Lanka. However, the need for military assistance was met by a British Private Company in the British Channel Islands called ‘K.M.S. Limited’. Its full name was Kenny Meeny Services, whose major area of expertise was counter terrorist campaigns and general security work. Britain’s position in regard to this was set out in an answer to a question in Parliament by the British Foreign Secretary.
K.M.S. Ltd was employed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office from May to August 1982 to provide protection to Her Majesty’s Ambassador to Montevideo. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not employed K.M.S. since then. We understand that K.M.S. employs British citizens under a private commercial contract with the Sri Lankan government to provide training services to its security forces. As a commercial company it contracts to provide services and is not controlled by Her Majesty’s Government. We here throughout emphasised to K.M.S. and to the Sri Lankan government alike our clear view that British subjects should be involved only in training, and should certainly not be engaged in military operations of any kind in Sri Lanka.  

It is obvious that both the US and Britain did not directly get involved by giving military aid. In the case of USA, Israeli’s intelligence agents were employed, and in the case of Britain, a British mercenary company. One can only infer that this was due to the regional geopolitics of south Asia, where India was accepted as the ‘pivotal power’. Hence, any direct military involvement was not acceptable in view of this position. Both Britain and the US viewed the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka as one which was really the concern of India, and that India should therefore play a major role in obtaining a political solution to this. Tim Eggan, who was the then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, stated in the House of Commons:

_We deplore the continuing violence in Sri Lanka. We acknowledge Mr Gandhi’s valuable and positive role in encouraging direct talks between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil representatives. We shall support any efforts that are aimed at furthering the peace process. However, we believe that India has a crucial role in this whole area. We would be prepared to do whatever we can to support that role._

This only points to Britain’s realist stand. In a geopolitical sense Sri Lanka came within the Indian orbit of defence and strategic planning. This was an
understanding at the highest level. Hence, nothing should be done to upset this accepted reality. Western strategic thinking took this fact into consideration while formulating their policies of naval and military deployment within the Indian Ocean region and south Asia. Even if Sri Lanka was an active supporter of Britain and the Western Powers in its foreign policy, the reality, on these grounds, had to be taken into account. India, by her size, economy and military capability in the south Asian context, had to be given due consideration.

**Voice of America Agreement: Revisions Proposed in 1983**

The Original Voice of America (VOA) Agreement (that had undergone many revisions from time to time) was subject to a major revision in 1983. This new Agreement (through the process of letters of exchange between the two concerned governments) had a widened scope. Under this new Agreement the United States Information Agency was to lease 1000 acres (later reduced to 500 acres) for a large facility. Within this area there was both a receiving and transmitting station to be constructed, and towards this objective to have six short wave transmitters. Two of the transmitters were to have the capacity to transmit up to 250 kilowatts and the other four a capacity to transmit up to 500 kilowatts.\(^{16}\)

When the contents of this new Agreement was known to the Indians there were protests. In reply to a question in the Indian Parliament, the Minister of Foreign Affairs answered by saying: “With this power, broadcasts can be beamed to the whole of Asia”.\(^{17}\)

In the course of the debate that followed an Indian of Parliament member stated:

*America is not only installing this transmission facility in Sri Lanka, but is also seeking to establish a military base in Sri Lanka and all around us. Therefore, this arrangement infringes on our security. It is disturbing to our security environment.*\(^{18}\)
There were also questions raised in the Indian Upper House (the Rajya Sabha) as to the VOA facility in Sri Lanka. In reply to a question the Indian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs stated:

_Reportedly the most powerful outside the US and its range is likely to cover the whole of the Indian sub-continent and its neighbouring countries._  

Following on this strategy an Indian writer, Jasjit Singh, observed that the VOA facility in Sri Lanka could have also an Extremely Low Frequency (ELF) system that could be utilized for command and communication facilities for submarines. The US naval base at Diego Garcia was short of land to adequately house and operate a large ELF facility. As Diego Garcia is a small island there was also the problem of it causing disturbance with the communications facilities located there.

There was opposition for the added VOA facility from the Soviet Union. It viewed this new US facility in Sri Lanka as being part of a larger plan to update a series of such stations situated in strategic areas to transmit and keep a tab on countries in Central Asia and other sensitive areas. Such stations included US facilities in Thailand, Belize, Costa Rica and Morocco. A ‘Tass’ newspaper report from Russia mentioned that a Senior American Official, Charles Wick, had arrived in Sri Lanka for the ceremony in connection with the laying of the foundation store for this facility at Iran Vila, in the north-west of the country. The Tass report went on to say:

_The construction of the radio station, a new branch of the US, engaged in psychological warfare again Socialist and developing countries, shows that Washington steps up its interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Observers note that the station will be directed mainly against countries of South and South West Asia, above all against India and Afghanistan, whose independent foreign policy goes against the grain of the US ruling circles._
Map of the US Naval base in Diego Garcia in relation to Sri Lanka
This is evidence that the facility given in Sri Lanka was an active instrument in the ‘Cold War’.

**Trincomalee Harbour and its Oil Tanks**

During the 1980s the subject of the strategic Trincomalee Harbour was constantly raised in the Indian Press and was a topic of discussion in the Indian parliament. Consequently it became a topic of strategic interest to India and seemed to be intrinsically tied to her security interest. For example, there was a press report in 1982 which clearly pointed to the fact that the proposed lease of the oil tanks adjacent to the Trincomalee Harbour was a step towards making the Trincomalee Harbour a US naval base in south Asia.\(^{22}\)

S.D. Muni, a writer in political and strategic issues, made this clear when he stated:

*US strategic calculations during the early eighties had viewed the utility of Trincomalee Harbour in the chain of facilities available for the western naval movements in the Indian Ocean.* \(^{23}\)

There were a number of questions in the Indian Parliament on the Trincomalee Harbour issue. In 1981 the Indian Foreign Minister, in reply to a question on US bases in Sri Lanka, referred to Sri Lanka’s Foreign Minister’s statement of 26 November 1980 in the Sri Lankan parliament that permission had been given to US warships to utilize past facilities available in the country. The Sri Lankan Foreign Minister stated that these facilities included a covering provision that such naval ships should not carry nuclear weapons, and should not be engaged in war; and the same facilities would be given to other foreign naval ships, including that of the USSR if they complied with these provisions. To another question, specifically in relation to US naval bases in the Indian Ocean, the Foreign Minister of India replied that there was only one Diego Garcia Base, which was jointly run by the US and Britain. \(^{24}\)

There was another question in the Indian Parliament in 1982. The question was whether the Indian government was aware of work in a number of US naval bases in south Asia and the Indian Ocean, namely in
Gwardar in Pakistan, St Martin in Bangladesh, and Trincomalee in Sri Lanka. In response to this question the Indian Foreign Minister confirmed that he had seen reports pertaining to these bases, and went on to say that the respective governments of those countries had denied the contents of the report. However, the Indian Foreign Minister reiterated India’s opposition to any foreign naval bases when he said:

*Government of India are opposed to the establishment of any foreign base in the Indian Ocean region as it would be a threat to our security and to the peace and tranquillity of the region as a whole.*

The Indian Press kept its focus on this issue of a US naval base in Sri Lanka. President Jayawardene of Sri Lanka stated that he had allowed US navy (and all other navies) to use bunkering and other facilities in Trincomalee Harbour and the Colombo Port. The Sri Lankan Finance Minister, Mr Ronnie de Mel, on a visit to India was questioned on the same topic of US naval bases in Sri Lanka. While denying the existence of US bases in Sri Lanka, he also referred to a similar denial made by the then Sri Lankan Minister of Security, Mr Athulathmudali.

Another issue connected with the Trincomalee Harbour and the US was the issue of the oil tanks, adjacent to the harbour. The oil tanks, which were originally constructed by the British to serve the needs of the Royal Navy prior to World War II, were thereafter owned by the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, a wholly owned government undertaking. These storage tanks were situated at Chine Bay, near the Trincomalee Harbour.

In 1980 there was an offer to build an oil refinery, utilizing the oil tanks. This proposal, through the Greater Colombo Economic Zone, was made by the Harco Group Inc., which was a US Company. The proposed refinery at Trincomalee was to process about 200,000 barrels of crude oil each day, and produce a number of petroleum products: gasoline for aircraft and motor vehicles, diesel oil, kerosene oil, jet fuel and asphalt. The Harco Group Inc. was to get Rizaco Company, based in the West Indies (Caymen
Islands) to undertake this project. It was later found that this company based in the British West Indies had financial difficulties, and the whole project was dropped. After this incident another US Company came on the scene to utilize the oil tanks: US Coastal Corporation. The project was to repair the oil tanks and use it for storage oil.

The Indian response to these moves was suspicious. There appears to have been protests from India, and Sri Lanka had to send Lalith Athalathmudali to Delhi to clarify Sri Lanka’s position. Athalathmudali submitted that Sri Lanka was striving to develop the Trincomalee Harbour as a commercial venture. On his return to Sri Lanka the Minister explained his position and that of the government of Sri Lanka. Trincomalee development was to open it up for international bids. He refuted the allegation made by certain Indian sources that the Trincomalee Harbour was being developed for strategic and military purposes.

In 1982 following this, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation called for world-wide tenders to develop the oil storage facilities in Trincomalee. To some extent the fears entertained by the Indian officials was calmed by this move. The Indian Minister of Petroleum, Chemicals and Fertilizers, in a statement before the Indian Parliament, said the officers from the Indian Oil Corporation had gone to Sri Lanka to submit a tender for the operation of the oil tanks. However, by 1985 there was disappointment in India when the Indian Tender was rejected in favour of three firms from Singapore.

Indian Suspicions of Sri Lanka's Relations with Pakistan and China: India's Chief Rivals

India, since the partition of the Indian sub-continent, had bad relations with Pakistan. From the late 1940s the rivalry between the two states arose over the disputed accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and this yet continues. Disputes with China were slow to develop, but gradually increased over border disputes and the events in Tibet. It reached a climax
in 1962 when the Chinese land forces attacked a number of Indian positions in the North-East of India, with a loss of face to India. From then onwards India was suspicious about both Pakistan and China from a security and military point of view. These perceptions yet continue, and India’s defence planners have taken these factors into account in formulating her defence and strategic plans.

Pakistan provided a wide variety of military aid and training to the Sri Lankan forces to assist them in their civil war efforts. Most of the aid was confined to the supply of small arms, and a training programme in counter terrorist measures. President Jayawardene was clear on the aid when he gave an interview to an Indian news reporter: “Pakistan is training our people. We send a large number to Pakistan”. President Jayawardene visited Pakistan in 1985. This was followed by a return visit to Sri Lanka by Pakistan’s President Zia-ul-Haq in the same year. During President Jayawardene’s visit to Pakistan he spoke in favour of self determination for the people of Kashmir, which was a sensitive issue to the Indian government. He is reported to have said that his government supported the people of Jammu and Kashmir in “their struggle for the right of self determination”. When the Pakistani President travelled to Sri Lanka, in a joint statement issued at the end of the visit, this subject was once again raised:

Both sides recalled with regret the dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and agreed that its expeditious solution in accordance with the UN Resolution or by other peaceful means would be in the interest of peace in the subcontinent and in the region.

The UN Resolutions was reference to a plebiscite in Kashmir which no Indian government had held so far.

Sri Lanka’s relations with China had always been good. Even when no formal diplomatic relation or recognitions existed, economic relations continued. In 1952, even when Sri Lanka had not recognised the People’s
Republic of China, a Rice/Rubber Agreement was concluded on a barter basis. This Agreement was concluded when there was a UN embargo in trade, which followed the spread of the ‘Cold War’ to Asia. In the USA there was the Battle Act, and this Agreement contradicted that legislation. Yet the Agreement went ahead, and this perhaps earned Sri Lanka a special place in China’s foreign policy. As for Sri Lanka, unlike other countries in south-east Asia, such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia, where there was no overseas Chinese element in her population. China was a country far away from Sri Lanka. This contrasted with India, so near, and which had a history of invasions repeatedly until the European powers appeared in the sixteenth century. After 1962, when China had military clashes with India, it took a greater interest in south Asia. Earlier, in 1956, China and Sri Lanka established formal diplomatic relations. When the USSR invaded Afghanistan in 1979 there was a closer connection between China, Pakistan and the USA as far as south Asia was concerned. Their main objective was to contain the Soviet Advance into south Asia and the Middle East.  

With this background China responded positively to Sri Lanka’s appeal for assistance consequent to the ethnic war and the Tamil rebellion in the North and East of Sri Lanka. At this point a statement was issued by China which was aimed at India: “The big must not bully the small”. This was taken as a reference to India interfering in Sri Lanka’s ethnic conflict. When the Chinese Foreign Minister, Wu Zuerquain, visited Sri Lanka this position was reiterated when he said that the ethnic civil war in Sri Lanka “should be solved without outside interference”.  

China’s military aid to Sri Lanka has, therefore, to be viewed in light of these diplomatic developments. Earlier Sri Lanka had purchased patrol boats from China. Arms sales from China increased with the ethnic war: for example $5 million (US) worth of arms were sold by China to Sri Lanka to assist her military build up during the period between 1979 and 1983.
The Indian Response

India's response to these developments was to perceive it as a challenge to its position within the south Asian region, especially after 1980 when Mrs Indra Gandhi returned to power. India’s response was to support the Tamil rebels in the North and East of Sri Lanka by asserting pressure on the Sri Lankan government. Hence India’s policy towards Sri Lanka, which led to the 1987 Agreement, was according to Muni due to:

1. Employing on the “suggestion of the US” the Israeli intelligence agency and western mercenary agencies to help it to fight the Tamils.

2. Exclusion of Indian Tenders “from the oil tank farm development projects to suit western firms”.

3. Establishment of a “strategic relationship, including military supplies and exchange of military officers for training purposes with Pakistan and China, with India’s known regional adversaries”.

4. Conclusion of a “fresh agreement with US for the expansion of the Voice of America facility in the Island”, which could serve military and intelligence purposes particularly with regard to the US ships and submarines in the Indian Ocean region.  

It was clear that strategic considerations were the main resource for India’s interference in Sri Lanka as seen in the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. There was an element of compulsion, and, in this regard, it may be called an “unequal treaty”, where Sri Lanka was forced to follow the dictates of India in the formulation of her foreign policy. Kodikara explains this point when he states:

What was most significant about the Indo-Lanka Agreement of July 1987 was the manner in which, by one stroke of the pen, as it were, Sri Lanka was squarely brought into the Indian Security fold under its
From then onwards Sri Lanka had certain restrictions placed on her foreign and security policy. This was the first time, since 1948 when Sri Lanka attained independence, that a diplomatic policy framework was virtually forced on it. Sri Lanka had to accept the geopolitical realities of south Asia, where India had evolved as a “pivotal power” and was so recognised by the major powers. In this situation the security perceptions of India had to be given its due consideration by a small country like Sri Lanka, situated as it is within the Indian Ocean. The discontent that the Agreement generated, leading to civil disorder was due to this aspect of the Agreement. There was a Jatike Vimukthi Peramuna which led to a violent campaign against the existing government that took considerable time and effort to quell.

The Cold War in the Indian Ocean Region in the 1970s and 1980s: the Global and Regional Issues as a Background to the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987

During these next decades, the USA and the Soviet Union competed with one another for strategic superiority in the Indian Ocean. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, President Jimmy Carter announced his intention to use military force to prevent any foreign power (i.e. the Soviet Union) from gaining control of the Persian Gulf region. To buttress this policy, the US increased its military presence in the Indian Ocean to enhance its ability to respond quickly to any military contingency. After the downfall of the Shah’s government in Iran in 1979, the USA deployed a second carrier task force to the area to join the one already on station. Additionally, the US government concluded a series of military access agreements with Egypt, Kenya, Oman, and Somalia, and arranged to conduct joint military exercises with these countries. On March 1, 1980, President Carter also authorised the creation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, later reorganised as the United States Central Command
(USCENTCOM), whose area of responsibility includes Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.  

During the 1980s, the Indian Ocean continued to provoke competition between Washington and Moscow. The USA increased its presence on Diego Garcia by building new airfield facilities and an air force satellite detection and tracking station, initiating Strategic Air Command (SAC) operations, improving navigational aids, and increasing anchorages and moorings for pre-positioned warehouse ships stationed permanently at the island. The USA had earlier developed ballistic missile submarines that could hit industrial targets in the Soviet Union from the Arabian Sea. Moscow also feared that Washington’s announcement that it intended to deploy some ballistic missile submarines to the Pacific Ocean and to build a very low frequency communications station (designed for submarine contact) in Western Australia signalled a military build-up in the Indian Ocean. These were the factors that made the Indian Ocean an area of strategic importance; more so after the Afghan invasion, and the consequential possibility of a threat to the US position in the Middle East.

India entered into a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union in 1971, which was a prelude to the Indian attack on East Pakistan. This was signed before the break away of East Pakistan, and the formation of the new state of Bangladesh. This dismemberment of Pakistan, in 1971, made India the dominant power in south Asia. During the course of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971 the US sent her aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Enterprise, to the Bay of Bengal. It was however too late to intervene as the Indians had already overrun East Pakistan. Though the Pakistan government expected a Chinese land intervention, this did not eventuate. What happened after the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship of 1971 was, therefore, a triumph for India. When the US sent her naval flotilla to the Bay of Bengal the Soviet Union sent units of the Soviet Far Eastern Fleet to shadow the US naval flotilla. It
is therefore not surprising that the Indo-Soviet Treaty was the main strength of her foreign policy. In this sense the Indian policy was no more non-aligned, and was in accordance with Soviet Policy in the Indian Ocean Region. The belief grew in India that this Treaty with the Soviet Union had prevented an active Chinese intervention, and also balanced the US intervention. 45

Diego Garcia and the US Presence in the Indian Ocean Region

From 1971 onwards, due mainly to the US intervention in the Indo-Pakistan War, India’s policy was to free the Indian Ocean Region of superpower rivalry. The policy was mainly directed against the American build-up of its naval base at Diego Garcia. The reasons of Indian strategic writers, like K.Subramanyans, justified the Soviet presence in the Indian Ocean on the following terms:

1. **The Indian Ocean forms the links that connects the Soviet Union’s Pacific, Atlantic and Black Sea Fleets.**

2. **From the Arabian Sea it is possible to launch an attack on the then Soviet Union’s Asian republics in Central Asia.**

3. **Unlike the US, the Soviet Union has no land based satellite monitoring and command stations within the Indian Ocean Region. In contrast the US has stations in Australia like Pine Gap and Narrungar, and Victoria Station in Seycheller. The US and western justification for a big naval presence in the Indian Ocean is justified on the grounds that it is a balancing factor to the large Soviet land power within the Eurasia area. This argument cannot be maintained as this would justify a big Soviet naval presence in the Caribbean area.** 46
Subramanyam goes on to quote Military Balance 1987-1988 that refers to the US military presence in the Indian Ocean. This contained approximately 11,000 personnel drawn from the US Seventh and Second Fleets, at the Diego Garcia Base. There were 1,700 persons, one Carrier Battle Group which contained six combatants, one command ship which normally had four Destroyers/Frigates within the Gulf area and a temporary deployment of one Cruiser and four escorts as at July 1987. This contrasts with Soviet deployment which consisted of 0.1 submarine, one to two principal and 1.2 minor surface combatants, one amphibious and six to eight support ships.  

Subramanyam also makes reference to the concept of striving to make the Indian Ocean region free of nuclear weapons. This was a proposal strongly supported by India. This was the time that the Non-proliferation Treaty was signed. In the 1980s this position was no longer free of nuclear weapons deployment. He cites the fact that US aircraft carriers carry nuclear weapons as a part of their standard equipment. The P3C aircraft, used for real purposes, which fly over the Indian Ocean have with them nuclear depth charges. The Diego Garcia naval base airfields contained B-52 and F-14 aircraft. In addition to this the British and French ships, operating in the Indian Ocean region, should also be taken into account when evaluating the presence of western naval fleets in the Indian Ocean.

Another aspect of development referred to by Subramanyam is the strategic aspect of submarine based missiles: exocets, harpoons, and cruise missiles. Earlier submarines were targeted only against ships. Now with submarine based missiles, the submarine became a potent missile based launching pad, with a wider coverage of targets. This added to the strategic significance of the Indian Ocean, especially due to its land locked characteristics. In this situation, by establishing bases in the Indian Ocean, it was possible to control the littoral lands. As seen the western powers that entered the Indian Ocean from the sixteenth century, like the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British, were able to dominate the weakest states in the Indian Ocean. At present the successor to these earlier European powers is
the USA, with its powerful navy, based at strategic points. Apart from the aircraft carrier, the most dangerous weapon deployed by the US is the nuclear submarine with its ballistic missiles. It is the greatest deterrence by way of force potential to project its power.\(^49\)

**The Rise of India as ‘Pivotal Power’ in South Asia and the “Indira Doctrine”**

As pointed out by John Gooneratne, the period covering the 1970s and the 1980s were vital for India and her security perceptions, due mainly to global and regional developments.\(^50\) G.C. Thomas, a writer on Indian security issues, said “In the case of India, the external threat environment has undergone revolutionary and evolutionary change at both the regional and global levels”.

John Gooneratne affirmed this:

> **While the basic structure of India’s defence policy since 1947 remains, namely, the regional triangle of India, Pakistan and China, India sees an extended strategic environment which can have an impact on her security. This extended strategic environment includes the Middle East, Central and South East Asia, and the Indian Ocean. Above all these levels, and invariably influencing it, are the global strategic relationships involving the United States, the Soviet Union and China.**\(^51\)

Indian foreign policy from 1947 to 1962 was based on a modest stand of ‘sufficient defence’. Its two fold strategy was to contain Pakistan and to have the strength to maintain a holding operation against the Chinese in the North East of India. This holding operation was on the basis of eventually receiving help from an outside power.\(^52\) With the Border War with China in 1962 where the Indian military suffered a defeat, the Indian defence and military policy changed: a rise on defence which raised the level of defence to what can be described as a ‘minimum defence’. This period saw a radical change in Indian policy. A process of modernisation was inaugurated which
had effects on all India’s defence arms: the Army, Air Force and Navy. The old policy of minimum defence, and all efforts towards economic development, as shown in the first Five Year Plans for economic and social development was abandoned. Defence was given a greater priority and attention.\textsuperscript{53}

This led to an arms race between India and Pakistan. In particular the Air Force purchases and procurement illustrates this. When the Soviet Union forcibly occupied Afghanistan in 1979, the US made it a point to arm Pakistan with the latest weapons. F.16 fighters were given to Pakistan to bolster her defences. Such a calibre of aircraft was not available to the Indians and frantic attempts were made to procure an aircraft to match the F.16. The advanced Mirage 2000 was purchased from France to match the F.16 possessed by Pakistan in 1981. This was followed by another purchase of Soviet MIG 2915 (amounting to forty in number) in 1984. To match these acquisitions, Pakistan got the E-2-C Hawkeye, which was an early waring radar device.\textsuperscript{54} Pakistan also made purchases from France to bolster naval arms. This included three agosta submarines and patrol craft, and exocet missiles.\textsuperscript{55}

The Indian navy, though neglected at first, got a lot of attention after the 1960s. An aircraft carrier, two cruisers and frigates were purchased. Gradually the Soviet Union supplied the bulk of the naval armaments, including submarines together with a nuclear powered submarine. As observed by Raju Thomas:

\textit{The result has been a predominantly Soviet built navy, unlike the relatively more mixed bag of western and western equipment found in the other services … 1985 the dependence on Soviet vessels had become overwhelming.}\textsuperscript{56}

The Indian navy was the largest regional navy within the Indian Ocean region.
As observed by Onkar Marwah, India was in a dominating position within the Indian Ocean Region. India’s size, economy and political stability makes her position as a ‘pivotal’ and the strongest state within the south Asian region. He takes India’s geographical area, military capability and economy into account when he states:

The Indian peninsula juts 2,000 kilometres into the sea. This physical configuration brings approximately 50% of the Indian Ocean within a thousand mile arc described from Indian Ocean territory. In a strategic context, the implication was that the appropriate weapons systems, land based military power, could be projected from and integrated with India’s sea based capability over a wide swath of the Indian Ocean.  

This points to India’s real position to project her power as a regional power within the Indian Ocean area. This position India had reached by the 1980s.

**India’s Monroe Doctrine - The Indira Doctrine**

The Monroe doctrine as enunciated by the US government was a warning to the European States not to intervene in the Americas, or the New World, that covered Central and Latin America. This was in 1823. This warning issued had no practical effect as the then US government did not possess the needed naval power to enforce its decree. It was only by the end of the nineteenth century that the US government had acquired the necessary military and economic power to act and enforce this, and become a self appointed guardian of the Americans. In 1904 Teddy Roosevelt, as President of the US, stated that misgovernment in the Latin American republics would result in an armed intervention by the US government. By this it conveyed an impression of US hegemony with this area.  

India adopted, or strove to adopt, a similar policy in an area of the Indian Ocean which it considered was within India’s sphere of influence. S. Mansigh makes this point clear when he stated that this policy was associated with Mrs Indira Gandhi when she was Prime Minister:
India’s desire for power was a reaction to its earlier powerlessness. That it became a search for power in the period under review is largely due to Indira Gandhi. She valued power - in contrast to Mahatma Gandhi who preached love, and Jawaharbal Nehru who was content with moral influence.  

India’s policy and outlook appeared to border on an imperial outlook as submitted by Ference A. Vali. India thought itself as heir to the British Empire, and the earlier Mogul, and the Hindu empires of the Gupta and Maurya periods. India’s area of dominance extended to countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkeim (that was incorporated into India) and Sri Lanka. India was acting as a ‘policeman’ of the subcontinent (which included Sri Lanka), whose objective was to preserve the peace on the subcontinent. Dr Kissinger, the US Secretary of State, makes this point of India’s geostrategic position very clear when he stated:  

*India will play an increasing international role. Its goals are analogous to the British east of Suez in the nineteenth century - a policy essentially shaped by the Viceroy’s Office in New Delhi. It will seek to be the strongest power in the subcontinent, and will attempt to prevent the emergence of a major power in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia. Whatever the day to day irritations between New Delhi and Washington, India’s geopolitical interests will impel it over the next decade to assume some of the security functions now exercised by the US.*  

Indian policy was aimed towards getting other states in south Asia to act in a manner in keeping to Indian interests. It was the Indian policy to blame outside powers as being responsible for problems within the region. Hence the Indian policy was to lay down the manner in which the trends that south Asian countries should carry out in their foreign policy. What was paramount was that countries followed policies that did not hurt Indian interests.
Bhabani Sen Gupta, a writer of strategic issues, writing in a leading Indian journal, spelt out the framework of this policy. Firstly, the claim was that India had no intention to interfere in any internal conflict with a state in south Asia. However, India would not accept any outside intervention in such a conflict; especially if it had any anti-Indian slant. In any case if a country had internal problems assistance should be sought from countries within the region, and should include India. The exclusion of India would be construed under these circumstances as a move against India. Bhabani Sen Gupta put this point of view clearly when it is stated:

This regional security doctrine reflects, on one hand, the reality of India’s preponderant power position in the South Asian region, and, on the other, the South Asian consensus that there should be no interference by any other in the internal affairs of any other. It goes two significant steps further. First, it asserts India’s right to be included in any regional assistance sought by a South Asian country to deal with a serious conflict situation. Secondly, it stresses that assistance in such contingencies should be regional rather than by individual countries.  

The Indian Foreign Minister (P.V. Narasimha Rao) made a statement in the Indian Parliament as regards events on Sri Lanka that covered this policy. The statement followed a visit to Sri Lanka, where he met President Jayawardene. This visit followed the violent ethnic riots of July 1983, and the reports circulating that during these events Sri Lanka had approached certain foreign governments for military assistance. His statement was clear he was “not in a position to give details, but the House and the Nation should know that there is substance in the report”. He went on to explain the countries that had been approached for help. These countries had assured the Indian authorities that nothing would be done which is not in the interests of India. The Minister had this point very specific when he stated “the response of those to whom we have spoken is favourable”. These words indicate that the countries who had been approached had accepted the preponderant position of India within this area of the Indian Ocean. In more specific terms the countries had taken up the position that Sri Lanka came
within the sphere of influence of India. This, in essence, in the Indian
d Doctrine (or the Indira doctrine) was similar to the Monroe doctrine adopted
by the US from the nineteenth century onwards.

**Statements that Point to the Strategic Base of the 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan
Agreement**

After the 1987 Agreement a number of statements and opinions were
expressed, that point to the true nature of the Agreement. A large
contingent of Indian troops was sent as a peacekeeping force (called the
IPKF). The focus of media attention was that the purpose of the exercise
was to relieve the Tamil people of the North and East of a military presence
of Sri Lankan (mostly composed of ethnic Sinhalese) troops and alleviate
them of their duties, and ‘confine them to their barracks’. The Indian troops
were portrayed a ‘liberators’ of the Tamils, and had, in this context, come as
peacemakers who would bring a much needed peace and consequently a
prosperity to the North and East of Sri Lanka. With this the true reason (as
spelt out in the Letters to the Agreement) was lost at the start of whole
process.

Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, made statements which reveal the
strategic nature of the Agreement from the point of view of India. His
statement quoted in the Foreign Affairs report spells out the true nature of
the Agreement:

> Apart from the Agreement, which looks to the Tamils interests in Sri
Lanka, we had exchange of letters between President Jayawardene
and myself. It is in the exchange of these letters that we have seen to
the security problems in our region. With this exchange of letters, we
will see that such hostile forces are not allowed to come into our
region. This exchange of letters ensures that forces prejudicial to
India’s interests will not be present on Sri Lankan soil. It also ensures
that Sri Lanka’s ports, including Trincomalee, will not be given for
military use, as this is prejudicial to India’s interests. It also ensures
that any broadcasting facilities that are set up in Sri Lanka will not be used for military or intelligence purposes.\textsuperscript{65}

This statement by the Prime Minister of India illustrates the security and strategic issues underlying the whole of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987. Anything else is closely subordinate and subsidiary to it; especially the Sri Lankan Tamil issue which was the main part of the Agreement. This took a lower order of priority as seen in the Prime Minister’s statement pertaining to it:

\textit{The Agreement secures everything that the Sri Lanka Tamils had demanded, short of breaking up Sri Lanka’s Unity.}\textsuperscript{66}

What the Tamils had requested was for a separate state, on the same lines of what Bangladesh had got with the break-up of Pakistan in 1971. It appears that the Tamil rebels had this in mind: India as a ‘liberator’ from oppressive rule. What turned out was quite different - India and Sri Lanka were not prepared to grant devolution of power to the Sri Lankan Tamils that would have a domino effect on the sixty million Indian Tamils in the state of Tamil Nadu. Such a development in India could lead to disintegration of the nation. This had to be stopped. Similarly the successive Sri Lankan governments in Colombo, reflecting the majority Sinhala point of view, felt that even a federal state would lead to the division and consequent disintegration of the country. The Tamil problem, like the Kurds in the Middle East, was one that was viewed with suspicion by both India and Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{67}

Velupillai Prabhakaran, the leader of the Tamil rebel group (called the LTTE - or the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam) had his own views about the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement. He was not satisfied and felt that it was not in the interests of the Tamils, and that India’s geopolitical interest was the true reason for the Agreement. In a speech in Jaffna (the capital city of the Tamils in the North of Sri Lanka) he stated:

\textit{This Agreement did not concern only the problem of the Tamils. This primarily concerned with Indo-Sri Lankan relations. It also contains}
within itself the clauses for binding Sri Lanka within India’s super-power orbit. It works out a way for preventing disruptionist and hostile foreign forces from gaining footholds in Sri Lanka. That is why the Indian Government showed such an extraordinary keenness in concluding this Agreement.  

The events that followed proved this to be correct; as there was a bloody clash that resulted between the Tamil rebel LTTE forces and the Indian Army. There were complaints that the provincial government elections were conducted under an army of occupation. It was alleged that the Elam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front, that headed the provincial government, was a political extension of the Indian military occupation of the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka. There were alleged human rights abuses, and that there were a number of summary executions of members of the Liberation Tamils of Tamil Elam (the Tigers) by the Indian Army. These events pointed to the fact that the Indian intervention was a failure as it did not suppress the Tamil separatist movement. There was an alienation from the mass of Tamil people, living in the North and East of Sri Lanka, and the whole administration lasted so long as it was supported by the Indian Army.

The Agreement to Solve the Tamil Separatist Movement: Common to India and Sri Lanka

The first and the main part of the Agreement sought to contain ‘Tamil Separatism’ in Sri Lanka, and to ensure that it did not spill over to south India (the Tamil Nadu State) which was closest to the north and eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. There was always a fear that in the states of south Asia with ethnic nationalism and separatist demands, what happened to Pakistan, and later to Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, could cause the disintegration of states which were put together by colonial powers prior to their departure. The separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 is another example.
Marguerite Ross Barnet has written on the subject of cultural nationalism in south India within a historical setting. Tamil cultural nationalism had its formulation in the 1920s, caused by an anti-Brahmin movement, based on caste. There began a ‘Dravidian’ as opposed to an Aryan movement, which evolved into a movement of a separate state. Its ideologue was E.U. Ramaswami Nayakar. In 1935 and 1938 there were anti-Hindu movements in south India, and in July 1939 there was a call for a separate state for the Dravidians. Though the movement was at a cultural level, the movement gathered strength. The Justice Party evolved into the Dravidé Munitré Kalagem (the DMK). Though the cry for a separate state was dropped in 1962 after the Chinese invasion of India, the fear of separatism, based on a Dravidian Tamil movement, continued in India.  

The Tamils and the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987  
The Indo-Sri Lankan agreement of 1987 did not solve the ethnic problem, and the violence continued, but it did have certain positive features. It has to be, therefore, seen as a step in solving the ethnic issue; as it had the potential of leading to an upsurge of Tamil ethnic nationalism with its consequences to the stability of both India and Sri Lanka. Any step towards its solution would be in the security interests of both countries.

The Agreement of July 1987 had recognised that the North and East of Sri Lanka had been inhabited historically by the Tamils and thus implied that they could continue to live with security in these areas. The agreement had thus acceded to a principal demand of the Tamils. Additionally, the Accord indeed had recognised that, at least initially, the North and East should be administered as a single unit, which gave greater reassurance to the Tamils of their safety.

The Accord also acknowledged the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious nature of the island’s population. It accepted the existence of a plural society in Sri Lanka comprising Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Burghers
and others and that these various ethnic entities had their own linguistic and cultural identities which could be fostered without let or hindrance. Moreover, the agreement recognised the right of every citizen of any of these ethnic identities to live in equality with other citizens, in safety and harmony, fulfilling his own aspirations and not feeling as second class citizens which had been engendered by the Sinhala Only Act of July 1956.  

The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord had provided for the confinement of the Sri Lankan security forces who had been in the Tamil areas of the North and East of Sri Lanka which was expected to follow with the conclusion of the agreement. The Accord provided for India’s cooperation during the elections to the Provincial Councils, and during the referendum later on the merger of the North and East provinces and so forth.

The Accord had recognised the propriety of turning Tamil into an official language. The quarrel over the language issue following the passage of the Sinhala Only Act in 1956 had indeed caused and pronounced firmly the ethnic cleavage between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. This had been indeed a sharp dividing line among the two communities. The Sri Lankan government has passed legislation in respect of both the Provincial Councils along with the temporary merger and the referendum and in respect of making Tamil as an official language. There were other reasons, however, which also added to the initial relief that the Tamils in the North and East had felt when sections of the Accord came to be implemented. The disbandment of the Home Guards removed a source of threat and trouble to the Tamils in the Eastern Province and the withdrawal of the Mossad from the island meant less suffering to civilian Tamils all over.

Yet, at the same time, there were many other Tamils who were unhappy with the Accord since it was proclaimed. They considered the Accord to be forcibly imposed from above. These Tamil civilians had endured for years so much pain and hardship at the hands of those forces that naturally they eagerly desired to be freed from the associated patrols, cordon and search
operations and other such harassment. Hence this was yet another aspect which made the Accord welcome to the civilian Tamils in Sri Lanka. Over the months after the accord of July 1987, although hostilities did not cease, the Sri Lankan forces had been not so active generally in the North and East of Sri Lanka and, consequently, no complaints of unruly behaviour or maltreatment at their hands had emanated from the Tamil peoples although such complaints had been constant and common in the pre-accord period. However, there were residual matters in regard to the position and plight of the Sri Lankan Tamils politically and otherwise which India had to finalise within six weeks of the signing of the Accord. The Sri Lankan Tamils had trusted India to do this but this could not be done.\textsuperscript{77}

The Departure of the Indian Army (the IPRF) from Sri Lanka: New Affairs with the Close of the Cold War

The Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement reflected, in essence, the new strategic settling of this re-emerged ‘Cold War’ and the range of naval and security activities it provoked in the Indian Ocean and in south Asia.\textsuperscript{78}

By the early 1990s the ‘Cold War’ was over, and the Russians had decided to pull out of Afghanistan. New forces, and security concerns, had emerged in Asia, and, in this background, the Indians pulled out of Sri Lanka. The global strategic considerations that were fundamental to the 1987 Agreement were no longer relevant. The USA emerged as the only superpower, and China emerged as a ‘major power’ in Asia, with their appearance in Burma (Myanmar), and in the Bay of Bengal. India had to rethink its strategy, and posture, in the new changed circumstances. The USA was no longer a grave threat to Indian security. Due to the Chinese presence in south Asia, India turned to the USA. No more was the Soviet Union in existence, and the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 had no more ‘relevance’ in a security sense. This is the background of the Indian withdrawal from Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{79}
Lt. General Defender Singh was the Indian General in charge of the IPKF in Sri Lanka. His book entitled the “IPKF in Sri Lanka” gives a description of the fighting during this period, from the point of view of the Indian army. He indicates as to why the Indian army supported the Tamil rebels at first, and, subsequently, had to intervene, and thereafter leave the country after losing 1500 military personnel (including both men and officers) by saying “For instance, in July 1987 the conditions were such that our intervention was vital.” He then goes on to state “Then there was the security aspect, the danger of forces inimical to Indian Security interests securing a foothold in Sri Lanka.” At that time it was the US forces in the Indian Ocean that was looked upon with suspicion.

At the end of the book he looks to the future, and, he surveys the whole scene from an Indian security point of view: “India will continue to be confronted by two contradictory requirements; the moral need to support the Tamils and the political security of ensuring stability in Sri Lanka.” In his survey Singh advocates autonomous state forces for Tamils in the North. He does not want the Eastern Province and the strategic Harbour of Trincomalee within the Tamil autonomous region. He further states: “… and the Eastern Provinces including the vital Port of Trincomalee would remain part of Sri Lanka”.

That sums up the strategic aspect. If Trincomalee results in being within Sri Lanka, it would be easier to deal with Colombo; than one where Trincomalee would be under the Tamils, seeking an independent state. Further, there is also the possibility of the Tamils of India joining with the Sri Lankan Tamils as a wider political unit. This clearly points to the high priority the strategic issue had in the mind of the Indian policy makers, and they were willing to subordinate all other issues to this.
Map of Maldives, India and Sri Lanka
Map of the Indian Naval Deployment in the Indian Ocean
Summary

The Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement is a diplomatic document that reflects the domestic political issues within the two countries as much as the regional and global issues, in the emerging world. Firstly, in domestic issues, it reflects some of the disintegrating factors like ethnic and cultural issues, which face south Asian states, after the colonial era. In this instance the broad issue is that of Tamil nationalism. What is revealed in the study is that India used it in Sri Lanka to put pressure on the government to follow certain policies, and then went against it when these objectives were achieved by the provisions of this Agreement. It was a good example of a turn about in political issues when the circumstances dictate it.

The second and most important aspect of the Treaty reflects Sri Lanka’s strategic position. At the time the Treaty was concluded the Soviet Union was in Afghanistan, and the 1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty was in vogue. India’s stand on international issues, and strategic moves, in the Indian Ocean, reflected this position. Its anti-American stand as reflected in the Agreement (the Letters exchanged between the heads of government) points to this. India objected to US moves: the VAO Agreement, and the US use of Trincomalee Harbour and the use of Israeli Secret Services to aid the Sri Lankan security forces through an interest section of the US Embassy in Colombo. Attempts to enlarge the provisions of the VAO Agreement were perceived as an up-grade to a command and communication centre, and a point to spy on India. Trincomalee Harbour was always considered by India as falling within her defence orbit. Hence, the visit of US war ships, and her top diplomats to the country was viewed with suspicion. India tried to ensure that with this Agreement Sri Lanka would be a part of the wider Indian defence posture in south Asia. At best it was a part of the ‘Cold War’ politics of the period as the then USSR fully supported Indian moves.
This position changed with the end of the ‘Cold War’ in the early 1990s. It certainly was a factor in the Indian troop withdrawal from Sri Lanka. Further, it no longer protested at a continuing US presence on the island and the expansion of the VAO Agreement. All these went against the provisions of the Agreement but it was a new world in global politics and in south Asian strategic posture. Russia was no more a superpower and the emergence of China in Asia and in the Indian Ocean were factors of note by the Indian foreign policy makers. These moves were once again dictated by the situation of global politics, which was tied to regional and south Asian, strategic issues. Sri Lanka (as in the past), was a small country, attempting to protect its interests in this situation.
End Notes


3 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement, 1987: Two letters of 29th July 1987 between Prime Minister of India and the President of Sri Lanka.

4 Appendix - Clauses I and II.


10 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, p.129.

11 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, p.130.

12 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, p.129.
13 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, p.129.


16 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, p.106.

17 Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. XLV, No. 17, Col. 11-15 - India.

18 Lok Sabha Debates, Vol. XLV, No. 17, Col. 11-15 - India.


22 *Times of India*, 22 April 1982.


26 *The Hindu*, 30 May 1981.
27 The Times of India, 29 January 1982.


29 Sun, 5 December 1981.

30 Tender called - appeared in the Ceylon Daily News, 8 April 1982.

31 Times of India, 22 April 1982 - article entitled: Lanka calls off Talks with US Firm on Oil Tanks.


37 Gooneratne, A Decade of Confrontation, pp.124-126.

38 The Hindu, 26 January 1985 - article entitled: China Against Division of Sri Lanka.


41 Kodikara, *The Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement*.

42 Gooneratne, *A Decade of Confrontation*, p.158.


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62 Mansigh, ‘India’s Search for Power’, pp.27 and 41.


68 The speech made by V. Prabhakaran in August 1987, at Sudumalai in Jaffna District. Translated from Tamil Language - issued by the LTTE Halquser Lasilan, August 1987.


72 Clause 2.16 (e) of the Agreement of July 1987.

73 Clauses 1.2 - 1.4 of the Agreement of July 1987.

74 Clauses 2.5 and 2.8 of the Agreement of July 1987.

75 Clause 2.18 of the Agreement of July 1987.

76 Clause 2.9, Part 2 - Sri Lankan Army and New Security Personnel will be confined to the barracks.


CHAPTER V

Conclusions

The case studies of diplomatic documents (given in the Appendices), point to the relevance of the realist school of thought in international politics. This school of thought submits that anarchy is what gives international politics its distinctive quality. In the absence of any central body governing the world, each country works primarily for survival. Kenneth Waltz observes as follows:

In self help systems, the pressure of competition weighs more heavily than ideological preferences in internal political pressures.¹

The lack of a world body that directs is, per se, the main reason for the existence of an anarchical state. In many instances international bodies have striven to prevent war and conflict, but this has not quite brought peace, or end to conflict. In the nineteenth century the Concert of Europe, following the Congress of Vienna, after the Napoleonic Wars, strove to bring peace to a war torn Europe. Similarly, after World War I the League of Nations was formed, but what followed was a series of wars and conflicts, leading to World War II. After World War II, the United Nations Organisation was formed to end war and conflict. Though no world war was seen, a number of conflicts, and regional and civil wars, were seen. This confirms the real situation:

The anarchical condition inherent in any system of multiple sovereignty constitutes one of the prerequisites of international conflict: without it there would be no international relations, peaceful or non-peaceful, the division of the world into sovereign states is a precondition for international co-operation as well as conflict.²
The emergence of the great European maritime empires marked an historical watershed in the Indian Ocean. In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British quickly gained control over much of the region. To reach this goal, they used sophisticated ships and maritime strategies and exploited local rivalries to gain allies and territory. These activities signalled the beginning of the use of the Indian Ocean as a theatre where European maritime nations competed with one another for power and influence in the area. This rivalry spawned many extra-regional wars and alliances, many of which caused instability in the region’s islands.

Although it enabled the British to consolidate their hegemony over the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal also facilitated the entry of other European nations into the area. The latter development not only challenged British mastery over the Indian Ocean but also caused a scramble for colonies among the stronger European powers. The French established a presence in the Horn of Africa and Madagascar, both of which protected the route to their south-east Asia empire. Additionally, the Italians, Germans, and Portuguese created colonies along the East African coast. Russia viewed the Suez Canal as a vehicle to achieve its goal of creating a network of warm water ports. However, Japan’s 1904 victory over the Russian fleet ended this dream. Over the next several years, Japan and the United States posed a growing naval challenge to Britain’s dominance in the Indian Ocean. Nevertheless, British seapower remained pre-eminent throughout the region. During World War I, the Indian Ocean aroused international interest, as the British and the Germans battled one another for control of various colonies. Also, these nations sought to protect shipping routes that carried petroleum from the Persian Gulf, via the Suez Canal, to Europe. Despite the area’s importance, Madagascar, Mauritius, the Comoros, the Seychelles, and the Maldives managed to escape the ravages of World War I.

In World War II the most notable wartime event occurred at the 1942 Battle of the Java Sea, when the Japanese destroyed the British Royal Navy in Souel East Asia. This event marked the end of British hegemony over the
Indian Ocean. During the post-war period, the British government lacked the ability and resources to reassert its maritime dominance over the region. However, in the absence of strong contending naval power, the British remained in nominal control of sizable portions of the Indian Ocean. France confined its activities mainly to the western Indian Ocean. Politically, World War II weakened British and French holds over their respective colonial empires. The rising tide of nationalism that swept through Africa and Asia accelerated demands for independence on the part of all the Indian Ocean colonies. During the post-war period, several factors affected the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean. The onset of the Cold War increased superpower activity throughout the region.

With the onset of the Cold War, the proponents of the realist approach saw their views vindicated once again. It was clear, they argued, that the basic nature of the international system had not changed. Governments still pursued their national interests by whatever means they could muster. In such an anarchic system, officials acting in the name of their country have but one obligation: to achieve their foreign policy objectives without being constrained by ethical considerations. Echoing Machiavelli, the realists said that state representatives are free to maximize the gains of their country by any means, as long as they do not endanger that country’s existence. To fulfill their mission, the realists added, officials must increase the power of their state.

As early as 1948, Hans Morgenthau, who had a pivotal influence on the post-war development of the realist theory, presented several propositions as the foundation of a realist approach.³

1 Human nature follows certain norms that are “impervious to our preferences”. More specifically, those who act in the name of sovereign state “think and act in terms of interest defined as power”.

³
2 Diplomats and heads of state cannot apply universal moral principles. Such principles must be “filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place”.

3 Each policy must be judged by political criteria and on the basis of its political consequences. The political realist must ask: “How does this policy affect the power of the nation?”

Naval strategy and tactics have been shaped by the forms and capabilities of naval warships. Geography is an important factor in shaping naval thinking. For islands, such as Britain, strong navies were crucial. For the many empires of the Middle East, the Central Asian steppes, and India, naval power was less important or superfluous. Not until Alfred T. Mahan wrote “The Influence of Sea Power upon History” in the last decade of the nineteenth century was the central theme of naval strategy formulated in universal terms, although the British had been practising it for hundreds of years. The main strategy of sea power was defined as “command of the sea”, i.e., the ability to deny use of the sea as a means of transportation to an enemy while simultaneously protecting one’s own merchant shipping, and the ability to use the sea to project power ashore while denying that capability to the enemy. Despite the introduction of new weapons such as steam warships, armoured ships, heavy ordnance, submarines, and aircraft, “command of the sea” remained a fundamental objective of naval strategy. Another important naval strategy is “overseas presence”, i.e., the visible display of seapower as a deterrent to intervention by opposing powers in key areas of international tension.

The development of air force has led to many changes, which include the emergence of aircraft carriers, and naval air fleets and the development of submarine-based retaliatory missile forces. The employment of land-based and carrier-based aircraft during World War II showed that command of the seas rested in great part on control of the air above it. The submarine, introduced in World War I, greatly changed naval strategy and led to the
development of many new weapons and tactics. In both world wars the 
submarine was employed mainly as a commerce destroyer and, as such,
could not by itself gain command of the sea. However, the use of long-range 
guided missiles on nuclear-powered submarines in the 1960s transformed 
the submarine into a major weapon of strategic bombardment. Nuclear-
powered submarines carrying guided missiles are almost invulnerable to 
attack. It is the chief weapon for defence and deterrence, Sri Lanka will, 
therefore, be an important point for naval strategy and tactics as in the past, 
due to the strategic position and its possession, of the Trincomalee Harbour.

Power long has been considered to be the key concept in the study of 
international relations.4 Hans Morgenthau held that governments, in their 
relations with each other, try “either to keep power, increase power, or 
demonstrate power”. He also equated interest with power. Another scholar, 
Georg Schwarzenberger, argued that, in the absence of a superior authority, 
governments are likely to do whatever they are capable of doing to gain their 
ends. Power, in his view, is the prime factor in international politics - a 
“combination of persuasive influence and coercive force”. 5 More recently, 
two other scholars have defined power as “the ability of an actor on the 
international stage of use tangible and intangible resources and assets in 
such a way as to influence the outcome of international events to its own 
satisfaction. 6 These theories were clearly seen in the diplomatic documents 
studied. Hence, it is a relevant framework for this study.

What was seen in all these diplomatic documents was the realistic approach 
taken by the concerned parties. There were hardly any ideological issues 
that went into the agreement (and those proposed), except as a general 
introduction or recital (in a legal document) that has no real significance 
when the substance of the agreement, or treaty, are closely examined. 
Hence, there are no moral or ethical issues seen in the diplomatic 
documents examined, and what must be perceived at that time as the 
mutual self interests of the parties concerned.
Each of the Agreements, Treaties and the diplomatic correspondence illustrates this. In the proposed Treaty of the British by the Pybus Mission the British authorities in India wanted a harbour on the east coast of Sri Lanka (Trincomalee if possible), and in return they proposed to assist the King of Kandy, but specifically they were not prepared to do so against the Dutch due to the diplomatic situation in Europe at that time. During the Andrews Mission to the Kandyan Court the European political situation had changed, and the British were willing to assist the King of Kandy against the Dutch in Sri Lanka. This change in attitude flowed directly from events in Europe where the French Revolutionary Wars had led to a diplomatic revolution whereby Britain was opposed to the then current government in Holland.  

The conquest of the Kandyan Kingdom (and the Kandyan Convention that followed) was the fruit of a successful espionage campaign against the King of Kandy whereby the Kandyan Chiefs were won over. D'Oyly, a British civil servant (stationed in Colombo), conducted this work of espionage with the Kandyan Chiefs. A close study of D'Oyly's Diary would prove that it was espionage carried out through spies and its aim was to wean away the Kandyan aristocracy from their traditional loyalty to their King. A study of the Diary would prove that he individually promised a lot to each Kandyan Chief of note. This was particularly so as far as the Chief Minister of the King Ahelepola was concerned. There were hints that he may be made the next King when in fact the British had no idea of retaining a local King or political power within the country, as they wanted to consolidate their position over the whole country. Once the King was dethroned, the British broke all their promises to the Chiefs, and this led to the great Kandyan Revolt of 1817 which was crushed with great force. The Kandyan Convention of 1815 should be taken with the Battle of Waterloo in Europe, which saw the downfall of Napoleon and France. The French had tried to dominate Europe and had global ambitions. The Kandyan Kings had an interest in the French connection as seen in their diplomatic documents. Therefore the downfall of
the Kandyan Kingdom by the British was another blow to French ambitions within the Indian Ocean region.

The 1947 Defence Agreement with the United Kingdom illustrates the mutual defence interests of the two countries and the realism it reflected at that time. Sri Lanka at that time had no navy, army or air force of its own. Therefore the British offer of help and the stationing of the British Fleet at the Trincomalee Harbour was a guarantee of safety to Sri Lanka. At that time Britain wanted a strong naval presence in the Indian Ocean as they hoped to remain in the Middle East and to exploit the resources of the African continent. Hence, a strong British naval base in Sri Lanka (Trincomalee) fell in line with this strategic posture in the context of global politics. British policy continued till 1957 when a decision was made to gradually pull out after the Suez Crisis in 1956-1957.  

The Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987 was based on realistic principles of perceived mutual benefit to the two countries. Both Sri Lanka and India strove as a matter of policy to put down Tamil separatism, and in Sri Lanka there was formulated a devolution package. The Indian Army (though styled a peace keeping force) was to disarm the Tamil rebels. Sri Lanka in turn was to give up her freedom of choice by seeking foreign military aid. The use of the Trincomalee Harbour was to be in accordance with Indian Defence interests. India, in this process, broke her promises to the Tamil separatists whom she trained to fight against the security forces of Sri Lanka. It was a complete turn around of Indian policy as far as the Tamils were concerned. Such a policy can only be justified on grounds of realism as seen at that time.  

During World War II electronics, especially in the deployment of naval vessels, emerged as a vital input in the conflict. Perhaps one can infer that Lord Louis Mountbatten (the then Supreme Allied Commander for south-east Asia) made Sri Lanka his Headquarters for operational purposes for this reason. In 1951 the USA entered into VOA Agreement with Sri Lanka. It
was purely for the purpose of broadcasting. In 1980 (during the period of the heightened cold war in south Asia) the Americans proposed to expand the broadcasting facilities, and sought a much larger ground area covering nearly one thousand acres.\footnote{11} The Indians were suspicious of this move. The Indians suspected that this was a cover up to establish a command and control centre for the US military, having a global and regional reach for the deployment of American submarines. In addition the Indians were suspicious that the Centre would also be used to spy on India, especially in regard to her nuclear programs. In 1992, in spite of the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987, the Americans got their VOA expansion programs approved, and it is operative now.\footnote{12} This agreement of the VOA in 1992 went contrary to the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987, and in 1992 the ‘Cold War’ was over, and a bipolar world was now replaced by a unipolar world with one superpower the USA. The new force now in Asia is the rise of China, and her entry into the Indian Ocean region, through Burma, and this realization perhaps influenced the Indians not to protests on the confirmation of the 1992 VOA Agreement: another example of a realistic approach to politics.

When a strong political power (earlier Kingdoms) arose in south India, they tended to dominate the politics of Sri Lanka. From early times the history of Sri Lanka was that of a constant struggle to free itself from such domination. It was the projection of power from south India that had a decisive influence on its history. Therefore, it was not surprising that the British in Madras (Fort St George) showed an interest in the Sri Lankan harbour of Trincomalee from the middle of the eighteenth century. The Pybus Mission in 1762 was the first British diplomatic mission.\footnote{13} In 1796 the British forcibly occupied the Trincomalee Harbour and the Maritime Provinces of the country. In 1815 the British occupied the Kandyan Kingdom, and with this they consolidated their hold over the whole country. They occupied the whole country and ruled directly over it till 1948 when they left. The British domination had a decisive effect on Sri Lanka:
Sinhalese independence was thus finally overthrown. The capture of Sri Wikrama Rajasinha and the signing of the Convention of 1815 mark the end of the existence of Kandy as an independent political entity. A petty state, mediaeval in structure, unprogressive in ideas, parochial in policy and diplomacy and rent by internal dissensions, could not anyhow have checked the advance of a modern imperial power. The British acquisition of, and the consequent substitution of a strong for a weak government in, the Maritime Provinces made the subjugation of Kandy inevitable and a mere matter of time.  

The Indian Intervention in 1987 was another example of the projection of power from India. By 1971 (with the amputation of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh), India became the dominant power in south Asia. Following on this the aims and objectives of Indian policy was to ensure that all states which were perceived as falling within the Indian defence orbit should follow a policy in external affairs as laid down in Delhi. As the U.N.P. government of J.R. Jaywardene (in 1977) took a line contrary to Indian policy they put pressure on Sri Lanka to look to India for assistance. One way they did this was by supporting Tamil separatist guerrillas in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Such action exerted pressure on the Sri Lankan government to fall in line with Indian policy. This assistance to the Tamil separatists was given even when India did not desire a separate Tamil state in Sri Lanka. The policy was justified in that it assisted India’s long term interests of dominating Sri Lanka, which was partially achieved with the 1987 Agreement. Early in 1987 India broke the air space of Sri Lanka (in a dramatic fashion) by dropping food and medical supplies to the Tamils in Jaffna. They followed this by using coercive diplomacy to get their strategic and security interests covered by the 1987 Agreement.

Sri Lanka gained very little from the 1987 Agreement. There was no surrender of arms by the Tamil rebels and the civil war continued. There were strained relations between India and Sri Lanka, and there was no stability or peace within the country. A number of tragic events followed the
intervention: a large number of deaths of civilian population along with human rights abuses and over one thousand Indian army personnel killed, and many wounded and disabled. On the whole the militarisation of the country continued, and with it, the civil war. This sapped the economy of the country, dissipating the country’s limited resources.  

Trincomalee Harbour, from the middle of the eighteenth century to the present, has acted as a magnet for naval powers interested in the use of bases within a perceived strategic point of the Indian Ocean. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were periods associated with the age of sailing ships. In this context it was the only safe harbour in the entire coast of India to anchor a whole fleet due to the ill effects of the monsoon winds. At present it serves as a safe point to house a fleet - a fact seen when the remnants of the British fleet took refuge after the fall of Singapore during World War II. With a conflict in the Middle East, or in the Pacific, Trincomalee has a vital part to play. In today’s technology the submarine is a potent weapon, especially in carrying missiles, including nuclear war heads. Every effort is made to avoid detection by nuclear submarines. In this the Indian Ocean is a better place to avoid detection due to the biothermal qualities of her waters. Further, Trincomalee Harbour has canyons (it is asserted) that can enable submarines to hide without detection.

Sri Lanka’s leaders used Trincomalee as a bargaining chip. One of the Kings of Kandy said this in a letter to the French Governor, in Pondicherry in south India, while soliciting his aid:

An introduction having been made, we decided to send for you, to consult you, to hand over a harbour to you and to make you enjoy our trust and confidence. We, therefore, intend to grant to you the Batticaloa Harbour and Tambalagamam Harbour (Trincomalee) including Kattukulampatty in order to have you in our country and with
the intention of continuing the friendship between us and your King as long as the sun and moon shall endure.

(King Kirti Sri Rajasinghe to Governor of Pondichery, 25 June 1776) 

The same importance of Trincomalee was repeated on many occasions. D.S. Senayake, in 1947, made the path towards Dominion Status easier representing the Sri Lankans (mainly the Sinhalese, the majority ethnic group) by signing the Defence Agreement with the United Kingdom that allowed the British navy to use the Trincomalee Harbour. This policy of depending on the British for all Sri Lanka’s defence requirements continued till 1957, by which date the British (after the Suez Canal Crisis) decided to pull out of south Asia and the Middle East. Britain, as a matter of policy, gradually gave way to the United States of America to take over the role of defending Western interests in the Indian Ocean and the Middle East.

In the 1970s and 1980s Trincomalee Harbour attracted much attention due to developments in Afghanistan and the Middle East. This period witnessed arrival of interest in Trincomalee by the Americans with a revival of a new phase of the ‘Cold War’ in the context of the Indian Ocean. In 1971 the Indo-Soviet Treaty and the war with Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh further added to this. This was the era where the Americans were told to move out of the Subic Bay in the Philippines. All these factors made Trincomalee a much needed back up for the Diego Garcia USA naval base. Trincomalee is an ideal back up for the Americans as Diego Garcia is isolated without another base. In fact there was a map in the USA which indicated that Trincomalee Harbour was used by the US navy. This was denied, stating that this was inadvertently included. J.R. Jayawardene appeared to be willing to bargain using this harbour. The 1987 Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement was really a diplomatic document where the strategic interests appeared to gain as Trincomalee Harbour was implied as being occupied as a part of the Indian defence arrangements.
The thesis, therefore, points to the fact that Sri Lanka’s strategic position in the Indian Ocean, and her proximity to India were the determining facts in her modern history, from the eighteenth century to the present. All the diplomacy and the documents studied point to this fact. Finally, it also shows that due to the modern state system and the innate nature of man, realism is the best approach to form a study that would point to the inner factor in diplomacy.
End Notes


(b) Muni, S., *Pongs of Proximity*, New Delhi, Sage, 1993, pp.11-12.


20 Letters of the Kandyan Kings - Sri Lankan Archives, King of Kandy to Bellecombe, Governor of Pondichery, 25 June 1777.


22 Kodikara, South Asian Strategic Issues, p.15.
APPENDIX 1

Articles of the Treaty Proposed to the
Nayak King by the British in 1762:
Relevant Extracts from Text *

“1st - That the English East India Company shall have permission to establish a Settlement or Settlements in the Bay of Cottiarum in the River of Mattu Cullapay, or Batacal, or in the River Chilaun in the Districts of Annawolandane, or at any other place on the sea coast of the island of Ceylon, as they shall hereafter find most convenient for carrying on their trade, which now, is or shall hereafter be in the possession of the king, giving notice to the king of their intentions of establishing such settlement, before they erect any buildings there.”

* Military Sundries, Vol. XVII, Tamil Nadu Archives
APPENDIX 2

King of Kandy to Bellecombe, Governor of Pondichery,
25 June 1777: Relevant Extracts from Text

“Therefore, it is necessary that you should start quickly and come over making the necessary arrangement to take possession of the Batticaloa harbour and Tambalagamam harbour including Kattukulampattu intended to be granted to you. After your arrival and when you are in possession of the Batticaloa harbour and Tambalagamam harbour including Kattukulampattu, if any body within your boundaries, although he may be one of your own race, commit an offence against you and escape within our boundary, and if you send the name of such person to Our Agents, the refugee, if alive, shall be duly arrested and handed over to you. “

This letter was dispatched on the 15th day of Ani of the year Saka 1699, from Sriwaddhana Nuwera in Ceylon.
APPENDIX 3

From Rajadirajasingha to the French at Pondichery,

3 July 1791: Relevant Extracts from Text *

“For the purpose of such consummation you should, on the receipt of this letter, send a few ships with the necessary men and ammunition; together with guns, gunpowder, shots and sulphur for sale to Us, in charge of wise and clever agents, and make them to land at and occupy either Trincomalee which you had previously seized, or Tambiligamam which was intended to be given to you. On receipt of the necessary information that you had done so, We shall send Our Agents to meet you and to supply the necessaries.”

* National Archives Sri Lanka (Translated into English from the original Tamil language)
APPENDIX 4

Proclamation at the “Convention” of 1815:

Relevant Extract from Text *

“4th. The dominion of the Kandyan provinces is vested in the sovereign of the British empire, and to be exercised through the Governors or Lieutenant-Governors of Ceylon for the time being, and their accredited agents, saving to the Adikars, Dissaves, Mohottales, Coralls, Vidaans, and all other chief and subordinate native head men, lawfully appointed by authority of the British government; the rights, privileges, and powers of their respective offices, and to all classes of the people the safety of their persons and property, with their civil rights and immunities, according to the laws, institutions, and customs established and in force amongst them.”

Whereas Ceylon has reached the stage in constitutional development at which she is ready to assume the status of a fully responsible member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, in no way subordinate in any aspect of domestic or external affairs, freely associated and united by common allegiance to the Crown.

And whereas it is the mutual interest of Ceylon and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland that the necessary measures should be taken for the effectual protection and defence of the territories of both and that the necessary facilities should be afforded for this purpose.

Therefore the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ceylon have agreed as follows:

1 The Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of Ceylon will give to each other such military assistance for the security of their territories, for defence against external aggression and for the protection of essential communications as it may be in their mutual interest to provide. The Government of the United Kingdom may base such naval and air forces and maintain such land forces in Ceylon as may be required for these purposes, and as may be mutually agreed.

2 The Government of Ceylon will grant to the Government of the United Kingdom all the necessary facilities for the objects mentioned in Article 1 as may be mutually agreed. These facilities will include the use of naval and air bases and ports and military establishments and the use of telecommunications facilities and the right of service courts and
authorities to exercise such control and jurisdiction over members of the said forces as they exercise at present.

3 The Government of the United Kingdom will furnish the Government of Ceylon with such military assistance as may from time to time be required towards the training and development of Ceylonese armed forces.

4 The two Governments will establish such administrative machinery as they may agree to be desirable for the purpose of co-operation in regard to defence matters, as to co-ordinate and determine the defence requirements of both Governments.

5 This Agreement will take effect on the day when the constitutional measures necessary for conferring on Ceylon fully responsible status within the British Commonwealth of Nations shall come into force.

Done in duplicate, at Colombo, this 11th day of November 1947.

Signed on behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

(Sd.) HENRY MOORE

Signed on behalf of the Government of Ceylon

(Sd.) D.S. SENANAYAKE

Source: Command Papers, 2757 (London 1947), pp.2-3
APPENDIX 6

Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement

To establish peace and normalcy in Sri Lanka

Exchange of Letters

Relevant Extracts from Text

(i) Your Excellency and myself will reach an early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence personnel with a view to ensuring that such presences will not prejudice Indo-Sri Lankan relations.

(ii) Trincomalee or any other ports in Sri Lanka will not be made available for military use by any country in a manner prejudicial to India’s interests.

(iii) The work of restoring and operating the Trincomalee oil tank farm will be undertaken as a joint venture between India and Sri Lanka.

(iv) Sri Lanka’s agreement with foreign broadcasting organisations will be reviewed to ensure that any facilities set up by them in Sri Lanka are used solely as public broadcasting facilities and not for any military or intelligence purposes.
APPENDIX 7

Velupillai Prabhakaran - Speech as Leader of the Separatist Tamil Rebel on the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1987:

Relevant Extracts from Text

This Agreement did not concern only the problem of the Tamils. This is primarily concerned with Indo-Sri Lanka relations. It also contains within itself the clauses for binding Sri Lanka within India's super-power orbit. It works out a way for preventing disruptionist and hostile foreign forces from gaining footholds in Sri Lanka. That is why the Indian Government showed such an extraordinary keenness in concluding this Agreement. However, at the same time, it happens to be an Agreement that determines the political future and fate of the people of Tamil Eelam.
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(a) Public Record Office

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C.O. 54 Volumes 1 - 150. These contain the despatches from Ceylon. There is also a Miscellaneous volume for each year containing other letters received by the Colonial Office. Volume 122 contains the Reports of the Commissioners of Eastern Enquiry.

Governor Caldecott’s despatch to Secretary of State for Colonies on 27 January 1943 and seventeenth February 1943.

Stanley Cabinet Paper on Ceylon Constitution on 27 March 1943.

22 May 1944 - Mailed “Top Secret” to Chiefs and Staff by Lord Mountbatten. 13 June 1944 - Telegram - case for a Constitutional Commission - before war was ended.


Useful information may also be found among the papers of the Foreign Office, the Board of Admiralty and the Board of Trade.
**India Office**

The material here, which relates to the period when Sri Lanka was in the control of the East India Company, is to be found among the following papers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dutch Records</td>
<td>Volume 27</td>
<td>Papers relating to the surrender of the Dutch Settlements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secret Despatches to Bengal and Circular Despatches</td>
<td></td>
<td>Volume 1 contains the orders which led to the expedition against Ceylon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boards Records</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(c) **British Museum**

*Wellesley MSS.* (Additional MSS. 13,864-7). The first three volumes contain the official and demi-official correspondence of Governor North with Lord Mornington, Governor-General of Bengal. The last volume contains the Minutes, etc. of the De Meuron Committee of Investigation.

2 **IN SRI LANKA**

(a) **Colombo Archives**

Much of the material here is available in the Public Record Office, e.g., the despatches from Ceylon. But there is in the Colombo Archives a complete collection of the *Ceylon Government Gazettes*. Above all, there is an important set of volumes, classified as the “B” *Series*, which contains a large amount of detailed information that is not accessible in England. The most important, perhaps, are the volumes relating to Kandyan administration.

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(b) **Colombo Museum**

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