



# Joint Committee on National Security



## AGENDA:

Addressing India's Strategic & Internal Response to the Sri Lankan Civil War and its Implications on Regional Stability

# JCNS



## STUDY GUIDE



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## LETTER FROM THE BUREAU

Greetings Delegates,

As your Executive Board, it is our honour to welcome you to the Joint Committee on National Security (JCNS) at the 10th iteration of Shishukunj International School Model United Nations Conference 2025, deliberating upon the agenda ‘**Addressing India's Strategic & Internal Response to the Sri Lankan Civil War and its Implications on Regional Stability.**’ We will be functioning under the guiding theme, “*Samprikti: bridges to a better world.* The Joint Committee on National Security is a high-level, fictional decision-making body designed to simulate the strategic and political landscape of India at a critical juncture. It brings together key voices from the government, armed forces, and intelligence to respond to imminent threats and regional challenges. Every delegate participating in this committee carries the responsibility of preserving national interests while upholding stability across the subcontinent.

The committee has a **freeze date of December 1, 1989**, which means that no information received after this date will be considered relevant by the committee. The rising tensions in Sri Lanka are no longer a distant issue. The conflict threatens to spill over, with its ethnic, political, and humanitarian dimensions pressing heavily upon India’s internal and external posture. From the sensitivities in Tamil Nadu to the prospects of military involvement and foreign influence in the region, every decision made here will shape the course of India's security doctrine and regional leadership. Delegates must exhibit clarity of thought, strategic reasoning, and political maturity. The agenda requires an understanding of historical undercurrents and real-time crisis evolution. Every policy, directive, or stance you take must be rooted in originality and realism. Plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.

We anticipate intense, analytical debates and well-rounded directives that reflect India’s constitutional values, national priorities, and commitment to peace and order. While the background guide provides a foundation, we urge all delegates to research beyond it, delving into the military, political, and diplomatic nuances relevant to this period.

This committee promises urgency, complexity, and immense learning. Come prepared to engage, question, and lead with conviction as we navigate one of India’s most defining security challenges. Prepare well and work with conviction.

We hope to see you all in July!

*Mens et Manus*

Feel free to contact us with any questions.

**Atharv Rawat**, Moderator

**Vishesh Dagra**, Deputy Moderator

**Kinshat Gangwani**, Political Advisor



## KEYWORDS

**The LTTE:** Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was a Tamil militant group demanding a separate Tamil state, known for its strict discipline and suicide bombings.

**JVP:** Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna was a Sinhalese Marxist group that opposed the government and Indian intervention.

**IPKF:** Indian Peace Keeping Force was an Indian military force sent to Sri Lanka under the 1987 Indo-Sri Lanka Accord.

**RAW:** Research and Analysis Wing is India's foreign intelligence agency. The agency's primary functions are gathering foreign intelligence, countering terrorism and proliferation, advising Indian policymakers, and advancing India's foreign strategic interests.

**Eelam:** Proposed Sri Lankan State By The Tamils

**TELO:** Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization

**EPRLF:** Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front

**Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (1987):** Agreement signed between India and Sri Lanka to resolve the Sri Lankan conflict by disarming Tamil militants and providing limited autonomy to Tamil-majority areas.

**Black July (1983):** Anti-Tamil riots in Colombo and other areas, sparked by the killing of 13 Sri Lankan soldiers by the LTTE. Over 2,000 Tamils were killed, and thousands were displaced.

**Insurgency:** It is a violent, often prolonged, armed rebellion by a group of people against their government. It's a form of irregular warfare in which smaller, lightly armed groups, such as rebels or insurgents, oppose a larger, established authority, often using guerrilla tactics.

**DMK:** The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam is an Indian political party based in the state of Tamil Nadu



## INTRODUCTION TO AGENDA

The Sri Lankan Civil War was one of the most serious conflicts in South Asia during the 1980s. It was mainly a three-sided conflict involving: The Sinhala majority dominating the Sri Lankan government and the population, the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) initially supported the LTTE but later aligned with the Sri Lankan government after the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and lastly Tamil militant groups like the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who were demanding a separate Tamil homeland called Tamil Eelam in the North and North-Eastern regions of Sri Lanka. The war was rooted in decades of ethnic discrimination, political failure, and broken promises to the Tamil minority. It quickly escalated into a violent and complex regional crisis with deep implications for India's internal and external security.

The conflict was not just a problem for Sri Lanka; it also affected India in various ways, as described later in the guide. India could not stay silent or neutral.





## TIMELINE

**1948:** Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) gains independence from Britain.

**1956:** The Sinhala Only Act is passed, marginalizing Tamil speakers.

**1957:** Bandaranaike–Chelvanayakam Pact

**1965:** Dudley–Chelvanayakam Pact

**1972:** The country becomes the Republic of Sri Lanka; Tamil alienation deepens.

**1976:** The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) is formed.

**1981:** Burning of the Jaffna Library

**1983:** Black July – Anti-Tamil riots mark the start of full-scale civil war.

**1987:** Operation Poomalai - Air drops were provided to the city of Jaffna, which was encircled by the Sri Lankan troops, to help the trapped civilians.

**1987:** The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord is signed; India sends the IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force).



## GEO-POLITICAL SITUATION

### India:

By December 1, 1989, India found itself at a pivotal moment in its political history. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, whose election was still fresh from the general election, was nominating others to help him run the government. The political system was undergoing some changes, the general populace seemed to be extremely frustrated due to factors like the Bofors scandal, and the rise of regional parties was emerging, which indicated that the Indian National Congress was losing its edge. Externally, there was severe unrest within the country, which included areas such as Punjab and the Northeastern states. India was under immense pressure regarding national security and political stability.

The economy was struggling, straining considerably. India was experiencing high inflation, low growth, and declining foreign exchange reserves. There was a controlled, licensed regime economy and heavy public spending, which had stretched the fiscal framework. The deployment of the IPKF in Sri Lanka also overwhelmed national resources. With increasing casualties and no clear strategic success, the public and political circles became sceptical about the utility and cost of such an operation.

Strategically, India wanted to extend its sphere of influence in South Asia through the Accord while amending the Indo-Sri Lanka Treaty in 1987, which included sending the IPKF to disarm the militant Tamils internationally recognized as Terrorists and secure Sri Lanka's stabilization. The mission was soon revealed to be incredibly multifaceted. IPKF's engagement in open confrontation with the LTTE has left India labeled as a not-so-peaceful intervener. Further, the India-bashing in those parts of the globe, combined with oppressed Tamil Nadu, brought some irony to diplomacy and an internal pirouette. India, as of this date, was caught in a very narrow window reevaluating the strategic shift needed to adapt to increasing regional volatility.

### Sri Lanka:

Sri Lanka in 1989 was fighting a salient blend of economic, political, and geopolitical challenges set against the backdrop of an unrelenting civil war.

This country is economically in dire straits. The violent conflicts especially the civil war in the south brought the entire economy to a grinding halt leading to a crippling balance of payments situation. By mid-1989, external reserves were nearly depleted, prompting the government to adopt stringent fiscal and monetary policies, including a significant devaluation of the Sri Lankan rupee, to stabilize the economy.

Politically, the landscape was turbulent. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) insurgency intensified, leading to widespread violence and a state of emergency declared in June 1989. President Ranasinghe Premadasa, who assumed office in January 1989, faced assassination attempts and political unrest. Despite efforts to negotiate with insurgent groups, including a temporary ceasefire with the JVP, violence persisted, culminating in the death of JVP leader Rohana Wijeweera in November 1989.

Geopolitically, India's involvement was significant. Initially supporting Tamil militant groups, India shifted its stance by signing the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987, deploying the Indian Peace Keeping Force

<sup>1</sup><https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/special-report/story/19890815-india-agrees-to-partial-pull-out-of-ipkf-from-sri-lanka-816384-1989-08-14>



(IPKF) to enforce peace. However, the IPKF's presence became contentious, facing resistance from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and criticism from the Sinhalese majority. By December 1989, under pressure from the Sri Lankan government and domestic opposition, India agreed to withdraw the IPKF, marking a pivotal moment in regional dynamics.

These intertwined economic hardships, political unrest, and complex geopolitical engagements underscored the multifaceted crisis Sri Lanka faced at the close of 1989.

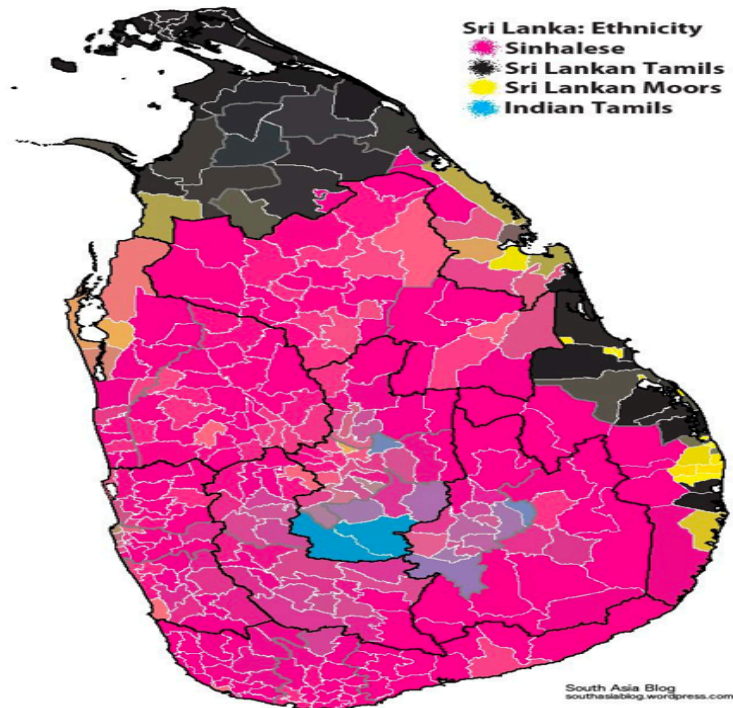


### **Tamil Nadu:**

By December 1989, Tamil Nadu had emerged as a critical region in India's internal security landscape due to its geographical proximity and ethnic affinity with Sri Lankan Tamils. The state witnessed heightened political sensitivity, with widespread public sympathy for the LTTE and increasing tension over the Indian Peace Keeping Force's continued presence in Sri Lanka. Refugee inflows strained local infrastructure, and allegations of LTTE sympathizers operating from Indian soil raised national security concerns. The coastal districts, in particular, became vulnerable to cross-border smuggling and militant infiltration, making Tamil Nadu a vital consideration in India's strategic response to the Sri Lankan Civil War.

## HISTORY

The Mighty Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon, is a teardrop-shaped island nation located just south of India in the Indian Ocean, just a few kilometres off the southern coast of Tamil Nadu. Like many other South Asian nations, Sri Lanka possesses a Vibrant and Diverse Socio-Cultural Fabric. The major ethnic groups are the Sinhalese (74 percent) and the Tamils (18 percent), and among the Tamils, there are two subgroups. The Tamil natives of the country are called 'Sri Lankan Tamils,' which comprises 13 percent of them, and the rest, whose forefathers came from India as plantation workers during the colonial period, are known as the 'Indian Tamils'.



India's involvement, initially covert, began to deepen through intelligence backing and refugee support. Events such as the burning of the Jaffna Public Library in 1981 and the Black July pogrom of 1983 shocked the Indian public, especially in Tamil Nadu. The emotional reaction in Tamil Nadu, home to millions who shared linguistic and cultural bonds with Sri Lankan Tamils, forced Delhi to act. Initially, India tried quiet diplomacy and aid. But as the violence worsened, especially India's role shifted from observer to reluctant participant, as diplomatic efforts failed and ethnic violence continued to rise, India moved from an observer to an actor in Sri Lanka's civil war. This conflict was no longer just Sri Lanka's problem, it was India's challenge too.



After The Independence in 1948, The Leaders Of The Sinhala Community Planted A Seed That Caused The Historic Massive Instability In The Country And The Indian Ocean Region. They Sought To Secure Dominance Over the Government by majority. As a result, the democratically elected government adopted a series of majoritarian measures to establish the Supreme Sinhala supremacy. This began as a hopeful democratic chapter for Sri Lanka quickly shifted in favour of the Sinhalese majority.

### **The Sinhala-Only Act and Rise of Grievances:**

After independence, the Sri Lankan government passed the Ceylon Citizenship Act (1948), which rendered nearly one million Indian Tamils stateless. Many of them, born in Ceylon, were denied basic rights and citizenship. Also, one of the first flashpoints was the passing of the Sinhala Only Act by Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike in 1956.

An Act that was the Blindfold to recognise Sinhala as the only official language, thus disregarding Tamil. Its legislation made Sinhala the sole official language, excluding Tamils from civil services, education, and public life. A new constitution stipulated that the state shall protect and foster Buddhism. All these government measures, coming one after the other, gradually increased the feeling of alienation among the Sri Lankan Tamils. They felt that none of the major political parties led by the Buddhist Sinhala leaders were sensitive to their culture.

This Act catalyzed protests, hunger strikes, and later, widespread disillusionment among Tamils. They demanded Tamil as an official language, regional autonomy, and equality of opportunity in securing education and jobs. But their demand for more autonomy for provinces populated by the Tamils was repeatedly denied. By the 1980s, several political organisations were formed demanding an independent Tamil Eelam (state) in northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka, Including The Well-Known LTTE ( Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam), the Piranhas, and the Tigers Of The Indian Ocean.

### **The Radical Turn, Emergence of Tamil Militancy, And The International Interference<sup>2</sup>:**

“As you sow, so shall you reap.” It's an example that is pre-eminent in the country of Sri Lanka. The more the Sinhalese government attempted to increase its dominance, the more radical their opposition became. This all seeded the hatred that gave rise to separatist ideologies among many Tamil leaders. By the late 1970s, As The peaceful solutions failed, the initial non-violent political struggle for an independent Tamil state was used as justification for a secessionist insurgency led by the militant groups. One major group, the LTTE, led by Velupillai Prabhakaran, was involved in attacks on government targets, policemen, and local politicians. By the mid-1980s, the LTTE had begun assassinating rival Tamil leaders and Indian-trained groups like TELO and EPRLF. Their brutal discipline, centralized control, and political ruthlessness made them the dominant force. Parallel To This Syndicate Were Israel and Pakistan, which reportedly provided military



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/tamil-separatist-violence-erupts-sri-lanka>

advisers and intelligence support to the Sri Lankan government during its fight against Tamil militants. This created suspicion and concerns in India, especially in Tamil Nadu, where sympathy for the Tamil cause was high. Hence, Making The Sri Lankan Soil a Stage To Showcase Their Influence, Intervention, and greatness.

### **The Black July And The Jaffna Library Case:**

One cannot speak of the Sri Lankan Civil War without remembering two tragic chapters: the burning of the Jaffna Public Library in 1981 and the Black July riots in 1983. The burning of the library, an epicentre of Tamil culture, destroyed nearly 97,000 rare manuscripts, setting ablaze not just books but an entire community's identity. Two years later, the assassination of 13 soldiers by the LTTE triggered violent anti-Tamil pogroms across Sri Lanka. In just a week, thousands of Tamils were killed. Homes were looted, lives shattered, and thousands fled to India seeking refuge. These events deeply shook Tamil Nadu, igniting widespread protests led by parties like DMK and AIADMK. For India, these weren't just humanitarian concerns. They marked the moment when Sri Lanka's conflict truly crossed the Palk Strait, demanding New Delhi's attention and eventual intervention.



### **India's Intelligence Footprint And The Tamil Nadu Factor:**

In the early 1980s, India, through RAW, began training and arming Tamil militant groups like the LTTE, TELO, and EPRLF. The strategy was to counterbalance Sri Lanka's tilt toward foreign powers like Pakistan, Israel, and the United States of America and gain leverage in resolving the Tamil issue diplomatically. These covert operations were conducted in southern Indian training camps, mostly near Tamil Nadu. However, this move backfired. Instead of unifying the Tamil militants under negotiation, it escalated factionalism and later, the LTTE emerged as the most dominant force, eventually turning against India itself. This period shaped the complex and often contradictory role India played in the Sri Lankan civil war,

India's response to the Sri Lankan Tamil crisis was never shaped by foreign policy alone. It was also driven by domestic emotion, especially from Tamil Nadu. Throughout the 1980s, political leaders and civil society in the state rallied in solidarity with Sri Lankan Tamils. From M.G. Ramachandran's vocal support for widespread protests after Black July, the pressure on New Delhi was intense. Refugee camps began to appear across Tamil Nadu, and public sentiment demanded intervention. For the Indian government, ignoring Tamil Nadu's voice meant risking internal unrest. This domestic pressure became a driving force behind India's early involvement both diplomatically and covertly, and later justified military intervention through the Indian Peace Keeping Force.

## IMPORTANT LEADERS

### **Rajiv Gandhi:**

Rajiv Gandhi, who served as the Prime Minister of India from 1984 to 1989, influenced India's approach to the Sri Lankan conflict. In 1987, he signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, which aimed to disarm Tamil militants and provide limited autonomy. He deployed the IPKF to Sri Lanka, representing India's first significant military involvement in a foreign civil conflict. His choice sparked debate, while some viewed it as a move toward peace, others considered it a misstep.



### **Velupillai Prabhakaran:**

Prabhakaran founded the LTTE in 1976. He was the main voice for a separate Tamil country, Tamil Eelam. He believed that only an armed struggle could achieve this goal, and under his leadership. They introduced suicide bombings, carried out assassinations of political leaders, and even ran their government in some areas. He believed in armed struggle over political negotiation. His leadership encouraged bold, unconventional methods, such as female combatants and child soldiers. These tactics were shocking and effective, but also earned global criticism and led to the LTTE being labeled a terrorist organization by several countries.



### **J. R. Jayewardene:**

J.R. Jayewardene was Sri Lanka's first executive President. He was in power during the early years of the war. His policies worsened Tamil grievances and effectively isolated them. He failed to ease tensions, allowing the conflict to grow. In 1987, under pressure, he signed the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord with Rajiv Gandhi. Though he invited Indian intervention, he later criticized India's role and was hence blamed for weakening Sri Lanka's sovereignty.



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/may/19/obituary-velupillai-parbhakaran-sri-lanka>

## CAUSES OF DISPUTE

While the historical timeline reveals how Sri Lanka's multifaceted ethnic identity gradually turned into a battleground of mistrust and marginalisation, the roots of the civil war lie deeper in the policies, perceptions, and political manipulations that followed its independence. As the promises of post-colonial unity began to fade, some central lines emerged during the journey. These causes, though distinct, overlapped and intensified each other, eventually leading to a violent and widespread conflict.

### Ethnic Tensions:

- Right from the beginning, Sri Lanka's social fabric was woven with two dominant threads: the Sinhalese and the Tamils. While they had been existing for decades, the real breakdowns began to show after independence. The Sinhalese, being in the majority, naturally found themselves in power, but instead of building an inclusive national identity, the early leadership began carving out a state that favoured one community over another.
- The Sinhalese viewed the Tamils, especially the Sri Lankan Tamils, as beneficiaries of British rule. Since many Tamils were educated and held government jobs during colonial times, discontentment brewed among the majority. What followed wasn't just an emotional or cultural divide; it was also political. Policies were introduced that slowly but surely excluded Tamils from administration, education, and even citizenship in the case of Indian Tamils.
- Cultural pride turned into nationalism. Nationalism turned into majoritarianism, and this marked the beginning of a deep ethnic rift that soon grew into something far more than was expected. Political space for Tamil voices began to shrink, while Sinhalese narratives dominated national identity. Dialogue was replaced by decrees, and peaceful appeals were met with state silence or suppression. What could have been resolved through inclusion slowly spiralled into a demand for separation.



## India's Intervention:



- While India's intentions may have started with diplomacy and regional stability, the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 quickly turned that vision upside down. Signed between Rajiv Gandhi and J.R. Jayewardene, the agreement was meant to bring Tamil aspirations into the mainstream through autonomy and decentralization. But on the ground, things fell off faster than anyone expected.
- The IPKF found itself fighting not with the Sri Lankan military, but the LTTE, the very group India once quietly backed. The tigers refused to disarm and felt betrayed by a deal they were never truly part of, and so began a brutal, widespread war where allies turned into enemies overnight.
- For India, this was no longer about peace; it became a question of credibility, control, and the high cost of strategic missions. The responses that were meant to unite ended up dividing both on the island and back home in Tamil Nadu.

## Series Of Failed Pacts, Policies, And Laws:

Sri Lanka's journey from independence to civil war wasn't just shaped by violence; it was carved with broken promises, betrayals, and biased policies. Time and again, attempts were made to calm tensions and offer limited autonomy to the Tamil, but almost all were either withdrawn under pressure or simply never implemented. These repeated failures became the fuel that radicalised a generation.

1. The Sinhala Only Act favored the Sinhala community and made it the only official language and placing them above the Tamil community in getting government jobs, university seats, and much more.





2. **Bandaranaike–Chelvanayakam Pact:** This pact between Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Tamil leader S.J.V. Chelvanayakam promised regional councils for Tamil-majority areas. However, it was torn down within a year due to opposition from Sinhala nationalists.
3. **Dudley–Chelvanayakam Pact:** This was another effort to introduce regional autonomy under PM Dudley Senanayake, but again faced the same fate.
4. **Standardisation Policy:** A change in university admission rules that favoured Sinhalese students by lowering cutoffs for them and raising them for Tamils.
5. **Sirima-Shastri & 1974 Pact on Stateless Tamils:** Through this, both countries agreed to share the responsibility of repatriating and granting citizenship to nearly one million stateless Indian-origin Tamils. However, slow implementation left thousands in a state of limbo for decades.

“When the ink of promises fades faster than the blood of betrayal, people stop believing in words.” This sentence was the motto of the militant groups in Sri Lanka, and this all led to the most devastating civil war in the history of the Indian Ocean region.

### **The Absence of A Regional Security Framework In South Asia:**

- One often overlooked reason for the tensions, especially from India’s point of view, was the lack of a proper regional system to address ethnic tensions. Although South Asia has seen unrest in many countries, there was no real structure in place to step in early or help prevent conflict. Even though the SAARC ( South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation ) was formed in 1985, it stayed away from discussing security or internal issues, which made it almost irrelevant in moments of crisis.
- When violence against Tamils in Sri Lanka intensified during the early 1980s, India was expected to step up as a regional leader but without any shared approach India had to act alone and Sri Lanka too was left to handle a growing conflict without outside support but relying instead on force, This only pushed the Tamil groups further into resistance and created space for external powers to get involved, deepening mistrust on all sides.
- For India, this wasn’t just a missed diplomatic opportunity; it was a sign that the region lacked the tools to protect peace. In such a diverse neighbourhood, the failure to build common systems meant that conflicts like Sri Lanka’s were left to explode on their own.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/South-Asia-Scan-Vol-8-Full-1.pdf>



## NON-STATE ACTORS

### LTTE:

**Origins:** The LTTE was founded in the late 1970s as a militant group demanding an independent Tamil homeland, Tamil Eelam, due to longstanding ethnic discrimination against Tamils by the Sinhalese-majority government.

**Re-emergence:** After initial struggles and rivalries with other Tamil factions, the LTTE re-emerged in the mid-1980s as the strongest Tamil militant group, consolidating power across the North and East.

**Propaganda and Brutality:** The LTTE skillfully used propaganda to gain Tamil support, but also employed brutal tactics such as assassinations, suicide bombings, and attacks on civilians, creating an atmosphere of fear and control.

**Decentralised Operations:** The LTTE developed a decentralized command structure, allowing autonomous regional units to carry out coordinated guerrilla attacks efficiently across different areas.

**Strategic Patience:** The LTTE showed strategic patience by avoiding confrontation when necessary, building strength over time, and exploiting political opportunities to further their cause.

**Destabilisation:** By 1989, the LTTE was a major destabilizing force, fighting both the Sri Lankan state and the Indian Peace Keeping Force, intensifying the civil war and political instability.

**Overview:** The LTTE's rise significantly shaped Sri Lanka's conflict, becoming the primary armed group in the Tamil separatist struggle.

### JVP:

**Origins:** The JVP was founded in the 1960s as a Marxist-Leninist movement aiming to overthrow the capitalist government and establish a socialist state in Sri Lanka.

**Re-emergence:** By the late 1980s, the JVP re-emerged as a violent insurgent group, mobilizing rural Sinhalese youth against the government and Indian intervention.

**Propaganda and Brutality:** The JVP employed brutal tactics, including assassinations, bombings, and strikes, using propaganda to fuel anti-Indian and anti-government sentiment among the Sinhalese population.

**Decentralised Operations:** They operated through decentralized cells, enabling them to carry out coordinated attacks across southern Sri Lanka despite government crackdowns.

**Destabilisation:** The JVP insurgency from 1987 to 1989 severely destabilized Sri Lanka's south, contributing to widespread violence and political instability before being suppressed by state forces.

**Overview:** The JVP's uprising was a major challenge to the Sri Lankan state, representing a powerful Sinhala nationalist insurgency during a period of ethnic conflict and foreign intervention.

<sup>6</sup> <https://repository.graduateinstitute.ch/record/292651/files/CCDP-Working-Paper-10-LTTE-1.pdf>



## EFFECTS

### Political Effects:

#### 1. Argument Between Indian Leaders and NoConsensus:

Different political leaders and parties in India had different views on how to deal with the Sri Lankan conflict. Some supported helping Sri Lankan Tamils, while others opposed sending Indian soldiers there, and there were various other opinions. This created confusion and disagreement within the Indian government. Hence, there was no consensus among the Indian leaders. For example, while Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi supported the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, leaders from Tamil Nadu like M.G. Ramachandran (AIADMK) and DMK leaders had contrasting opinions on India's role in the conflict.

#### 2. Strained Relationship with Sri Lanka:

India's involvement in Sri Lanka, especially after signing the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord and sending the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), made relations between the two countries tense. The Sri Lankan government and people were unhappy with India's interference.

#### 3. Inconsistency in India's Stance:

To begin with, India supported the LTTE and other Tamil Rebel Groups. This support included arms, training, and financial assistance, done through India's intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). But when the LTTE refused to disarm, after the Accord, India started seeing them as enemies. This shift led to more violence, including against Indian soldiers (deployed as IPKF). By late 1989, over 1,100 Indian soldiers had died and more than 3,000 were injured during IPKF operations due to LTTE attacks.

#### 4. Anger and Resentment in Tamil Nadu:

Some people in Tamil Nadu supported the Tamil rebels. When the Indian government started fighting the LTTE, it angered the local population and caused political trouble for the government.

### Social Effects:

The Sri Lankan Civil War triggered a major refugee crisis in Tamil Nadu, as thousands of Tamil and even some Sinhala civilians fled the violence and sought shelter in India. This sudden population surge placed a heavy burden on local resources such as food, housing, and healthcare. Public infrastructure, particularly in refugee-dense areas like Mandapam and Tirunelveli, became overstrained, making governance difficult for the state. At the same time, the conflict heightened ethnic tensions—Indian Tamils, emotionally connected to the Tamil struggle in Sri Lanka, grew increasingly resentful of both the Sri Lankan government and, later, the Indian central government's stance.

This emotional connect, coupled with rising political dissatisfaction, contributed to the radicalisation of youth in some parts of Tamil Nadu. Several young Indian Tamils either sympathized with or actively supported militant groups like the LTTE, raising internal security concerns for India. During this period, the Indian government tried to tightly control media coverage of the IPKF operations and the broader conflict. This led to conflicting narratives, misinformation, and widespread mistrust, especially in Tamil

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.eurasiareview.com/07052011-indian-policy-and-sri-lanka-civil-war-a-time-for-re-evaluation-analysis/>



Nadu, where protests and opposition to the IPKF grew steadily. The gap between state actions and public perception further deepened the social unrest within India.

## Economic Effects:

### 1. Trade Disruption:

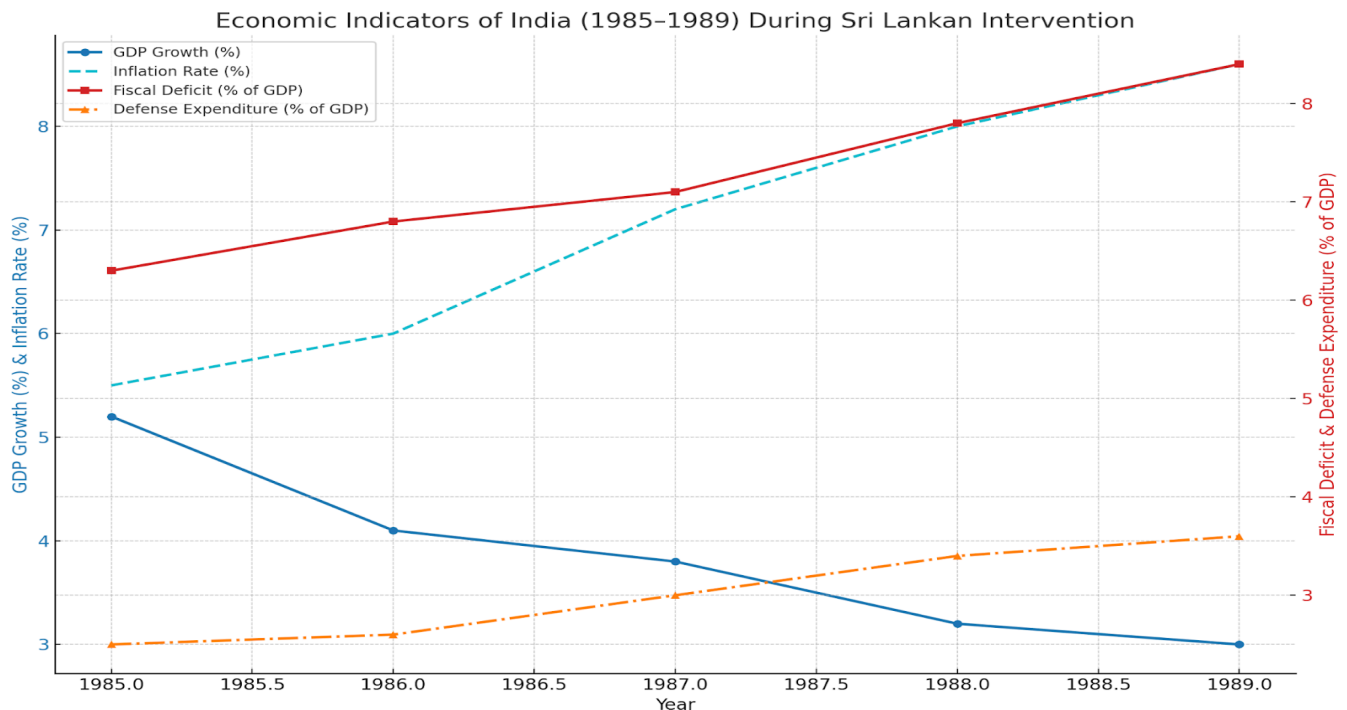
Due to the war, trade and transport between India and Sri Lanka (especially coastal trade) were badly affected. Fishing communities in Tamil Nadu also suffered because of the naval conflict. Indian naval forces increased patrolling to prevent arms smuggling and infiltration, which also affected civilian maritime movement and, consequently, had an impact on trade between the two countries.

### 2. Cost of Military Operations:

Sending and maintaining the IPKF in Sri Lanka cost the Indian government a lot of money. These military expenses created a financial burden as they burned money from the government. Over 70,000 Indian troops were deployed to Sri Lanka, with costs covering transport, salaries, combat equipment, medical aid, logistics, and communication infrastructure. By the end of 1989, it is estimated that the IPKF mission had cost the Indian government ₹1,000–1,200 crore, a massive burden on the national budget.

### 3. Impact on Local Economy:

Tamil Nadu and other southern coastal states had to spend extra on helping refugees. Schools, hospitals, and ration systems were overburdened, especially in areas where refugees settled. Local fish markets crashed due to supply shortages, impacting tens of thousands of fishermen and traders.





## POSITION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

The positions and response of the International Community as a whole were complex and varied. While some countries like the USA wanted to end hostilities and wanted the government of Sri Lanka to allow international observers into the conflict, the International Community as a whole was mainly concerned about the Human Rights Violations. It condemned both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military for human rights abuses, such as the use of child soldiers, attacks on civilians, and other violations.

- The LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) was increasingly criticized for using child soldiers, carrying out suicide bombings, and conducting targeted killings of civilians and rival Tamil leaders.
- At the same time, the Sri Lankan Army was accused of torture, enforced disappearances, and indiscriminate shelling of Tamil-populated areas.

The International Community was also very much concerned about the LTTE's acts and was hence starting to be looked at as a terrorist organization. The LTTE was designated as a terrorist organization by several countries, including the US, EU, Canada, and Australia, which impacted their ability to receive funding and support.

There were also rising concerns about the refugees who were not only migrating to India, but also to countries like the UK, Australia, Canada etc which were not appreciated by these countries because they witnessed a noticeable rise in asylum applications and undocumented migration from Sri Lanka, especially after the outbreak of full-scale war in 1983 and the escalation of violence in the late 1980s. Host governments did not entirely welcome this influx of Sri Lankan refugees. Western nations, particularly Canada and the UK, which housed large Tamil communities, began expressing concern about the implications of potentially militant-linked individuals entering their borders. The strain on public resources, such as housing and welfare systems, and mostly the security of their own country, is due to the refugees being potentially linked to terrorist groups.

By 1989, countries like Canada and Australia started tightening their asylum processes for Sri Lankan Tamils and increased intelligence surveillance over their political activities once they were admitted to the country based on seeking asylum. The influx of refugees to other countries not only highlighted the global dimension of the conflict but also began to pressure India to rethink its strategic approach. There were growing calls for India to either ensure peace through its military presence (the IPKF) or to withdraw and allow for international mediation. At the same time, Sri Lanka faced growing criticism for its human rights record and its failure to protect civilians, which added to its diplomatic pressure, and some extent, the isolation of an already fragile government. In conclusion, by 1989, the Sri Lankan Civil War had become a global concern. The rise in human rights abuses, militancy, terrorism, and refugee migration put pressure on both India and Sri Lanka. India was pushed to rethink its military role, while Sri Lanka faced criticism for failing to protect civilians. What began as a local conflict had now drawn international attention, demanding action from both countries.



## POSITION OF COUNTRIES IN THE INTERNATIONAL SPHERE

As tensions flared in Sri Lanka during the 1980s, the conflict quietly drew the attention of powerful nations around the world. What seemed to be an internal ethnic dispute soon turned into a geopolitical chessboard. Behind the scenes, key countries took positions, some driven by regional rivalry, others by strategic opportunity. Their roles weren't always loud, but they were deeply felt. These nations either armed the sides, influenced diplomatic stands, or silently pushed regional balances, all of which affected India's stance, responses, and responsibilities.

- The Soviet Union, though not directly engaged in the Sri Lankan theatre, stood behind India with strategic patience. As India's key ally during the Cold War, Moscow supported India's regional leadership but chose to stay distanced from Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict. While Sri Lanka stood with the socialist ideals still the USSR didn't interfere militarily. It offered limited economic and development assistance to Colombo and remained firmly in favour of state sovereignty. Though quiet, the Soviet stance gave India crucial geopolitical backing and space to act without fear of Western or Chinese interference.
- Israel's involvement in Sri Lanka remained largely covert but highly strategic. It provided arms, surveillance tech, and training to Sri Lankan forces during the insurgency. Though unofficial, its support significantly enhanced Sri Lanka's counterinsurgency capabilities. For India, Israel's growing presence in the region was alarming and played a role in accelerating India's involvement in the conflict.
- The United States of America took a cautious but firm position. It supported Sri Lanka's sovereignty, offered economic assistance, and was alerted to the Tamil militant links to global insurgent patterns. Though not militarily active, Washington's interest in curbing the Soviet Union and Indian influence shaped its discreet support to Sri Lanka.
- China maintained a quiet but steady relationship with Sri Lanka. It provided arms and economic assistance without taking a public stance on the ethnic conflict. While its involvement wasn't aggressive, it aligned with Sri Lanka's sovereignty, but subtly wanted to extend its presence in the Indian Ocean region to be a big player in controlling the Indian Ocean and extending its military bases, to showcase itself as dominant.
- Pakistan, like China and Israel, offered military training and intelligence to Sri Lanka in the 1980s. This move was part of Islamabad's broader effort to undermine Indian influence in the region. By offering Sri Lanka tactical help, Pakistan positioned itself as a counterweight, a move that could not go unnoticed in New Delhi.



## PRESENT DAY STANCE OF THE RULING PARTY

As of 1 December 1989, India finds itself at a crucial turning point in its involvement with the Sri Lankan conflict. With the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987 dwindling and the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) engaged in a conflict it was never designed to fight in. The Ruling Party, the Indian National Congress, led by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, is walking a diplomatic tightrope. The government is juggling with its foreign policy commitments, domestic political pressures, and the rapidly changing strategic environment in the Indian Ocean region. The Congress party is facing immense criticism both from the opposition in the Parliament and from regional allies, especially in Tamil Nadu. It remains committed in principle to the goals of the Accord, but is falling apart with the growing gap between political intent and ground reality.

### Political Position:

The Congress government continues to defend its policy decisions in Sri Lanka as necessary for regional peace and Tamil protection. The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord remains a cornerstone of India's foreign policy in the region. Although the party acknowledges setbacks, such as the IPKF's confrontations with the LTTE, it frames them as unfortunate, recognizing that they are temporary challenges in the context of a longer peace process. Internally, the party resists calls to withdraw the IPKF prematurely, fearing that doing so would send a message of failure and abandonment. Externally, it is careful not to be seen as undermining Sri Lanka's sovereignty, even as it tries to uphold Tamil rights. This dual narrative they are having is the support for unity and autonomy, and forms the core of Congress's political position.

### Socio-Economic Policies:

On the domestic front, the government is under increasing pressure to provide support for thousands of Tamil refugees arriving in Tamil Nadu. Relief camps have been set up, but resources are getting too stretched. The Centre's efforts to assist these populations are visible but not adequate, leading to growing dissatisfaction among the local population. At the same time, the central government maintains economic relations with Sri Lanka, particularly in the form of trade and development assistance. These include aid packages meant to rehabilitate affected regions in the north and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. The government frames these policies as part of a broader humanitarian commitment rather than a strategic move, but critics are still arguing that they lack coordination and long-term vision.

### Media Narrative and Censorship:

The Congress government maintains tight control over the national narrative. Doordarshan and state-aligned newspapers continue to frame the IPKF as a peacekeeping force, avoiding coverage that might expose the scale of ground-level resistance or civilian casualties. Reports critical of the government's involvement are either downplayed or left unpublished in the national media. However, the situation is very different in Tamil Nadu, where regional newspapers and political figures openly criticise the IPKF's role, with some even accusing it of causing more harm than good. This media split has led to a growing gap in public perception between New Delhi and the southern states. The Centre, meanwhile, continues to project its role as a stabilising force, even as the ground reality grows increasingly volatile.

<sup>8</sup> <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/03064228908534738?download=true>



## RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT

### Indo-Sri Lankan Accord 9:

The Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of July 1987 was a diplomatic initiative by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Sri Lankan President J.R. Jayewardene to restore peace amidst the civil war. The Accord mandated constitutional reforms in Sri Lanka (via the 13th Amendment), disarmament of militant groups, and devolution of powers to Tamil-majority areas. In return, India committed to deploy the IPKF to enforce compliance. However, the LTTE's outright rejection of the Accord unraveled its framework. By late 1989, the Accord had not only failed to bring peace but had deepened hostilities. The Sri Lankan government itself was increasingly reluctant to support devolution, and sections of the Sinhala majority viewed the Accord as an infringement on sovereignty. Rajiv Gandhi's government faced the dual challenge of enforcing the agreement abroad while defending it domestically amid rising casualties and regional discontent.

Still, the Accord remained the diplomatic cornerstone of India's engagement with the crisis. It was designed to preserve India's regional primacy, prevent international intervention, and stabilize its southern periphery. The Ministry of External Affairs continued diplomatic pressure on Colombo to implement the promised provisions.

By December 1, 1989, although the political consensus around the Accord had weakened, it remained the legal and strategic basis for India's military presence and a significant part of Rajiv Gandhi's foreign policy legacy.

### Military Involvement:

Under the Rajiv Gandhi government, the military intervention of India in Sri Lanka through the Indian Peace Keeping Force was one of the boldest yet controversial decisions. Initiated in July 1987, following the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, it aimed at disarming the Tamil militant groups, mainly the LTTE, and helped in the implementation of the constitutional devolution that had been promised to the Tamils. However, the refusal of the LTTE eventually turned the IPKF away from being peacekeepers.

By late 1989, the mission had become a very costly affair, with the lives of nearly 1,000 Indian soldiers having been lost and thousands more wounded. Operationally, the terrain, the hostility of the civil population, and the war tactics put forth by the guerrillas posed constraints. The mission was being increasingly criticized back home, especially from Tamil Nadu and the opposition party quarters, with accusations of it being a military overreach and a humanitarian blunder. Rajiv Gandhi, however, for all the political cost he had to pay, favored the deployment, citing national interest and regional leadership. The IPKF was viewed as a political statement that said India would never tolerate any foreign influence, let alone from Pakistan, the U.S., or China, in its maritime neighborhood. On the other hand, the long-term deployment brought about discussions within the Indian Army and the Ministry of External Affairs as to its long-term viability. By December 1, 1989, general election drawing near, the calls had become louder for the withdrawal. Yet, the government's response remained firm, positioning the IPKF as a necessity for regional stability and treaty obligations.

<sup>9</sup> <https://scholarship.law.unc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1461&context=ncilj>



## **Intelligence and Border Security:**

The Sri Lankan civil war posed severe challenges for intelligence and border management in India, especially across the southern coastline of Tamil Nadu. With the onset of the civil war and India's military intervention through the IPKF, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) and the Intelligence Bureau (IB) had to swiftly recalibrate their operations to counter foreign interference as well as LTTE infiltration.

In the late 80s and early 90s, reports confirmed the existence of the Tamil coast strip used by LTTE operatives for arms shipment, recruitment, propaganda, and so on. Indian security agencies steadily became more concerned with possible external players (such as Pakistan's ISI) attempting to capitalize on the situation to destabilize southern India. Rajiv Gandhi's government took proactive steps to strengthen coastal surveillance, crack down on illegal arms networks, and enhance coordination between central intelligence and the Tamil Nadu police. It was also one of the first examples wherein the various Indian intelligence tools had to be applied for national security purposes and to shape regional peace enforcement under the IPKF operations. It was an instrument of diplomacy and informed India's positioning concerning Colombo's commitment (or noncommitment) to the Accord.

A few weeks into the winter of 1989, the Centre issued an order for the border security arrangements along the Tamil Nadu coastline to be thoroughly reviewed, with particular focus placed on examining refugee camps that were under suspicion of LTTE activity. In expressing this, it is these efforts that demonstrate how the government's response to the Sri Lankan conflict went beyond mere military action.

## **Tamil Nadu's Domestic Unrest and Political Pressure:**

Tamil Nadu has become a key internal front in formulating India's strategic response to the Sri Lankan civil war. The state's strong linguistic and ethnic identification with the Sri Lankan Tamil population has shaped public opinion, which has frequently diverged from the central government's military intervention. The dismissal of the DMK government under Article 356 in February 1989, supposedly for favoring the LTTE, highlighted the Centre's discomfort with regional opposition. Mass agitations, student protests, and Tamil Nadu cross-party pressure have prevented the Rajiv Gandhi administration from continuing the IPKF deployment without falling back on domestic repercussions. The Sri Lankan refugee influx has also strained state resources and provoked ethnic sensitivities, catalyzing concerns regarding communal stability. Intelligence inputs predicted the possibility of LTTE cells in Tamil Nadu, and security was alerted to high levels. The Rajiv Gandhi government had to tread a tightrope of delicate proportions, navigating a complex foreign operation while staying away from Tamil Nadu as a political and security tinderbox.

The Tamil Nadu issue reflects how internal federal politics directly shaped India's foreign and defense posture. As of December 1, 1989, the Centre remained under pressure to either justify or scale back its military presence in Sri Lanka, while also placating the growing regional demands for Tamil solidarity.

## ROLE OF DEFENCE

### Intelligence Agencies:

The early phases of the Sri Lankan conflict saw significant involvement from India's intelligence agencies, particularly the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). RAW's initial involvement included training, funding, and arming Tamil militant groups such as the LTTE, partly to pressure the Sri Lankan government into safeguarding Tamil rights. However, this strategy was abandoned after the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord in 1987. India's intelligence agencies were asked to help coordinate peace, not conflict. But by then, groups like the LTTE had grown powerful and refused to follow the Accord. Intelligence failures played a role in India underestimating how hostile the LTTE would become, even towards India itself.

### Military Engagement:

India's direct military intervention started in 1987 with the sending of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF). This was a historical

moment—it was India's first solo overseas military deployment. The IPKF was tasked with disarming militant factions and assisting in enforcing the peace agreement signed with Sri Lanka. However, when the LTTE refused to lay down arms, the IPKF was forced into full-scale combat operations. At its peak, the IPKF had more than 70,000 Indian soldiers in the field (Indian soldiers can be seen disembarking the ship in large



numbers). By the end of the mission in 1989, more than 1,100 Indian soldiers were killed, and thousands were wounded. The army was engaged in a complicated war, with undefined goals and limited local support. The military operation became unpopular in both Sri Lanka and India. In Sri Lanka, many saw it as an unwanted intervention. In India, especially in Tamil Nadu, people were angry that Indian soldiers were fighting Tamil rebels whom they once supported. Eventually, military engagement did not bring lasting peace. Instead, it led to strained foreign relations, domestic political backlash, and the loss of Indian lives, without achieving the intended goals.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2016/04/01/india-gave-birth-to-ltte-tamil-militancy-in-sri-lanka/?utm>



## CONCLUSIONS AND EXPECTATIONS

The Sri Lankan Civil War has evolved into one of the most pressing regional challenges of our time. What began as an ethnic struggle has spiraled into a violent conflict with far-reaching consequences, not just for Sri Lanka but for India and South Asia as a whole. With increasing unrest in Tamil Nadu, growing domestic tensions, and India's military involvement through the Indian Peace Keeping Force, the crisis is no longer confined to the Palk Strait. It is right at our doorstep.

This committee is being entrusted with the responsibility of reassessing India's role in the conflict and shaping a strategic and internal response that balances national interest with regional peace. Delegates must examine the past critically, understand how previous decisions have shaped the present, and consider how today's policies can influence the future. From the loss of Indian soldiers to the rise of non-state actors and foreign interference, the situation demands clarity, empathy, and sharp political thinking. You are expected to consider multiple dimensions of this issue, including diplomacy, humanitarian impact, regional power dynamics, domestic politics, intelligence operations, and the need for national unity.

This is not a simple debate. It is a crisis filled with complex narratives and high emotions. Delegates are urged to approach the agenda with maturity, strong research, and original thinking. The study guide is only a beginning. You must dive deeper, understand the regional context, and prepare to engage with opposing viewpoints respectfully and constructively.

Success in this committee will be defined by your ability to collaborate, negotiate, and craft real, feasible solutions. Plagiarism and the use of AI Chatbots such as ChatGPT will not be tolerated and will not be accepted. We are looking for genuine ideas that reflect your preparation, understanding, and strategic mindset.

We hope this guide helped you grasp the seriousness of the issue. We are excited to see the insight, passion, leadership, and ship you bring into the committee room. Hope you understand the gravity and urgency of the situation.

Looking forward to meeting you all!



## QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER

- Q1. What should be India's official position on the Sri Lankan Civil War and the demand for Tamil Eelam?
- Q2. Should India continue, revise, or withdraw from the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord of 1987?
- Q3. How should India respond to rising political pressure and unrest in Tamil Nadu over the Sri Lankan issue?
- Q4. What steps should India take to ensure national security and prevent the spread of separatist sentiments domestically?
- Q5. Should India re-engage militarily in Sri Lanka or restrict its involvement to diplomatic and humanitarian means?
- Q6. What policies should be adopted regarding Tamil refugees arriving from Sri Lanka?
- Q7. How should India counter growing foreign influence in Sri Lanka, especially from the US, China, or Pakistan?
- Q8. What long-term strategy should India adopt to maintain peace and stability in the South Asian region?
- Q9. Who will be responsible for coordinating and implementing India's new strategic and internal response?
- Q10. How will India measure the success and impact of its revised policy toward Sri Lanka and the regional stability?



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