

## **From Victor's Peace to Negotiated Peace; Prospects and Challenges of Ethnic Reconciliation in Post War Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

In 2009, the zero-sum ending of the civil war between Government of Sri Lanka(GoSL) and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam(LTTE) in which the former had emerged victorious upon the all-out military defeat of the latter, has had spelled out the likely kind of peace that could be evident in the aftermath of the war(Hoglund;Orjuela). One of the salient condition of the peace emerged during this period of time had been negative peace of which the victor of the civil war-GoSL- attempted to preserve it intact by giving low profile to the issues of ethnic reconciliation and power sharing whereby the emergent negative peace could have been turned into positive peace. Consequently, the so called victor's peace while bolstered the hands of GoSL to an extent in which the victor was able to arbitrarily dictate the terms of the post war peace, put GoSL in a more dominant position in dealing with ethnic and political affairs of the country. In this context, the paper sheds light on certain issues that characterize the above phenomenon to be reckoned as a problem worthy of systematic enquiry. The data gathered were refined through the process of sorting out and classification. The results of the data analysis reveal the following findings; zero-sum ending of the civil war has had created circumstances and opportunities for both victor peace and negotiated peace simultaneously and yet unable and unwilling positions maintained by Tamil leadership and GoSL respectively led to the loss of opportunity from being seized; There has appeared great chances for making victor's peace a negotiated peace whereby effecting sustainable ethnic reconciliation with the change of regime early this year. Equally, despite, there are challenges and obstacles in the way of making dawn of negotiated peace as well. These challenges and obstacles come from two different fronts namely those who want to preserve the status quo (members and supporters of previous regime), and those who want to change prevailing kind and condition of peace (this constitutes both members and supporters of the current regime and the Tamil leadership). To elaborate further, the challenge from the second front mainly involves the mutual stand and position held by both the current regime and Tamil leadership. In conclusion, it can be argued that the zero-sum ending of the civil war has had only created a condition of absence of violence related to ethnic crisis which in turn tended to discourage GoSL from engaging itself with the exercise of post war reconciliation and power sharing with Tamils. Hence, it is imperative to turn the prevailing condition of peace (victor's peace) into negotiated one in order to secure the non-recurrence of ethnic violence in the country.

**Key words:** Victor's Peace, Negotiated Peace, GoSL, LTTE, Zero-Sum Outcome, Ethnic Conflict

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