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Ajay Parasram
Department of Political Science, Carleton University.

Erasing Tamil Eelam: De/Re Territorialisation in the Global War on Terror

“We are a government who defeated terrorism at a time when others told us that it was not possible. The writ of the state now runs across every inch of our territory.”

- President Mahinda Rajapaksa: May 19, 2009

I. Introduction¹

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa declared victory over terror on May 18, 2009 and invited the world, embroiled in a so-called global war on terror (GWOT), to be his pupil in counter-terrorism.¹ The Sri Lankan military drove the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from their defacto² capital of Kilinochchi by January 2 of 2009 and contained the LTTE into approximately 250 sq. km of coastal forest terrain.³ The details of the dramatic end to the war are disputed by the government of Sri Lanka (GSL), international humanitarian organisations, and Tamil sources, but according to *The Economist*, the war ended when two LTTE leaders and their cadres agreed to lay down arms and return to the negotiating table.⁴ As the cadres raised white flags and crossed the battlefield with their families, the military “cleared” the field with machine guns. Most of the LTTE leadership was crushed amidst the last physically defensible assertion of what they called “Tamil Eelam”.

The Tamil citizens caught between “Sri Lanka” and “Tamil Eelam” were declared “liberated” by Colombo, as small areas of land were designated “cleared” as political control shifted from “Eelam” to “Lanka.”⁵ Those Tamil civilians in “cleared” zones would be ushered

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into guarded open air holding camps so that “terrorists” could be separated from civilians and the GSL could plan its resettlement agenda. A key component of this resettlement, the *Sri Lankan Guardian* reports, is aimed establishing military and Sinhalese settlements alongside re-settled Tamils displaced by the war.⁶

This paper considers the Sri Lankan civil war with attention to how its dramatic end can be explained through postcolonial territorial politics. Drawing on literature in political geography and political science, I argue that two discourses: postcolonial nationalism and global terrorism, aligned along domestic, regional, and international political levels to enable a military victory for the GSL. At the domestic political level, there was a change in government along with a split and defection within the LTTE command. At the international level, there was a turn away from Western allies due to their perceived inability to understand the needs of the Asian front in the GWOT. This in turn led to an important regional geopolitical realignment with China, a state understood to be sympathetic to fighting terrorism and secession movements. Through these movements, the domestic civil war effectively maps onto the developing regional geopolitics of southern Asia.

As John Agnew and Stuart Corbridge maintain, politics is always spatial.⁷ Agnew’s 1994 article, “The Territorial Trap,” warned scholars to problematise their Waltzian assumptions⁸ of territorially bounded, a-temporal “nation-states” that operate on discrete domestic and international levels. Though not drawing on Waltz directly, Peter Taylor’s application of territoriality, defined as “a form of behaviour that uses a bounded space, a territory, as the instrument for securing a particular outcome,” importantly challenged the static territorial assumptions most influential in political science as well. For Agnew, disturbing the territorial assumptions of the nation-state was important in order to work through the territorial “trap” that limits the analytical richness of territory and sovereignty as objects of analysis.⁹ For Taylor, the fused notion of “nation-state” reifies the idea of the state as a vortex-like “container” over a long legal and territorial tradition dating as far back the fifteenth century.¹⁰ Nearly two decades later, many social scientists have risen to the challenge of theorising territory and sovereignty beyond “container” states.¹¹ As noted by participants of a recent *Geopolitics* roundtable however, there remains a need to investigate territory dynamically: to ask “how particular territorial settlements are produced, and how states operate in ways that normalise and perpetuate this spatial order of things.”¹² The Al Qaeda attacks on the United States (US) and the subsequent GWOT has

brought to the foreground questions of whose boundaries, borders, and territorial sovereignty truly matters, in stark contrast to what globalisation scholars in the 1990s were describing as a world with evaporating borders.¹³ As Newman notes,

The spatial focus of territorial politics is as global as it is local and, in this sense, differs from the previous almost exclusive focus on territory at the state level. But even the state level is more pronounced than scholars would have had us believe just ten years ago – the demise of the territorial state as yet being unconfirmed.¹⁴

Dichotomous understandings of territory since the end of the Cold War sees a realist approach where territory is seen as a natural aspect of the container-state, while critical approaches often see the world in a process of “de-territorialising”, defined as the erosion of power/control of the sovereign state in the context of economic globalisation.¹⁵ Arguably, both of these approaches read territory as a “passive spatial recipient of the state” and overlook the spatial processes that infuse meaning into territory and nations.¹⁶

De-territorialisation, thus, must not be confused with a diminished importance of territory. The term “territorialisation” is contested; following a post-structuralist approach that takes its inspiration from Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, I read the verb as a process of “writing space” that inscribes socio-political meaning to physical geography.¹⁷ The following section offers a brief history of the conflict in Sri Lanka, contextualised as a collision of competing ethno-nationalist ideals of what the ‘nation-state’ ought to have been. Next, I return to Deleuze and Guattari’s “de/re territorialisation” to explain how reading territory as being in a perpetual state of “becoming” rather than as something static, is especially useful in the context of postcolonial territorial politics underlying the question of Lanka/Eelam. Building off the existing literature on terror and territory, this section links the discourses of global terror to postcolonial nationalism through a lens of territorialisation. The final section considers how the discourses of postcolonialism and terrorism maps onto the domestic, regional, and international political levels. It explains how a particular constellation of political events contributed to a military victory for the GSL. This paper contributes to the debates on terror and territory, bringing to light how discourses of terror and identity map onto the evolving postcolonial geopolitics of Southern Asia. Through applying the lens of territorialisation, I demonstrate that while the GSL has conquered Eelam militarily, the core

motivations for Eelam have not been addressed and thus President Rajapaksa's claim to "victory" in the "war on terror" may be premature.

II. Ceylon, Sri Lanka, Eelam: Ethno-nationalism and the Birth of Nation(s)

The island conventionally called Sri Lanka has had many names. In Sanskrit texts, the territory is known as "Lanka" and has spiritual significance for Hindus and later, Theravada Buddhists. Ancient Arab traders called it "Serendib" from which the word "serendipity" is derived. Under 443 years of Portuguese, Dutch, and finally British colonial rule, the island was consolidated into a singularly administrated entity called "Ceylon" in 1833.¹⁸ In 1972, it was renamed the "Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka." The politics of name is crucial in postcolonial places, and "Sri Lanka" is contested by Tamil nationalists who prefer the term "Ceylon" because it speaks to what they see as an ongoing form of colonisation after British rule.¹⁹

The civil war's roots are related to British "divide and rule" strategy, which created a long-lasting unitary political authority in Colombo. This unification transformed what was previously de-centralised Tamil and Sinhalese communities into a central administration.²⁰ Tamils were over-represented in British administrative posts, in part explained by Ceylon Tamils²¹ who emphasised education as a result of their geographic concentration in areas where agriculture was difficult. The over-representation is also due to Tamil areas being brought under direct colonial rule before Sinhalese areas were.²² As Sowell notes,

The Kandyan Sinhalese held out longest against British colonial conquest (until 1815), and were consequently exposed to British culture for a shorter time – a fact that continued to be reflected in their under-representation in higher education and higher-level occupations more than a century later in independent Ceylon.²³

Though the United National Party (UNP) ruled from independence in 1948 until 1956, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's Freedom Party rose to power under the banner of Sinhalese-Buddhist ethno-nationalism, decrying 400 years of Christian rule in a Buddhist country.²⁴ With strong support from the Sinhalese-Buddhist clergy, Bandaranaike mobilised ethnic Sinhalese-nationalism through his "Sinhala-only" 1956 election campaign which legislated Sinhalese as the sole official language.²⁵ The GSL's position brought to reality longer-standing Tamil fears of linguistic marginalisation within the new nation-state.²⁶

The 4 key issues influencing the development of a militant Tamil resistance based on establishing an independent state included: language and employment, regional autonomy, land settlement, and access to university education.²⁷ K.M. de Silva's study of university admission policies show that Tamils and Sinhalese required different grades to qualify for university. As he notes, "students sitting for the examinations in the same language, but belonging to two ethnic groups, had different qualifying marks."²⁸ The question of qualifying grades and ethnic quotas was determined at the cabinet level. According to C.R. de Silva,

The political impact of the district quota system has been little short of disastrous. It has convinced many Sri Lankan Tamils that it was futile to expect equality of treatment with the Sinhalese majority. It has immensely strengthened separatist forces within the Tamil United Front and contributed to the acceptance of a policy campaigning for a separate state in early 1975.²⁹

Tamils were historically over-represented in government employment, in part explained by a higher quality of schools in the Northern Province as a consequence of English-language missionary schools. Successive Sinhalese governments after the Sinhala Only Act sought to address this imbalance politically. This had the twin impact implementing policies favouring Sinhalese at a time when the island's population was rapidly growing. The "youth bulge" came at precisely the time when Tamils were facing increased discrimination along linguistic, academic, and professional lines.³⁰

Young, politicised Tamils' fears of ethnic erasure at the hands of singular Sinhalese-nationalism were fuelled with the election of J.R. Jayewardene in 1977. According to Sankaran Krishna, Jayewardene especially understood the nation's history as ostensibly Sinhalese and Buddhist.³¹ His government passed the "Proscription of The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and Similar Groups Act" and the "Prevention of Terrorism Act" (PTA) in 1978 and 1979 respectively. By 1979 then, the discourses of terrorism and postcolonial national identity were joined in domestic politics. The prior law outlawed armed secessionist groups and the latter allowed for the arrest and holding of those accused of "subversive activities" without trial for 18 months in this early "war on terror".³² Anti-Tamil rhetoric amongst political parties vying for electoral success complemented the culture of impunity offered by the PTA and anti-Tamil *pogroms* in 1958, 1965, 1971, 1978, and 1983.³³ According to Neil DeVotta, the burning of the Jaffna library and with it, the destruction of rich Tamil-cultural relics caused "many Tamils to feel that the Sinhalese Buddhist state was determined to destroy their culture."³⁴ Black July

(1983) is often cited as the catalyst for the civil war and is officially attributed to the anti-Tamil riots in response to the LTTE's July 23, 1983 ambushing of 13 government soldiers in Jaffna. Jennifer Hyndman notes that the next day, the GSL widely publicised news broadcasts of the LTTE's attack, while censoring coverage of the military's retaliation. By July 25, anti-Tamil crowds in Colombo looted and burned Tamil property as the police watched.³⁵ The Minister of Development clarified the GSL's position in the aftermath of the pogrom:

Sri Lanka is inherently and rightfully a Sinhalese state...this must be accepted as a fact and not a matter of opinion to be debated. By attempting to challenge this premise, Tamils have brought the wrath of the Sinhalese on their own heads; they have themselves to blame.³⁶

Postcolonial birth pangs saw Sinhalese nationalists in a process of writing "Sri Lanka" and Tamil nationalists resisted that script initially, only to begin writing one of their own after two decades of ineffective civil disobedience and electoral politics.³⁷ By the 1970s, becoming-Sri Lanka meant the erasure of being-Tamil in a singular nation-state to Tamil-nationalists. The solution for many was a Tamil state in the north and east Tamil-dominated regions; a partition of the sort that is not without precedent in South Asia.³⁸

III: Territorialising the Enemy-Other

An independent state was born in Ceylon in 1947, but part of what inscribes states with nationalist meaning are the territorial practices over time that establish boundaries of inside/outside; Self/Other.³⁹ This simultaneous production can be understood as de/re territorialisation. Despite the cartographic rigidity posed by the modern system of states, Mathias Albert notes that territory gains meaning through "the enactment of challenges to it, by questionings and erasures of boundaries as markers of space, but also through the inscription of new boundaries."⁴⁰ Both "Sri Lanka" and "Tamil Eelam" gain meaning through contestations; simultaneous efforts to materially inscribe social relationships.⁴¹ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari explain the process of becoming:

Even blacks, as the Black Panthers said, must become-black. Even women must become-woman. Even Jews must become Jewish...Becoming-Jewish, becoming-woman, etc., therefore imply two simultaneous movements, one by which a term (the subject) is withdrawn from the majority, and another by which a term (the medium or agent) rises up from the minority.⁴²

Sri Lanka or Tamil Eelam, in this conceptualisation, are both engaged in simultaneous processes of becoming. For Eelam, this means withdrawing from the majority "Lanka" to emerge within

the minority. Becoming-Eelam requires a re-territorialising move, which implies a de-territorialising move away from Sri Lanka. Territorialising Tamil Eelam or Sri Lanka is more than control of territory in a Weberian-sense, de/re territorialising a nation-state involves inscribing myths, symbols, and narratives that emphasise place. These inscriptions can be likened to what Deleuze and Guattari describe as de/re territorialising signifying the process of “leaving” (Sri Lanka) and “entering” (Tamil Eelam).⁴³ The nationalist contestations, which only took the form of state-hood in the 1970s,⁴⁴ configured and reconfigured power-relations throughout the civil war based on physical and ideational claims; practices by “Eelam” and “Lanka”. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of “refrain” is instructive, as it describes the simultaneous de/re territorialising movements that transforms territory through an analogy of musical refrain.

The difference between noise and sound is definitively not a basis for a definition of music... Rather, it is the *labour of refrain*: Does it remain territorial and territorializing, or is it carried away in a moving block that draws a transversal across all coordinates – and all of the intermediaries between the two? Music is precisely the adventure of the refrain.”⁴⁵

The labour of refrain positions the contestation of ethno-nationalist ideals as a quest for postcolonial identity, but one that is necessarily co-constituted. Contemporary work on postcolonial geography observes that in many cases, independence continued colonial boundaries/borders which has been rife with problems.⁴⁶ De/re territorialisation applied to Sri Lanka/Tamil Eelam speaks to the constant process of becoming in a postcolonial environment where claims to sovereignty and identity are especially charged.⁴⁷

Part of territorialising, or inscribing socio-political meaning into territory, involves the question of legitimacy. The “legitimate” (state) and “illegitimate” (non-state) use of terror has been pivotal in the study of the GWOT.⁴⁸ Stuart Elden charts the historical development of the “legitimate” territorial state, specifically emphasising how international norms of “self-determination” have been eclipsed by a perceived need for “territorial stability” in the early independence period.⁴⁹ Drawing out the geographic significance of Max Weber’s well established dictum that the state monopolises “legitimate” violence, Elden argues that “any potential redrawing of the borders of a state *limits* the spatial extent of its sovereignty, the extent of the state’s ability to use violence, and is therefore, in itself, necessarily violent and illegitimate.”⁵⁰ Elden, and Barry Hindess before him, have shown how the etymology of

“territory” and “terrorism” is deeply related; distinguished largely by claims to the “legitimate” use of terrifying tactics.⁵¹ It reveals an attempt to distinguish between “those who conduct the war, who are opposed to terror, and their enemies, who use it.”⁵²

Both the GSL and the LTTE, argues Margo Kleinfeld, used the “trope of *September eleventh*” to contest the label of terrorist. The LTTE sought to demonstrate that they were a legitimate freedom-fighting movement under attack by a “terror” state, and the GSL sought to position Sri Lanka as an experience theatre in a GWOT.⁵³ Amongst Tamil-nationalists, Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism represented a re-colonisation rather than a de-colonisation, which only intensified through the 1970s.⁵⁴ What is important after *September eleventh*, is how the production of the enemy-Other in Sri Lanka was influenced by the international discourse of the GWOT. Simon Dalby’s “essential geopolitical moment” sheds light on the tactic employed by the GSL and the LTTE to seek legitimacy through essentialising the Other and producing the Self. Dalby explains,

The exclusion of the Other and the inclusion, incorporation and administration of the Same is the essential geopolitical moment. The two processes are complementary; the Other is excluded as the reverse side of the process of incorporation of the Same. Expressed in the terms of space and power, this is the basic process of geopolitics in which territory is divided, contested and ruled...the “Other” is seen as different if not an enemy. “We” are “the same” in that we are all citizens of the same nation, speak a similar language, share a culture. This theme repeatedly recurs in political discourse where others are portrayed as different and as threats; it is geopolitical discourse.⁵⁵

Colombo and Kilinochchi were engaged in “geopolitical discourse” as explained by Dalby, which itself can be likened to the simultaneous movements of de/re territorialisation as defined above. Taken in the context literature on terror and territory, the naturalisation of a static understanding of territory encoded into the territorial-state enables the state to “legitimately” represent the citizen-Same and in turn, define the terrorist-Other. It is precisely this geopolitical discourse of creating Other and Same that operationalises the refrain of territory. In the early independence period, the GSL employed the discourse to separate the Tamil-Other from the Sinhalese-Same and in the last two decades, to separate the terrorist-Other and civilian-Same. The LTTE employ the discourse to create the Tamil-Same, devoted to the LTTE’s quest for Tamil Eelam, and the Other, understood as non-Tamil in the 1990s and then applied to Tamil defectors in the Eastern Province in the 21st century, as will be discussed below.

IV.I: Re-Territorialising the northeast: Tamil Eelam and Sovereignty-Acts

By the 1990s, the Tigers had proven their stripes domestically and regionally as a military force, winning battles against both the GSL military and Indian Peacekeeping forces. Re-territorialising the northeast toward “Eelam” required nation-building in addition to territorial control however. Toward this end, the LTTE performed administrative duties such as establishing a judiciary and policing areas under their control. The LTTE also built important material and ideational symbols like the *Sea Tigers* - a small, well-armed fleet of ships capable of outmanoeuvring the GSL, the *Air Tigers* - a small air force capable of conducting bombing raids - and a 20,000 cadre-strong army of their own.⁵⁶ A vital non-military territorialising tactic involved de-legitimising the basis for the GSL rule over the Tamil people, and LTTE political broadcasts sought to do precisely that through national and international media.⁵⁷

To replace the UNP-government in the 1994 election, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga’s Freedom Party engaged in their own quest for domestic legitimacy. Kumaratunga campaigned on the basis of economic reform and seeking a political settlement with the LTTE, specifically proposing a ten-year period of LTTE-rule in the northeast.⁵⁸ The conditions for this compromise, however, were politically unfeasible. Kumaratunga demanded that the LTTE disarm and renounce its secessionist agenda. After over a decade of insurgency, territorialising Tamil Eelam meant inscribing a successful revolutionary struggle. According to DeVotta, “Prabhakaran wanted *eelam* built militarily so as to imbue Tamil society with a martial legacy.”⁵⁹ Becoming-Eelam in this domestic context meant fulfilling a nationalistic criteria with defensible borders. This could not be realised under the terms offered by Kumaratunga.

By the time the GSL and LTTE came to the negotiating table in 2002, it was nearly as equals.⁶⁰ Following the February 23, 2002 ceasefire and subsequent peace talks sponsored by Norway, the LTTE sought legal recognition for the structures of governance that they were already running in the northeast.⁶¹ In an important performance of statesmanship, the LTTE commander Prabhakaran called a press conference in the *de facto* capital of Kilinochchi. The LTTE made arrangements for travel and accommodations for the over 250 domestic and international journalists who attended the press conference. Donning civilian clothing rather than military fatigues, Prabhakaran reaffirmed his commitment to the Thimpu principles⁶² which included:

- right to nationhood;
- a homeland;
- self-determination for the Tamil people⁶³

- fundamental rights and citizenship of all Tamils who see the island as their homeland

The Thimpu principles speak to the LTTE's demands for space, place, and sovereignty. In theory this does not demand a functioning and independent state and opens the door to many creative ways of conceptualising sovereignty, such as the province of Quebec's "distinct society" recognition within Canada, or China's one-country, two-systems approach regarding Taiwan. However, in light of domestic political context, it is clear that both sides understood that what was at stake was one state, or two. The peace talks were widely received by the Sinhalese population as favouring the LTTE and President Kumaratunga dubbed the Norwegian mediators "salmon eating international busybodies."⁶⁴ At the same time, tensions between Kumaratunga and the UNP Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, who led the peace and reconciliation plan for the GSL, were escalating.⁶⁵ Wickremasinghe publically called Kumaratunga a "Hitler madam" and Kumaratunga proclaimed that the Prime Minister lacked the backbone to enact meaningful peace.⁶⁶ As this intra-GSL bickering continued, the LTTE used the time to regroup, rearm and pressure the GSL to vacate civilian territories in the Jaffna peninsula to allow resettlement.⁶⁷

IV.II: Territorial Refrain and the Domestic Political Level

Three critical domestic factors affected the territorial refrain decisively between 2003 – 2006. First, Muslim populations in the northeast were treated as pawns by both the LTTE and the GSL. The LTTE were notoriously harsh in their treatment of Muslims because of their presence within the territory claimed as the Tamil homeland. The massacre of praying Muslims in a Mosque on August 3, 1990 and of sleeping villagers 8 days later in Eravur catalysed Tamil-Muslim conflict, in which the LTTE scapegoated Muslims as being "obstacles" to Eelam.⁶⁸ LTTE cadres in the Eastern Province in particular found increasingly radicalised Muslim youth ready to fight for autonomy in regions where Muslims were populous. With funding from external Islamic organisations, young Muslims were proclaiming their affiliation with "Jihadi," "Mujahideen," "Osama," or "Qaeda."⁶⁹ Though the material role of foreign Islamic groups may be minor, it becomes a discursive variable in the conflation of Al Qaeda and LTTE territory.⁷⁰

[Map 1 should be placed approximately here]

The second domestic event was the split in the LTTE leadership in 2006, after the Eastern commander Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan, commonly referred to as Colonel Karuna, defected

and fought alongside the GSL.⁷¹ Karuna's transformation from the LTTE-Self to Tamil-Other reflected the class distinctions between high-ranking Northern and low-ranking Eastern Tamils. His defection exposed the instability of the homogenous "Tamil".⁷² The ethnic makeup of the Eastern Province was such that Tamils did not comprise a clear majority population, and the combination of Muslim resistance and Tamil defection caused a loss of sovereign control that enabled the GSL a foothold in the Eastern Province by 2007.

The third domestic event was the unexpected 2004 parliamentary election that toppled Wickremasinghe's teetering moderate government due to its perceived willingness to sacrifice sovereignty to the LTTE. Since September 2001, the international political level has played an important role in shaping the domestic Sri Lankan discourse of a GWOT, and Wickremasinghe's government had barely survived a 2002 election because of it. Margo Kleinfeld's study of the initial domestic political mood following Washington's declaration of the GWOT describes public "euphoria" towards militarily ending terrorism and the linking of the LTTE and Al Qaeda through the (new) discourse of global terror.⁷³ Leading up to the 2004 change in government was the Freedom Party's formal withdrawal of support for the peace process initiated by Wickremasinghe's UNP-led alliance. The Freedom Party's allied with the extreme ethno-nationalist anti-Tamil JVP-People Liberation Front Party.⁷⁴ The text of their alliance says, "the so-called peace process will not usher in a durable peace but threatens the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the country, degrading its dignity."⁷⁵ According to the JVP spokesman, the reason the party allied with Kumaratunga's Freedom Party was to "prevent a plan to divide the country in the name of peace."⁷⁶ Mahinda Rajapaksa, the Freedom Party's new leader who had contested the snap elections in 2004 as leader of the Freedom Party led People's Alliance, was appointed Prime Minister with a majority of 2 seats. In the subsequent 2005 presidential elections, Rajapaksa succeeded Kumaratunga as president, galvanising Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism amidst the collapsing peace talks with the LTTE.⁷⁷ The quest for legitimacy being pursued by both the LTTE and the GSL during the period of peace negotiations was not favouring the LTTE, and by the second quarter of 2006, fighting had resumed.⁷⁸

These factors affected the de/re territorialising rhythms in important ways beyond the physical act of fighting to control territory. The very existence of Muslims and their resistance to LTTE and GSL practices troubles the binary logic used to over-simplify the geography of the civil war. Colonel Karuna's defection is important for military-strategic reasons, but in

destabilising the idea of a homogenous Tamil within the imagined boundaries of Eelam, it dealt an important symbolic blow to the LTTE territorialising practices. Sinhalese-Buddhist factions were brought to power through an electorally effective campaign based on wiping the terrorist threat off the island. Doing so, however, required support at the regional and international level.

IV.III: Erasing Tamil Eelam; (Re)Writing Sri Lanka – the International and Regional Levels

Since the launch of the GWOT, the GSL and LTTE both sought to use the discourse of global terrorism to lobby support. In November of 2001, Prabhakaran's annual Hero's Day speech held a message to international audiences in an effort to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence:

The world governments waging a war against terror should, first of all, explore the root causes of political violence. It is only through a deep insight into the origins of political violence that one can discern the differences between authentic liberation struggles and blind acts of terror. In our view, there are two dimensions in political violence. Firstly, there is the violence of the oppressor. Secondly, there is the violence of the oppressed... The violence of the first category can be designated as state violence. The second category can be termed as the violence against state violence. Since state violence is a form of repressive violence of the oppressor, it is unjust. The reactive violence of the oppressed is just since it is undertaken with the motive of obtaining justice. It is within the context of this distinction that the violent modes of political struggles of the oppressed find legitimacy.⁷⁹

On September 23, 2001, US Ambassador Holgate said in Colombo that there was a distinction between the LTTE and Al Qaeda, and that the prior was not a target in the GWOT. As Kleinfeld observes, this message was received as contradicting President's Bush's ominous "with us or against us" rhetoric at the time.⁸⁰ The feeling of American hypocrisy towards the postcolonial battlefield of counter-terrorism helped bring an avowedly "anti-terror" alliance of Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalists to power in 2004. The alliance saw their task as protecting the territorial singularity of Sri Lanka against the illegitimate terrorist-Other.⁸¹

Following the resumption of war in August 2006, human rights abuses affected the flow of aid at the international level from the West to the GSL, and also from the Tamil diaspora to Tamil Eelam.⁸² The Sri Lankan military was poorly equipped to win a war against the LTTE, as they had been unable to do so in the decades preceding 2006. Asian geopolitics at the regional level becomes significant in the final years of the civil war. Beijing's five-fold funding increase between 2007-2008 makes it Colombo's largest benefactor in bilateral aid, exceeding US 1 billion which was used towards purchasing military equipment from China and Pakistan.⁸³

Support from countries facing secession-movements of their own filled the aid gap, with military equipment from China, Russia, and Israel including tanks, radars, and jets.⁸⁴ According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Chinese exports of conventional military equipment made up 52% of military transfers within the Asia-Pacific region between 2004 – 2008. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh were the main beneficiaries which cannot be separated from the Beijing’s geostrategic role in South Asia Sino-Indian war of 1962.⁸⁵ Washington stopped selling arms to Colombo in 2007, and in 2008 stipulated its aid would be reduced and contingent on demonstrated improvements in human rights, specifically: allowing international aid organisations and journalists access to the battleground; trying military commanders accused of human rights abuses; and a permanent field presence for the UN High Commission for Refugees.⁸⁶

Faced with this international Western pressure, Colombo saw the benefits of regionally aligning with Beijing, whose deep pockets held cash, weapons, a UN Security Council veto, and a common distaste for secessionist movements.⁸⁷ The international legal norm of territorial integrity has been a cornerstone of Chinese foreign policy as Xianjiang, Tibet, and Taiwan each pose threats to Beijing.⁸⁸ Chinese diplomatic, economic, and military support for Sri Lanka was pivotal in rapidly transforming the military between 2006 – 2009 and has been recognised and appreciated by the GSL in speeches, parades, and the awarding land in the deep south to build a geo-strategically important commercial port. China has similar ports in Bangladesh (Chittagong); Sittwe (Myanmar); Gwadar (Pakistan) and elsewhere, in what is sometimes referred to as the “string of pearls”.⁸⁹

[Map 2 should be placed approximately here]

Beyond the domestic political level, the clashing postcolonial nationalisms on the tear-dropped shaped island has mapped onto the shifting regional geopolitical landscape of southern Asia in large part due to the international context of the GWOT.⁹⁰

Sri Lanka has embraced its new allegiances and formally joined the Shanghai Cooperative Organisation (SCO) as a dialogue partner in 2009.⁹¹ The SCO’s mandate speaks to the priorities of preserving existing boundaries and a postcolonial concern with non-interference. It formally aligns China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan predicated on anti-terrorism, border protection, territorial integrity, and non-interference.⁹² China and the GSL co-sponsored an international seminar entitled, “Defeating Terrorism, Sri Lankan

Experience” in June 2011 where 54 states were invited to learn counter-terrorism strategies from Colombo.⁹³ According to Foreign Secretary Palitha Kohona, “Asians don’t go around teaching each other how to behave. There are ways we deal with each another – perhaps a quiet chat but not wagging the finger.”⁹⁴ This comment illustrates the perceived indivisibility of the territorial nation-state through its personification. Further echoing the point, Rajapaksa’s victory speech declares, “We have set a fine example for the entire world...we don’t want advice from other country [*sic*] about how we should treat our people.”⁹⁵

The GSL sought to control the discourse surrounding military tactics during the war, denying international press access to LTTE territory in the name of security. Among the crimes documented in the March 2011 United Nations *Report of the Secretary General’s Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka* is the GSL’s use of media control, heavy shelling in civilian areas and No-Fire Zones, and destroying hospitals in well known areas whilst advancing a controlled media image of a zero-civilian casualty policy.⁹⁶ The report accuses the LTTE of summarily executing civilians who sought to escape the conflict zone and of recruiting soldiers as young as 14.⁹⁷ According to the US and Sri Lankan government, the LTTE took male villagers as human shields as they retreated, in the hopes that blending in with the locals would prevent the army from using heavy artillery. Nonetheless, the report documents heavy shelling and artillery use in the Vanni, amounting to the collective persecution of the civilian population and the deaths of international aid workers as well.⁹⁸ *Al Jazeera* reports that in controlled media briefings during the war, the Sri Lankan army was careful to show slideshows of dead cadres and seized weapons, but never heavy artillery.⁹⁹ As the army was boasting death ratios, soldier to cadre, of 1:11,¹⁰⁰ GSL Ambassador Jaliya Wickramasuriya was explaining on May 6, 2009 in Washington that ““We 100% deny shelling’ people trapped in the conflict zone.”¹⁰¹

Internationally, the “West” was in an awkward diplomatic situation waging a war on terror while criticising Sri Lanka for doing the same. This brought the question of “whose territorial sovereignty” matters to the foreground of the GWOT in southern Asia. At this intersection of postcolonial and GWOT discourses, Rajapaksa moved Sri Lanka diplomatically towards the growing ranks of “Look-East” non-western countries.¹⁰² The European Union and US cut some of their bilateral aid programs and threatened to withdraw General System of Preference trade benefits, and Sri Lanka was thrown out of the UN Human Rights Council in

May 2008.¹⁰³ According to the UN report, there may be sufficient evidence to pose charges of crimes against humanity, which arguably reinforces Colombo's regional realignment.¹⁰⁴

By the last battle in May 2009, the sovereign writ of the LTTE cadres and the leadership was cornered on all sides into a place the size of a football field. At this point it was clear the war was over, and Rajapaksa, who is also the Minister of Disaster Management and Human Rights, appeared on television answering questions about whether he wanted Prabhakaran dead or alive.¹⁰⁵ Amidst the rubble of the last physical vestiges of Tamil Eelam laid the slain body of the supreme LTTE leader, Prabhakaran, seemingly shot in the forehead in images throughout international media.¹⁰⁶ Amidst promises of "liberating" the Tamils of north-eastern Ceylon-turned- Eelam-turned-Sri Lanka, the GSL instead set to work ensuring that when resettlement did take place, it would spatially separate Tamil communities with new Sinhalese settlements and military bases such that an ethnic Tamil concentration could never again pose a territorial threat to Sri Lanka.¹⁰⁷ At the same time, the GSL continued explaining to the West that they did not understand the war against terrorism in Sri Lanka. A documentary, entitled "Freedom Speaks" is prominently available for streaming on the Ministry of National Defence's website with a specific purpose to address the, "global ignorance of Sri Lanka's conflict".¹⁰⁸

V: Conclusion

The GSL denies that the war was about territorial conquest, preferring to situate it as a struggle between good and evil; innocent-Self and terrorist-Other. When asked how he reconciled his Buddhist faith with his war on terror by the British newsmagazine, *The Week*, President Rajapaksa invoked historical nationalist symbols to make his point:

I went to war to save innocent people from a ruthless man and his organisation. It was a campaign to save the innocent from the brutal forces that dominated their lives for more than three decades. Even Dharmashoka, the Indian emperor who brought Buddhism to Sri Lanka, gained territory while spreading the faith. I merely liberated a part of Sri Lanka's population from the clutches of the LTTE. I did not fight the war for territory. In that way, I see no conflict between my religion and my action.¹⁰⁹

The President's choice of the word "liberate" to describe Colombo's triumph over the LTTE as "liberated" Tamil civilians occupied state holding camps amidst strategic demographic and military resettlement is indicative of the quest to utterly discredit the "Liberation" Tigers. Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, the retired Lt. Col. brother of the president, oversaw the military strategy of the final war as permanent secretary to the Minister of Defence since 2005. Ignoring calls for

reconciliation and resettlement after the conclusion of the war, the brothers Rajapaksa extended the war-time state of emergency to suspend resettlement/reconciliation efforts in favour of routing out LTTE sympathisers from the some 200,000 refugees interned in government camps.¹¹⁰

Amidst conflicting nationalisms, I have argued here that the new meaning of a GWOT was a key catalyst in enabling the GSL to militarily defeat the LTTE. The particular alignment and intermixing of domestic, regional, and international political conditions with discourses of postcolonial identity and terrorism created the conditions for the dramatic end. Domestically, the LTTE and GSL clashed in what Kleinfeld called the “trope of *September eleventh*” in response to the changed implications of “terror” after the Al Qaeda attack on the US. The result was the replacement of a more moderate government with an alliance of Sinhalese-nationalists in 2004, charged with a mandate to “end terrorism” and prevent the break-up of the singular Sri Lankan state. The 2006 defection of LTTE Colonel Karuna and the resistance of Muslims in the Eastern Province also worked to destabilise the nationalist claim of a singular LTTE-Tamil and the homogeneity of “Tamil Eelam”. The domestic and international levels overlapped to reveal a hypocritical double-standard over who had a right to wage a war on terror, and how that war ought to be waged. The contradiction of the US and its allies in proclaiming a war on terror in one breath and criticising Colombo’s much longer war on terror in another, was an important discursive factor at all three levels of analysis. Internationally, this contradiction materially limited the GSL’s ability to act on its 2004 electoral promise to “end” terrorism. In response to this international barrier, Colombo aligned regionally with China, earning the diplomatic, financial, and military assistance needed to overcome the long-standing military stalemate with the LTTE. The mapping of the domestic Lankan/Eelam civil war onto the regional geopolitics shows the importance of the postcolonial context in light of John Agnew’s 2010 warning: “be careful to avoid missing territory’s continuing contribution to nationalist ideology”.¹¹¹

The case of Sri Lanka/Tamil Eelam shows how a small and relatively powerless island state in the Indian Ocean has been able to leverage the discourses of postcolonial solidarity and global terrorism to actually bring about a military victory against a powerful secessionist group that until just a few years prior, administered large swathes of territory. Theoretically, the case brings to light the importance of studying the discourses of terrorism and postcolonial identity together. De/re territorialisation as a theoretical approach allows one to decode the politics of

contending nationalisms, seeing simultaneous efforts to inscribe nationalist meaning into territory in a constant process of “becoming.” This approach contributes to the study of terror and territory, but also to the territorial politics of postcolonial nationalism. Territorialisation joins with the growing body of literature seeking to destabilise socially constructed and legally institutionalised conceptions of sovereignty that “trap” analysis in (static) territory. It shows how the process of writing nationalism into territory is troubled by important empirical factors, such as the destabilised “Tamil” after the defection of Colonel Karuna as well as the destabilised notion of the “Tamil” homeland in light of resistance from ethnic Moors/Muslims. Every de-territorialising act comes with a re-territorialising act, and the “refrain” over the course of the civil war has led neither to the realisation of the Sinhalese or Tamil national imaginary.

Sri Lanka remains a deeply divided ethno-nationalist imaginary. The *spatial* aspect of Tamil ethno-nationalism has not changed with the GSL’s defeat of the LTTE and there is little reason to believe the new strategy of ensuring ethnic heterogeneity and military outposts in the northeast will address the causes underlying the movement for Eelam in the first place. The discourse of ending terrorism works in conjunction with a legalistic interpretation of state-based sovereignty in what scholars in the common spaces of critical international relations and political geography have shown to be a long-standing bias towards a “natural” nation-state.¹¹² Though the military conquest of Tamil Eelam is over, the GSL under President Rajapaksa has not taken the steps necessary to deal with the foundational issues of institutionalised racism that underscored the ethnic tensions in the teardrop shaped state. Indeed, the million-strong Tamil international diaspora has elected a transnational government-in-exile with a significant base in Toronto, suggesting that Colombo’s physical control of the island does not signify a re-territorialisation of Eelam.¹¹³ Chopping the head off the domestic-Tiger may suit the GSL for now, but the Tiger may turn into a Hydra if the serious issues underscoring this conflict are not addressed.

¹. “LTTE’s defeat is victory for country: Sri Lankan President” *India Today*, May 19, 2009. Available online at <<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/site/specials/asiangames2010/Story/42765/LTTE>>.

². Calling Kilinochchi a “defacto” capital somewhat stretches the meaning of “defacto sovereignty”. Fiona McConnell distinguishes “de jure” from “de facto” sovereignty, where the prior describes a legal status, and the latter describes how a political entity engages in practices normally associated with a territorial state without legal recognition. McConnell uses the example of the Tibetan government-in-exile as an example of a “geopolitical anomaly” that does not conform to what Murphy 2009 calls the “dominant political territorial ideal” or the legal state. Though what I describe as “Tamil Eelam” in this paper is arguably a type of geopolitical anomaly, I do not develop this particular line of reasoning in this paper for reasons of space. For more on de-jure/de-facto sovereignty and geopolitical anomaly, see: F. McConnell, “De facto, displaced, tacit: The sovereign articulations of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile” *Political Geography* 28/6 (2009): pp 343 – 352; F. McConnell, “The Fallacy and

Promise of the Territorial Trap: Sovereign Articulations of Geopolitical Anomalies” *Geopolitics* 15/4 (2010): pp 762 – 768; A.B. Murphy, “The sovereign state system as political-territorial ideal: historical and contemporary considerations” T. Bierstreker and C. Weber (eds.) *State sovereignty as social construct* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) pp 81 – 120.

³. V.S. Shekhawat, *Sri Lanka: The Politics of Tamil Eelam* (Jaipur: Ram Kishore Sharma, 2010) pp 208.

⁴. “After the Slaughter: Tamil Tigers Contemplate Life without Prabhakaran” *Economist* May 28, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.economist.com/node/13754093>>.

⁵. The Sri Lankan Ministry of Defence has an animated “Battle Progress Map” that allows visitors to zoom in on particular battles and see how the military won battles through the *Vanni*. It was last updated on May 19, 2009. See: Ministry of Defence, Public Security, Law and Order. “Battle Progress Map”(2009) available online at <<http://www.defence.lk/orbat/Default.asp>>.

⁶. N. DeVotta, “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Lost Quest for Separatism in Sri Lanka” *Asian Survey* 49/6 (Nov./Dec. 2009): pp 1047-1048; “Plan to resettle Tamil IDPs in the midst of Army and Sinhala Settlements” *Sri Lanka Guardian* August 24, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2009/08/plan-to-resettle-tamil-idps-in-midst-of.html>>.

⁷. J. Agnew and S. Corbridge, *Mastering Space: hegemony, territory and international political economy* (New York: Routledge 1995) pp 7.

⁸. Waltzian, referring to the influential theoretical work of the neorealist, Kenneth Waltz. Waltz developed a theory of international politics that worked through the causes of war in three “images” and concluded that the international level of analysis is the most important determinant of war/peace. Waltz likens states to empty “containers” because he maintains that causal explanations of war will be found in the anarchic structure of the international system and not the particularities of the state or human nature. See: K. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: a theoretical analysis* (New York: Colombia University Press 1959) .

⁹. J. Agnew, ‘The territorial trap: the geographical assumptions of international relations theory’ *Review of International Political Economy* 1/1 (Spring, 1994) pp 53 – 80.; Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: a theoretical analysis* (note 8) pp 159 – 187.

¹⁰. P. Taylor, “The state as container: territoriality in the modern world-system” *Progress in Human Geography* 18/2: pp 151 – 152. For an alternative account of the development and rise to prominence of the territorial state, see C. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States: 990 – 1990 AD (Studies in Social Discontinuity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 1990).

¹¹. J.D. Sidaway, “Sovereign Excesses? Portraying Postcolonial Sovereigntylandscapes,” *Political Geography* 22/2 (Feb. 2003) pp 157-178; T. Hagmann & M. V. Hoehne, ‘Failures of the State Failure Debate: Evidence from the Somali Territories,’ *Journal of International Development* 21/1 (2008) pp 42-57; McConnell, “The Fallacy and the Promise of the Territorial Trap: Sovereign Articulations of Geopolitical Anomalies” (note 2).

¹². S. Elden, “Thinking Territory Historically” *Geopolitics* 15/4 (2010) pp 760.

¹³. D. Newman, “Territory, Compartments and Borders: Avoiding the Trap of the Territorial Trap” *Geopolitics* 15/4 (2010) pp 774-775; D. Gregory, *The Colonial Present* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

¹⁴. Newman (note 13) pp 775.

¹⁵. K. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1979); John Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁶. A. Brighenti, “On Territorology: Towards a General Science of Territory” *Theory, Culture, and Society* 27/1 (2010) pp 52-72; J. Agnew, “Still Trapped in Territory” *Geopolitics* 15/4 (2010) pp 779 - 784; S. Elden, *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009) pp 161 – 169.

¹⁷. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); M. Albert, “On Boundaries, Territory and Postmodernity: An International Relations Perspective” in D. Newman (ed.) *Boundaries, Territory and Postmodernity*, (London: Frank Cass, 1999); Brighenti (note 16); .

¹⁸. British rule began in 1796, however the island was not unified administratively out of Colombo until 1833. See C.R. de Silva, *Sri Lanka: A History* (New Delhi: Vikash Publishing House, 1987) pp 150 – 154; A. J. Wilson, *Sri Lankan*

Tamil Nationalism: Its Origins and Development in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000).

¹⁹. S. Krishna, *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the Question of Nationhood* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 1999); A. Wijimanne, *War and Peace in Post-Colonial Ceylon 1948 – 1991* (New Delhi: Orient Longman Limited, 1996).

²⁰. C.R. de Silva *Sri Lanka: A History* (note 18) pp 150 – 157; DeVotta “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam” (note 6) pp 1025

²¹. “Ceylon” Tamils refers to those who were part of the Tamil Kingdoms predating European colonialism, as opposed to “Estate” or “Indian” Tamils who were brought from India to work the colonial tea plantations.

²². T. Sowell, *Migrations and Cultures: A World View* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996) pp 353 – 355; B. O’Duffy, “LTTE: Majoritarianism, Self-Determination, and Military to Political Transition in Sri Lanka” M. Heiberg, et. al. (eds.) *Terror, Insurgency, and the State: Ending Protracted Conflicts* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2007) pp 258.

²³. Sowell (note 22) pp 355. Part of the colonial project under British rule was the unifying of the island into a singular political entity when throughout most of its known history, there had been numerous kingdoms, most notably the Tamil-dominated Jaffna Kingdom and the Sinhala-dominant Kandy. See: C.R. de Silva, *Sri Lanka: A History* (note 8) pp 91-93; 146-151

²⁴. DeVotta “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam” (note 6) pp 1025.

²⁵. J. Hyndman, “Acts of Aid: Neoliberalism in a War Zone” *Antipode* 41/5, (Nov. 2009): pp 868. Tamil was made an official language under the Thirteenth Amendment of the 1978 Constitution of Sri Lanka in 1988. See: Government of Sri Lanka, “Amendments to the Constitution of Sri Lanka” Nov. 2003. Available online at <<http://www.priu.gov.lk/Cons/1978Constitution/AMENDMENTS.html>>

²⁶. The importance of language to nation-building as been well established by B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). I thank the anonymous *Geopolitics* referee for stressing that the Sinhala-Only campaign represented a critical juncture, but not a beginning to a much older Tamil-Sinhalese conflict.

²⁷. C.R. de Silva, “Sinhala Tamil Ethnic Rivalry” in R. Goldman and A. J. Wilson (eds.) *From Independence to Statehood: Managing Ethnic Conflict in Five African and Asian States* (London: Frances Pinter, 1984) pp 127 – 132.

²⁸. K.M. de Silva, “University Admissions and Ethnic Tensions in Sri Lanka: 1977 – 1982” in R. Goldman and A. J. Wilson (eds.) *From Independence to Statehood* (London: Frances Pinter, 1984) pp 107, the quotation is from note 3.

²⁹. C.R. de Silva, quoted in K.M. de Silva (note 28) pp 100.

³⁰. Between 1946 – 1971 the population nearly doubled, increasing by 6 million. See: N. DeVotta, *Blowback: Linguistic Nationalism, Institutional Decay, and Ethnic Conflict in Sri Lanka* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) pp 134-137; C.R. de Silva, “Sinhala Tamil Ethnic Rivalry” (note 27) pp 127 – 132; K.M. de Silva, (note 28).

³¹. Krishna (note 19) pp 31-59 Jayewardene also established an executive presidency with sweeping powers and assumed the position without election.

³². N. Manoharan, “Counter-Terrorism Legislation in Sri Lanka: Evaluating Efficacy” *Policy Studies #28*, (Washington: East West Centre) available online at <<http://www.eastwestcenter.org/fileadmin/stored/pdfs/PS028.pdf>> pp 11

³³. O’Duffy (note 20), 285 – 286; J. Hyndman, “The Securitization of Fear in Post-Tsunami Sri Lanka” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97/2 (2007) pp 364.

³⁴. DeVotta “The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (note 6), 1028

³⁵. Hyndman “The Securitization of Fear” (note 33) pp 364.

³⁶. Cited in: O. Yiftachel and G. As’ad, “Understanding ‘ethno-cratic’ regimes: the politics of seizing contested territory” *Political Geography* 23/6 (2004) pp 658.

³⁷. C.R. de Silva, *Sri Lanka: A History* (note 18) pp 241

³⁸. The independence period in South Asia saw the initial partition of British India into Pakistan and India in 1947. In 1971 East Pakistan separated from West Pakistan to form Bangladesh in a second partition.

³⁹. Deleuze and Guattari (note 17) pp 302; S. Dalby, cited in G.Ó Tuathail, *Critical Geopolitics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996), pp 180; R.B.J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

- ⁴⁰. Albert (note 17) pp 61.
- ⁴¹. Brighenti (note 16) pp 57; 54.
- ⁴². Deleuze and Guattari (note 17) pp 291.
- ⁴³. Anderson (note 26); Deleuze and Guattari (note 17) pp 508 – 510; Brighenti (note 16) pp 54 – 57.
- ⁴⁴. Wilson (note 18) pp 101 – 102.
- ⁴⁵. Deleuze and Guattari (note 17) pp 302.
- ⁴⁶. J.P. Sharp, *Geographies of Postcolonialism: Spaces of Power and Representation* (London: Sage, 2009); J.D. Sidaway, T. Bunnell and B.S.A. Yeoh, "Editors' Introduction: Geography and Postcolonialism" *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 24/3 (2003) pp 269 – 27; Elden (note 16); Sidaway, (note 11).
- ⁴⁷. Sri Lanka/Tamil Eelam is more than a postcolonial place, it is a postcolonial island as well. Social understandings of islands tends to privilege an imagined uniformity or congruence of both space and place. The idea of a islands as singular, territorially bounded entities on early portolan charts, Steinberg argues, foreshadows the development of Westphalian territorial (land) state. J.D. Sidaway's work on the island of Diego Garcia as a place of sovereign exceptionalism and detention in the GWOT also shows the racialised and colonial presumptions about treatment of islands and island-dwellers as something separate from the non-island world. See: P. Steinberg, "Insularity, Sovereignty and Statehood: The Representation of Islands on Portolan Charts and the Construction of the Territorial State" *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 87/4 (2005) pp 253 – 265; J.D. Sidaway, "'One Island, One Team, One Mission': Geopolitics, Sovereignty, 'Race' and Rendition" *Geopolitics* 15/4 (2010) pp 667 – 683.
- ⁴⁸. See: Gregory (note 13); Elden (note 16); B. Hindess, "Terrortory" *Alternatives* 31/3 (2006) pp 243 – 257.
- ⁴⁹. Elden (note 16) pp 139 - 170
- ⁵⁰. Ibid., pp 150.
- ⁵¹. Hindess (note 48) pp 244 - 246
- ⁵². Ibid., pp 243.
- ⁵³. M. Kleinfeld, "Strategic Troping in Sri Lanka: *September Eleventh* and the Consolidation of Political Position" *Geopolitics* 8/3 (2003) pp 105 – 126.
- ⁵⁴. UNP President Jayewardene is quoted in the Colombo *Daily News* tracing his presidency in the "language of the king" and the Sinhalese people of 2100 years ago in 1987. Cited in Krishna (note 19) pp 40-41.
- ⁵⁵. Dalby, in Toal (note 39) pp 180. See also: S. Dalby, "Geopolitical Discourse: The Soviet Union as Other" *Alternatives* 13/4 (1988) pp 417 – 418 ; S. Dalby, "The 'Kiwi Disease': geopolitical discourse in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the South Pacific" *Political Geography* 12/5 (1993) pp 437-456.
- ⁵⁶. "Sri Lanka Battles Tigers at Sea" *Al Jazeera English* 11 June, 2007. Available online at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFp0bJsgwe4&NR=1>>; DeVotta "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (note 6) pp 1022.
- ⁵⁷. M. Kleinfeld, "Destabilizing the identity-territory nexus: Rights based discourse in Sri Lanka's new political geography" *Geojournal* 64/4 (2005): pp 291-292.
- ⁵⁸. C.R. De Silva *Sri Lanka: A History* (note 18) pp 297-305
- ⁵⁹. DeVotta, "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (note 6) pp 1030, emphasis in original.
- ⁶⁰. A. Shastri, "Sri Lanka in 2002: Turning the Corner?" *Asian Survey* 43/1 (2003) pp 216.
- ⁶¹. Ibid.
- ⁶². Ibid., 217; "Thimpu Declaration" *South Asia Terrorism Portal* July 13, 1985. Available online at <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/shrilanka/document/papers/thimpu_declaration.htm#>
- ⁶³. The LTTE problematically claimed to be the sole legitimate representatives of the Tamil people, which presumes an impossible homogeneity amongst Tamils. This will be explored in greater detail below.
- ⁶⁴. DeVotta "Sri Lanka in 2003" (note 49) pp 50-51
- ⁶⁵. Wickremasinghe was the UNP's presidential candidate in 1999 and lost to Kumaratunga.
- ⁶⁶. N. DeVotta, "Sri Lanka in 2003: Seeking to Consolidate Peace" *Asian Survey* 44/1 (2004) pp 53.
- ⁶⁷. Ibid., 50
- ⁶⁸. S.M.M. Bazeer "1990 , The War Year of Ethnic Cleansing of the Muslims from North and East of Sri Lanka" *Sri Lanka Guardian* August 26, 2008. Available online at <<http://www.srilankaguardian.org/2008/08/1990-war-year-if-ethnic-cleansing-of.html>>

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- ⁶⁹. DeVotta "Sri Lanka in 2003" (note 66) pp 53 – 54.
- ⁷⁰. O'Duffy notes that the branding of the LTTE as a terrorist organisation in the 1990s by India and the United States helped choke millions of dollars in financial support to the LTTE from its supporters in the diaspora. Canada banned the LTTE in 2006, however other important states with Tamil diaspora populations, such as New Zealand and Australia, decided the LTTE was a political organisation and not a terrorist one. See: O'Duffy (note 20), pp 280-281; Matt Brown, "Govt Scrapped Plans to Ban LTTE" *ABC News* June 11, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2009/06/11/2595158.htm>>; M. Kleinfeld, "Strategic Troping in Sri Lanka: *September Eleventh* and the Consolidation of Political Position" (note 53).
- ⁷¹. C.R. de Silva, "Sri Lanka in 2006: Unresolved Political and Ethnic Conflicts amid Economic Crisis" *Asian Survey* 41/1 (2007) pp 100.
- ⁷². I am grateful to Jennifer Hyndman for clarifying this point
- ⁷³. Kleinfeld, "Strategic Troping in Sri Lanka: *September Eleventh* and the Consolidation of Political Position" (note 53) pp 117 – 120.
- ⁷⁴. S. Chandrasekharan, "Sri Lanka: SLFP-JVP Agreement Supping With the Devil" *South Asia Analysis Group* available online at <<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/notes3/note211.html>>
- ⁷⁵. K. Naji, "New blow for Sri Lankan peace pact" *CNN.com* January 20, 2004. Available online at <<http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/asiapcf/01/20/slanka.peace/>>
- ⁷⁶. Ibid.
- ⁷⁷. J. Uyangoda "Sri Lanka in 2009" *Asian Survey* 50/1 (2010) pp 104-111; C.R. de Silva "Sri Lanka in 2006: Unresolved Political and Ethnic Conflicts amid Economic Crisis" (note 71).
- ⁷⁸. C.R. de Silva "Sri Lanka in 2006: Unresolved Political and Ethnic Conflicts amid Economic Crisis" (note 71) pp 102.
- ⁷⁹. V. Prabhakaran, "Maha Veerar Naal Address" November 27, 2001. Available online at <<http://tamilnation.co/ltte/vp/mahaveerar/vp01.htm>>
- ⁸⁰. Kleinfeld, "Strategic Troping in Sri Lanka: *September Eleventh* and the Consolidation of Political Position" (note 53) pp 113-114.
- ⁸¹. Hindess (note 48) pp 250-251.
- ⁸². O'Duffy (note 20), pp 280-281.
- ⁸³. S. Sengupta, "Take Aid from China and take a Pass on Human Rights" *New York Times* March 9, 2008. Available online at <<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/09/weekinreview/09sengupta.html>>; H. Gardner, "China's Aid revealed in Sri Lanka's Victory Parade" *The National* June 9, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.thenational.ae/news/worldwide/south-asia/chinas-aid-revealed-in-sri-lankas-victory-parade?pageCount=0>>
- ⁸⁴. Gardner (note 83); S.T. Wezeman, "Arms Transfers to Asia and Oceania" *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute Background Paper* (Stockholm, 2009) available online at <<http://books.sipri.org/files/misc/SIPRI0910a.pdf>>
- ⁸⁵. Wezeman (note 84); J.W. Garver, "Chinese-Indian Rivalry in Indochina" *Asian Survey* 27/11 (1987) pp 1211 – 1212; J.W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the 20th Century* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2001) pp 9.
- ⁸⁶. T. Lum, "US Foreign Aid to East and South Asia: Select Recipients" *Congressional Research Service* Oct. 8, 2008 available online at <<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL31362.pdf>> pp 34-36.; US Department of State, "Amendment to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations: Sri Lanka" *Federal Registrar* 73/57: pp 2 available online at <<http://www.pmdtc.state.gov/FR/2008/73FR15409.pdf>>.
- ⁸⁷. China faces threats to its sovereign singularity from the regions of Tibet, Xianjiang, and Taiwan. The existence of the Tibetan government-in-exile has been a consistent point of contention between China and India.
- ⁸⁸. T. Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); A. Wachman, *Why Taiwan? Geostategic Rationales for China's Territorial Integrity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).
- ⁸⁹. The use of UN Security Council Veto and China's staunch anti-secessionist position internationally has been pivotal in winning lucrative resource contracts in Myanmar as well. See A. Parasram, "Orbits of Influence: The Sino-Indian Waltz in South/Southeast Asian New Regionalism" in H. Cao and J. Paltiel (eds.) *China in the 21st*

Century: Domestic and International Dynamics from a Multidisciplinary Angle (Ottawa: Ottawa University Press, forthcoming 2012); Gardner (note 83); Sengupta (note 83).

⁹⁰. Though India has been an important source of support for Colombo, the intensity with which Colombo attacked Tamil populations in 2006-2009 limited India's overt support because of the large concentration of Tamils in India, particularly in the southernmost province of "Tamil Nadu." India was in general elections in 2009, and Tamil Nadu is a swing state. Nevertheless, India is ever watchful of the spread of Chinese influence amongst the smaller states of the region, and did boost its bilateral support to Colombo by nearly 500 million in 2008.

⁹¹. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, "Yekaterinburg Declaration of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation" June 16, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.sectsco.org/EN/show.asp?id=87>>

⁹². "Charter of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation" May 7, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.sectsco.org/EN/show.asp?id=69>>. SCO also engages Pakistan, India, and Iran as "observer states" and Belarus as another "dialogue partner."

⁹³. A. Jayasinghe, "Key Nations Shun Sri Lanka's Terrorism Seminar" *Agence-France Presse* May 30, 2011. Available online at <<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/key-nations-shun-sri-lankas-terrorism-seminar-144045277.html>>

⁹⁴. Sengupta (note 83).

⁹⁵. "Rajapaksa makes victory speech, hails LTTE defeat" *CNN-IBN* May 19, 2009. Available online at <<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/rajapaksa-makes-victory-speech-hails-ltte-defeat/92920-2.html>>

⁹⁶. United Nations, "The Report of the Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka" March 31, 2011. Available online at <http://www.un.org/News/dh/infocus/Sri_Lanka/POE_Report_Full.pdf>

⁹⁷. Ibid.

⁹⁸. Ibid.; "Red Cross Worker killed in Sri Lanka Shelling" *The Independent* May 13, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/red-cross-worker-killed-in-sri-lanka-shelling-1684210.html>>

⁹⁹. "Sri Lanka Army Claims Control of Rebel Territory" *Al Jazeera English* January 26, 2009 available online at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=brMeGyyt8ow&NR=1>>

¹⁰⁰. Ibid.

¹⁰¹. Embassy of Sri Lanka, "Sri Lanka's Ambassador notes President Rajapaksa's electoral popularity and the end of terrorism" May 7, 2009. Available online at <http://slembassyusa.org/embassy_press_releases/sri-lankas-ambassador-notes-president-rajapaksas-electoral-popularity-and-the-end-of-terrorism/>

¹⁰². Uyangoda (note 77) pp 107-108; ELDEN (note 16) pp 171 - 178

¹⁰³. United Nations (note 96); "Sri Lanka warns Western sanctions can stoke ethnic conflict" *Agence-France Presse* May 29, 2008. Available online at <<http://reliefweb.int/node/268261>>

¹⁰⁴. Ibid.

¹⁰⁵. "We Want to Capture LTTE Chief Alive: Rajapaksa CNN-IBN" *LankaJournal Newspaper* April 29th, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.lankajournal.com/?p=836>>

¹⁰⁶. "First Visuals of Prabhakaran's Body" *Times India* May 19, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EaSL7XinAvk>>; "Tamil Tigers Confirm Leader's Death" *Al Jazeera* May 25, 2009. Available online at <<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/asia/2009/05/2009524124042406562.html>>; M.

Wade, "Scrutiny Calls on Tamil 'bloodbath'" *The Age* May 21, 2009. Available online at <<http://www.theage.com.au/world/scrutiny-calls-on-tamil-bloodbath-20090520-bfnm.html>>

¹⁰⁷. DeVotta, "The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam" (note 6) pp 1047-1048; "Plan to resettle Tamil IDPs in the midst of Army and Sinhala Settlements" (note 6)

¹⁰⁸. Ministry of Defence and Urban Development Sri Lanka, "Freedom Speaks" available online <<http://www.defence.lk/english.asp>>

¹⁰⁹. K. Bhattacharjee, "I fought India's War" *The Week* June 7, 2009. Available online at: <<http://www.hvk.org/articles/0609/75.html>>

¹¹⁰. "After the Slaughter: Tamil Tigers Contemplate Life without Prabhakaran" (note 4).

¹¹¹. J. Agnew (note 16) pp 781

¹¹². See Murphy (note 2); McConnell (note 2); Agnew (note 9 and 16) Elden (note 16).

¹¹³. N. Javed, "Toronto Tamils vote on transnational Tamil government to gain voice" *Toronto Star* April 28, 2010. Available online at <<http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/article/801993--toronto-tamils-vote-on-transnational-government-to-gain-voice>>