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SOUTH ASIA: ANALYSIS OF THE
INDIAN ELECTIONS AND THE
SECURITY SITUATION IN SRI LANKA
AND THE MALDIVES

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SOUTH ASIA: ANALYSIS OF THE INDIAN ELECTIONS AND THE SECURITY SITUATION IN SRI LANKA AND THE MALDIVES

Abstract:

The year 2014 was an interesting for domestic politics and international relations in India. With the world watching the closely contested elections in India it was no surprise to see Narendra Modi led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) recording a massive election victory in the recently concluded elections. The paper summarizes and gives a comprehensive overview of the Indian national elections and focuses exclusively on the economy, the international relations with neighbors and the national security of the country.

The second case study in the paper examines the nature of decade's long insurgency in Sri Lanka and the potential threats to the national security after end of the war in May 2009. The paper is helpful for the policymakers to understand specifically about the broader peace building agenda and the complexity of monitoring the human rights situation in Sri Lanka. Issue of maritime security to the Maldives is briefly outlined as the third case study in the paper.

Keywords:

Elections, Modi ,India , Sri Lanka , the Maldives ,Conflict , National Security.

***NOTA:** Las ideas contenidas en los **Documentos de Opinión** son de responsabilidad de sus autores, sin que reflejen, necesariamente, el pensamiento del IEEE o del Ministerio de Defensa.

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Of the 7 billion people of the world, 1.4 billion live in the South Asian Region. India, with more than a billion people and home to the world's largest democracy saw a revival of the Political order coming to dominate the entire country. In May 2014 India's political landscape changed with 830 million Indian voters choosing to elect 543 members to the lower house of parliament or Lok Sabha.

The Lok Sabha election of 2014 saw a new government and a Prime Minister in the Center. The paper analyses the 16th Lok Sabha elections of India. The Author in his paper analyses about the newly elected Prime Minister of India and his efforts to build friendly relations with India's neighbors. It examines the performance of the Indian economy, International relations with neighbors and the national security of India.



bjp-victory-at-india-gate

The Sri Lankan Civil war was one of the longest, complex and most destructive conflicts in Asia that ended more than five years ago. The Paper examines how the violent radicalization and ethnic hostilities that plunged Sri Lanka into a civil war. The paper offers some peace-building efforts, democratization process that has happened during the post conflict period in Sri Lanka. Even though the war in Sri Lanka had ended, the main problem based on ethnicity is still remaining and there are still potential threats to National Security of Sri Lanka. The paper explores briefly about the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation

Commission (LLRC) report and the impact of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution.

Nearly 100,000 ships pass yearly close to the Maldives and Sri Lanka on one of the main maritime lanes in the World. Even though the current security situation in the Maldives is peaceful and trouble-free, the paper briefly outlines the potential threat of piracy and infiltration of extremist groups to the Maldives.

The paper offers for International Affairs experts, policymakers, Security strategist some lessons from South Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

INDIA

THE 16TH LOKSABHA ELECTIONS OF INDIA

India, with more than a billion people and home to the world's largest democracy saw a revival of the Political order coming to dominate the entire country. On May 16th 2014 India, the home to the world's largest democracy, chose to elect 543 members to the 16th Loksabha elections. By late evening on May 16th, 2014 the Barathiya Janata Party led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) recorded the biggest Lok-sabha election victory in the post-Independence history of India. The Barathiya- Janata Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) the main opposition party in India emerged victorious winning 336 Loksabha seats with a 38.3 percent vote share. While being overjoyed at the Loksabha election results Narendra Modi the Barathiya Janata Party (BJP) Prime Minister in waiting said in his victory speech India has won! This is India's victory. "Achche din aane waale hain (The good days are ahead).

There was nation-wide celebrations and victory processions by enthusiastic youthful BJP and NDA supporters when the election results were announced in India. The major political partners of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) comprised of Barathiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena (SS), Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Lok Janashakthi Party (LJP), Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Rashtriya Lok Samata Party (RLS).

The Barathiya Janata Party (BJP) vote share in the Loksabha elections made inroads into crucial states in North India. The State of Uttar Pradesh is considered India's most populous state with the highest number of Loksabha seats. In Uttar Pradesh alone the Barathiya Janata Party increased their vote bank and representation to 71 out of 80 Loksabha seats.

ELECTION PERFORMANCE OF MAJOR REGIONAL PARTIES IN INDIA

Compared to previous elections the India National Congress (INC) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) saw its Loksabha vote bank erode to 61 Loksabha seats with 23.3 percent vote share in 2014. The major regional parties such as All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) of Tamil Nadu State, Trinamool Congress (TMC) of West Bengal State and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) of Odisha made significant gains in the Loksabha elections. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J.Jayalalitha won 37 Lok Sabha seats out of 39 seats.

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

For the Barathiya Janata Party (BJP) Narendra Modi was elected to the Loksabha seat of Varanasi by a thumping margin of 3.5 lakhs votes defeating Arvind Kejriwal of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the temple town. Modi also won Vadodara by over 5.7 lakh votes. Modi, the 63 year old Chief Minister from Gujarat nominated by the Barathiya Janata Party (BJP) as the Prime Ministerial candidate for the 16th Loksabha elections travelled 300,000 kilometers across 25 states and addressed more than 400 rallies from September 15th, 2013 to May 10th, 2014.

FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH INDIA'S NEIGHBORS

The Baharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been vocal and had clearly stated that it wants to improve relations with India's neighbors. Narendra Modi the Prime Minister designated has extended invitations to the South Asian leaders to attend the swearing in ceremony on May 26th, 2014 in New Delhi. Eight South Asian heads of states were invited to the new Indian Prime Minister's swearing-in ceremony. Pakistan Prime



Mr Narendra Modi PM India

Minister Nawaz Sharif's participation added a new dimension to the India –Pakistan relations. It was a historic moment where the time has grown to heal the wounds between the two nuclear armed neighbors who fought three wars since Independence from Britain in 1947. Fostering relations with India's immediate neighborhood will bring stability, lessen tension and improve the overall economic situation across South Asia.

NATIONAL SECURITY OF INDIA

Among the eight South Asian countries India with more than a million strong army personnel is a nuclear armed nation. Decades-old hostility between Pakistan and India continues to serve as the backdrop for instability and tension across South Asia. The state of Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan. It is at the heart of hostility between the neighbors and was the cause of two of their three wars since independence from Britain in 1947. There could be challenges to India –Pakistan relations if there are threats from external or internal terrorist acts. Even though India spends nearly US\$ 37 billion (Estimates, 2013) annually for national defense the country poses security threats from many terrorist groups . Crossing International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) by Indian fishermen for fishing in Sri Lankan waters has added a new dimension to the current situation and could create tensions and future challenges to India -Sri Lanka relations .

Also the growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean states like the Maldives and Sri Lanka in the recent years has created a uneasiness for India not only from its northern borders, but also from the South.

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF INDIA

In the last few decades, India, the economic giant of South Asia with a population of more than a billion people, has been known for its fast ride onwards on the road of global economy. The past several decades have seen the resource-rich Indian economy changing, developing at a fast pace and enhancing the financial status among the world's most powerful nations. The real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates of India have shifted substantially over time to an all-time high of 9.6 percent in 2006-2007 to 6.7 percent in 2011-2012 periods withstanding the global financial crisis. Nowadays India is responding to internal and external economic challenges with great creativity and initiative and endeavors to enhance new patterns of global cooperation and developing a sustainable economic partnership to build a better Indian society. India's economy will remain robust and will expand more than forecasted, despite the facts on GDP, inflation, trade, business, and other data and analysis on its economy. The strong Modi wave and the Baharatiya Janata Party (BJP) landslide victory in the recently concluded Lok Sabha election will establish a strong Government in the Center. The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Sensex lifted to a record figure of 24,121.74 points as the Narendra Modi led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won the historic elections in India. Today India is under the wise leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and will experience great progress and development. India will see a transformation politically, diplomatically, socially, economically and in regional security strategies.

SRI LANKA

SRI LANKA CONFLICT

The major political conflict in Sri Lanka in the post-Independence history originated in the early 1970s. In 1971, a youth uprising led by a Marxist political group known as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) was the first major political unrest in Sri Lanka. The major political conflict in

Sri Lanka in the post Independence history originated in the early 1970s. According to Abeyratne (2003), the conflict between Tamil people and Government has a long history that goes to colonial period, but it has some economic reasons too. Initially the Tamil separatist movement in Sri Lanka materialized after the passing of the Vaddukoddai Resolution led by then leaders of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) in 1976 (Sabaratnam, 2010).

The conflict in Sri Lanka is an important part of history which began in July 1983 and ended in May 2009. It became a struggle for a revolutionary social transformation, by the Tamil nationalist politicians since the passing of the Vaddukoddai Resolution in 1976. In this resolution they have declared that their intention is to create a separate area in the Northern (Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya Districts) and in Eastern (Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Ampara Districts) Provinces for Tamils living in Sri Lanka. The Northern and Eastern Provinces were about a third the size of Sri Lanka. The majority of people living in these two provinces were ethnic Tamils but there were also Sinhalese and Muslims.

With this background separatist movement started with its full strength in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in Sri Lanka. The assassination of the moderate Tamil politicians such as the Mayor of Jaffna, Alfred Duraiappah in 1975 and M. Canagaratnam a Tamil Member of Parliament, in 1977 by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) led by Velupillai Prabhakaran was the first tragic lesson of the Sri Lankan Northern insurrection. The ongoing violence turned into a cycle of violence in 1983 after the killing of 13 Sri Lankan government soldiers in the Northern Province. With this background separatist movement of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was started with its full strength in the Northern and Eastern Provinces in Sri Lanka. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) led by Velupillai Prabhakaran called Eelamist freedom fighters campaigned to "cleanse" the North and Eastern provinces of Sinhalese and Muslims ethnic groups, and create a Tamil homeland. Thereafter Tamil separatist movement with the label of ethnic conflict which ultimately got transformed into a civil war began as a multi-sided civil resistance. There were, horrific atrocities, mass executions, slaughtering of hundreds of innocent men, women and

children in the boarder villages , bombs exploded and hundreds of innocent people were killed or injured every day.

A9 high way that links North and South of the Island was the place where most crucial battles took place in the last stages of Sri Lankan conflict,(Eelam War IV).For the first time Sri Lankan security forces withdrew from Kilinochchi in 1990. Six years after the LTTE taking control of Kilinochchi the Sri Lankan army recaptured the town in 1996. Two years after the defeat in Kilinochchi the Tamil Tigers launched an operation known as Unceasing Waves II on the Kilinochchi Military complex After the Sri Lankan military vacated, the LTTE re-captured the town in September 1998. Kilinochchi was like a fortress because it was the LTTE de facto administrative capital. During the Eelam War IV the Sri Lankan security forces fought a “hybrid terrorist organization that had three wings; land, sea going force and a very rudimentary air force. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) suffered a stunning defeat in Kilinochchi and the Sri Lankan Security forces was able to retake on 2nd January 2009 the Tamil Tigers de facto administrative capital in Kilinochchi, and large swathes of territory that was held by the Tamil Tigers for years .

NORWEGIAN BROKERED CEASE FIRE AGREEMENT (CFA)

In 2002 after nearly two decades of fighting and failed tries at peace talks the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) entered into a peace process with the LTTE through a Norwegian brokered Cease Fire Agreement (CFA). The subsequent suspension of war was seen as a great achievement in the peace process. The last window of opportunity for peace emerged aftermath of the tsunami that struck Sri Lanka in December 2004. The Cease Fire Agreement (CFA) was a fitful peace and the prospect for Sri Lanka was gloomy. During the four phases of the conflict from 1983 to 2009 the LTTE has been benefited by the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora and the international support network.

THE END OF THE SRI LANKAN CONFLICT

Between 2005 to 2009 Sri Lankan Armed Forces grew significantly. The number of Army personnel grew from 120,000 to over 200,000.After various setbacks in 2009 the Sri Lankan government forces were able to defeat terrorism and established normalcy throughout the

country. The separatist war continued for last two decades ended up as a civil war as stated by Heraclides (1997). Heraclides has further stated that civil wars in general and more often will end with military victory to one side. Peace is a necessary precondition for sustained economic growth. Post-conflict reconstruction was one of the most relevant course of actions to this. Even though the war in Sri Lanka between the Sri Lankan Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) had ended, the main problem based on ethnicity is still remaining. As the government was victorious over the war it should be victorious by finding a proper and long lasting solution to the ethnic conflict.

POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

In the early months after the conflict ended in Sri Lanka the burden of re-building was shouldered solely by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) to make the Conflict zones of Northern and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka a better place to live in. Prior to resettling of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in areas where there was war the Sri Lankan Security forces and the international demining experts removed landmines through advanced demining procedures. After the end of war five years ago specially in the Northern and Eastern Provinces has made much progress in economic development and political stability from the destruction of war to peace. Housing needs are expectations of conflict affected communities in the former war torn area. Under the Indian Government assistance nearly 3480 houses were reconstructed and a total of 17,000 houses will be re-built in the Killinochchi district in the next few years.

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Kilinochchi to Colombo Train and the newly built Kilinochchi

In certain areas of the Northern and Eastern provinces, life has come to a reasonable life like in the other areas of the country. With availability of more consumer goods and better housing the desperate situation of people in these provinces are being alleviated. After the war ended, farming in the conflict affected areas underwent enormous changes and has become more self-sufficient with the introduction of modern machinery. The cultivation of paddy is the main occupation for majority of the population in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. Large scale banana, chilies, papaw, mango, grape and lime cultivation is undertaken by farmers in large leased lands. Efficient transportation is a key factor for economic development and providing friendly method of transport as well as a safe and economical way of travelling. With many changes taking place in Jaffna and Killinochchi the area is linking with rest of the country and rebuilding of long neglected roads, rehabilitation and maintenance and upgrading ageing transportation infrastructure within the districts. After more than 23 years, single track line between Colombo and Jaffna and Killinochchi has been re-constructed by the India Railway Construction International Ltd. (IRCON) with the assistance of the Indian Government.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND PEACE-BUILDING

Democratization and peace-building are closely inter liked. Political stability has been gradually restored in the area. The recently held Northern Provincial Council (NPC)

elections where the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) won majority of the seats have become a lens through which to observe the political changes. In Sri Lanka Provincial Council elections were held in Western and in Southern provinces in March 2014. The United Peoples Front Alliance (UPFA) the ruling party of the present government was able win 89 seats out of the 150 seats in both the provinces. Even though the main opposition party the United National Party (UNP) was able to win 42 seats, it was the Democratic party and the Marxist Peoples Liberation Front also known as the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party that increased their vote bank and representation in the two provinces.

POTENTIAL THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY

In Sri Lanka, there are still potential threats to National Security. The threat of terrorism re-emerging still persists. The Sri Lanka Government raised the defense spending to \$1.95 billion for the current year. Recovery of an arms cache, and shooting incident involving LTTE terrorist named K.P Selvanayagam a.k.a Gobi is evidence on attempts to reorganize and re-arm the terrorist outfit. However the Sri Lankan Security forces were able to Kill K.P Selvanayagam a.k.a Gobi and two other wanted terrorist in Nedunkerni area in April this year. The Palk Bay, which connects north-eastern Sri Lanka and the central part of the Tamil Nadu coastline, constitutes a unique ecosystem. It is a shallow bay circumscribed by sea known for its biodiversity (Venkataraman 2004). Crossing International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) by Indian fishermen for fishing in Sri Lankan waters has added a new dimension to current situation. This has brought Indian trawler fishers into regular conflict with the Sri Lankan navy. These tensions have created tension in the Tamil Nadu state of India.

MUSLIMS AND SINHALESE TENSION IN THE SOUTHWESTERN PART OF SRI LANKA

Sri Lankan Sunday Times reported on 22 June 2014 an assault and abuse of a Buddhist monk and his three wheeler scooter driver on 12th June 2014 who had been on their way to a religious ceremony by Muslims motorcyclist in Dharga Town triggered violence and had bred tension between the Muslim and Sinhalese communities living in the Southwestern part of Sri Lanka. Later more violence broke out where three persons were killed and seventy persons were wounded. Troops were rushed to supplement police and

Special task force (STF) commandos were deployed under a prolonged curfew, to bring the situation under control. According to another opinion page report by Sunday Times on 29th June 2014 the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) has allocated SLRs 200 million for the rehabilitation work in the affected areas. Further seven hundred soldiers from the Sri Lankan Army moved into the worst hit areas where the Sinhalese and Muslims violence occurred for a major rebuilding operations. The main task of the Sri Lanka troops will be to re-construct 27 houses and 47 shops that was destroyed due to violence. In addition the Sri Lanka troops will also carry out repairs to 67 damaged houses and 90 shops. On 23rd June 2014 the Sri Lankan External Affairs Minister G.L. Peiris while addressing a group of Ambassadors adds that strict instructions have been given to the Police not to permit any rallies or any demonstrations which contravene law of the International Convention on civil and Political rights Act passed by the Parliament of Sri Lanka in 2007. Although tensions have lessened, between the Muslims and Sinhalese communities there is a potential for the security situation to deteriorate again if right steps are not taken to prevent such incidences by the law enforcement agencies in the future.

There are the remnants of the radical groups that were involved in previous insurgencies in the South and are trying to re-organise within Sri Lanka and mobilise people to once again take up their extreme left wing causes. Some of their activities include radicalizing of students and encouraging them to take to the streets in various protests.

Azar (1990) has described violent events in developing countries as Protracted Social Conflicts (PSC). According to Azar, formation of Protracted Social Conflicts will take place in a country where it is composed with multi-communal composition. In relation to community content, there are multi-communal and multi-caste multi-religion situation could be seen in Sri Lanka. Azar (1990) was of the view that grievances resulting from need deprivation are usually expressed collectively. Failure to redress these grievances by the authority cultivates a niche for a protracted social conflict. Under the government role variable, the government of the country should ensure that all communal groups under its jurisdiction should meet their basic needs.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (LLRC)

According to the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) Report (2011), it is obvious that all individuals, parties and organisation represented the LLRC hearings have agreed to find a permanent solution to the problem but still failed to do so by all parties, individuals and organisations.

“Representations before the Commission were equally loud and clear that the people of all communities are ready and willing, as they have always been, to use this opportunity to promote reconciliation, amity and cooperation if the political leadership from all parties on all sides of the ethnic divide, are willing and able to lead the way. The Commission was further informed that it is possible to do this if the political leaders of all successive Governments, including the present Government, can summon the political will and the courage to introspect and reflect on the past failures and agree to nurture consensual decision making on issues of national importance and do not resort to the adversarial politics of the past, that sought short term electoral gain as against the long term national interest(8.143)” is mentioned in the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) report in 2011.

THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC) RESOLUTION “PROMOTING RECONCILIATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SRI LANKA”

Despite India’s abstaining the United States (US) sponsored resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) in Geneva which seeks to authorize the body to set up an independent international inquiry” in Sri Lanka to probe into human rights violations during Sri Lanka’s civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009 was passed . With 23 members voting in favour of the resolution while 12 voted against on 27th March 2014. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) adopted the resolution titled Promoting Reconciliation, Accountability and Human Rights in Sri Lanka requesting the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights to undertake a full investigation into alleged ,violations and abuses of human rights related crimes by parties concerned during the period covered by the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC)

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which examined the final year of the Sri Lankan conflict. However a home grown solution is the best way to bring about reconciliation among the two ethnically divided communities. However after the defeat of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009 India has taken tough stand against the, Government of Sri Lanka at the United Nations Human Rights Council due the influence of major Tamil Nadu nationalistic parties. Attempts by US backed resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva to bring war crime issues against the Sri Lankan government can be a drawback for future reconciliation efforts. Therefore, it is necessary to build permanent Peace in Sri Lanka and steps should be taken soon as possible.

THE MALDIVES

PRICEY THREAT AND INFILTRATION OF EXTREMIST GROUPS TO THE MALDIVES

The current security situation in the Maldives is peaceful and trouble-free. Nearly 100,000 ships pass through the Indian Ocean annually. The Maldives and Sri Lanka are located very closely to this shipping lane. The immediate threat to this vital shipping lane that that handles sixty per cent of the world's oil cargo and over fifty per cent of the world's container traffic, has been facing piracy threats in the last few years. However the Maldivian authorities are currently detaining a number of individuals suspected to have been involved in piracy. The United States that has an air base in Diago-gracia will be pulling out by 2016. The Maldives and Sri Lanka could be vulnerable places for extremist groups to infiltrate and cause hostilities within the region. The Maldivian Coast Guards needs to get more naval assets so that it has the ability to patrol the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). As an emerging democracy, the Maldives faces challenges, and is vulnerable to external shocks to its nascent democracy.

CONCLUSION

With the elections in India ending in May 2014 South Asia will see a new shift in politics, diplomacy, economics, governance and in regional security. In a Post-war environment, the question of security has been at the top of the agenda for policy makers. The Sri Lankan civil war and the Post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation at a micro and macro levels and

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the gradual democratization of the former war torn areas are lessons for the national and International policymakers to consider when planning national security strategies for conflict prevention operations.

Particularly security risks to the sovereignty of a country must be negotiated with various political parties at national and at regional levels and creating contacts with democratic attitudes, that lead to agreement by consensus in post conflict situations. The paper offers for International Affairs experts, policymakers, Security strategist lessons of politics, governance and managing conflict situations from South Asian countries such as India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

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