

Article

Children: The new face of terrorism

David H. Gray¹ and Tom Owen Matchin III²

¹Department of Government and History, Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, NC 28301

²Diplomacy Department Norwich University Northfield VT 05663-0367

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This study explores the use of children as terrorists and the organizational structure of one of the world's most feared terrorist groups - Hamas. Specifically, this paper will examine child terrorists within the terrorist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka by first developing a base understanding of what is considered a child terrorist, examining the ongoing situation and conflict in Sri Lanka, the reasons children are being used in Sri Lanka, how Sri Lanka child soldiers are recruited, trained and indoctrinated, and finally the policies and international law enacted to combat the continued use of children in terrorist organizations.

Key words: Terrorism, children, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), counterterrorism, political violence.

INTRODUCTION

"If there is any lesson that we can draw from the experience of the past decade, it is that the use of child soldiers is far more than a humanitarian concern; that its impact lasts far beyond the time of actual fighting; and that the scope of the problem vastly exceeds the numbers of children directly involved".

- Kofi Annan - former UN Secretary General

The images are everywhere. Movies, the media, online websites such as You Tube, magazines and documentaries portray an all too common picture around the world today: child soldiers and child terrorists. Seemingly glorified at times, child terrorists introduce a new threat to the War on Terrorism and are helping undermine the success of many governments attempting to thwart terrorism and rid it from their borders. Governments and counter terrorist organizations are having a difficult time confronting the new threat of child terrorists. Child soldiers are not a new phenomenon. They have existed for centuries and have participated in numerous conflicts in every corner of the globe; but in a world brought together by improved and interconnected technology we are able to witness, usually within seconds, the atrocities that can take place when child soldiers and terrorists are recruited, conscripted and kidnapped into rebel armies and terrorist groups. Areas such as Africa, the Middle East

and South East Asia have witnessed a steady increase of young children joining the ranks of terror and executing horrendous acts of violence. This paper will examine the lost innocence of child terrorists within the terrorist group Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka by first developing a base understanding of what is considered a child terrorist, examining the ongoing situation and conflict in Sri Lanka, the reasons children are being used in Sri Lanka, how Sri Lanka child soldiers are recruited, trained and indoctrinated, and finally the policies and international law enacted to combat the continued use of children in terrorist organizations.

What is a child terrorist / soldier?

In order to understand the significance of the events occurring in Sri Lanka it is necessary to provide a basic awareness of what most consider child soldiers. What is a child soldier? The answer according to the International Coalition to Stop the Use of Children as Soldiers (CSC) is "any person under 18 years of age who is a member of, or attached to, government armed forces or any other regular or irregular armed force or group, whether or not an armed conflict exists. They may perform a range of tasks, including participation in combat, logistical and support functions, and domestic and sexual services" (Peters, 2005). There should be no debate on the definition of a child soldier, nor should the practice continue to exist today. Unfortunately, the use of children as soldiers and terrorists is a commonly used practice

*Corresponding author. E-mail: dgray2@uncfsu.edu. Tel: +910-672-2120

that threatens the future of millions of children and young adults in some of the most desolate and poverty stricken areas of the world. So just how many child soldiers exist in the world today? Some reports estimate that "300,000 children under 18 years of age are recruited and used by armies and armed groups in violent conflicts in almost 30 countries worldwide" (Peters, 2005). Even to cut this number in half still illustrates a major humanitarian crisis facing the international community. Even more daunting, "six million more children have been disabled or seriously injured in wars over the last decade, and one million children have been orphaned" (Singer, 2006). The implications of child soldiers and terrorists for the long term and future security of many states is great. Child terrorists, whether eight years old or eighteen years old, can degrade a state's military and governmental capabilities as well as civilian moral to astonishing lows, as we will examine in Sri Lanka. As long as poverty, religious indifference, inequality and ethnic hatred continue to exist, the harder it will be to solve the flood of children joining the ranks of terrorists and armed groups in numerous areas around the world. Simultaneously, the question over where childhood and adulthood begins and ends continues to play out in the international community. Luckily, there exist several key international organizations and treaties that have attempted to define the appropriate age range of a child and the rights and protection of all children, while also attempting to resolve the issue of criminal culpability of those children who commit heinous and unspeakable crimes and destruction. Sri Lanka, home to what many consider the most lethal and successful terrorist organization in the world, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), has been subject to a civil war that has lasted almost three decades. Sadly, children in Sri Lanka have been both the victims and combatants in a war that seems far from ending.

The children's war

The persistent civil war between the Sinhalese majority and Tamil minority in Sri Lanka has been an ethnic conflict that has been an ongoing event since 1983. Initially peaceful and nonviolent, the Tamil minority sought equality from the Sinhalese majority, eventually desiring a separate and independent state in which to live peacefully and free from discrimination from the Sinhalese run government. Naturally, as the nonviolent separatist movement failed to yield the results desired by the Tamil minority, peace turned to violence and the formation of the most lethal and famous terrorist organization was formed, the LTTE. The founding members of the LTTE strongly "believed that there was no non-violent way to achieve what they perceived to be justice for Tamils" and that was a separate state (De Silva, 2001). To this date, a separate state has not been achieved and instead a "harrowing battle between Hindu Tamils seeking a separate, independent state and the ruling Buddhist Sinhala

government has claimed the lives of over sixty thousand civilians and displaced an estimated six hundred thousand from their homes since 1983" (Briggs, 2005). Negotiations and attempts to broker a peace deal between the LTTE and the ruling government have been attempted numerous times; nothing has yielded results bringing Sri Lanka any closer to peace. Attempts to grant regional autonomy to Tamils through the help of India and Norway has insistently been met with stern negative overtures by the LTTE. As the desire for independence from the Sinhala government continues to dominate the strategy of the LTTE, compromise seems dead. The recent recognition of the independence of Kosovo from Serbia could acerbate and embolden groups such as the LTTE to remain true and steadfast to their goals of independence. Claims to be freedom fighters rather than terrorists fill the air of propaganda for Tamils located in Sri Lanka and those living around the world. As one member of the LTTE remarked during an interview with a reporter concerning membership in the LTTE, "the LTTE succeeds because this is the people's base movement, movement with the people's support. In the course of participating in the struggle, some militants prefer to commit themselves to be a member of the Tigers. This is the manifestation of the highly motivated commitment to sacrifice their life for the liberation of Tamil Eelam" (Briggs, 2005). The LTTE has been largely successful in waging war against the Sri Lanka government as the government now "spends between 5 and 6 percent of GDP on the war with the LTTE, and the security forces have been expanded from 10,000 in 1983 to 120,000 today" (De Silva, 2001). As if the draining of the government's purse was not enough, the LTTE has mastered the suicide bomb attack and the recruitment of Tamil child soldiers waging a "hugely successful campaign employing conventional warfare, guerilla hit and run attacks, and suicide bombings-even though they are vastly outnumbered by the government's forces" (Briggs, 2005). As the conflict within Sri Lanka continues and man power is depleted, the utilization of child soldiers and the recruitment of children continues to be a vital part of the LTTE strategy with the conflict nowhere close to ending. The LTTE began "using children in the nine to twelve range after it faced a manpower shortage in battles against the Indian peacekeeping force in the 1980s and could not pull in enough adults because it had lost local support" (Singer, 2006).

The utilization of child soldiers in Sri Lanka by the LTTE has created a wealth of international attention and criticism from humanitarian organizations, the United Nations and numerous other states. Simultaneously, reports that the Sri Lanka government has committed unspeakable atrocities such as kidnap and murder against Tamil youth has also created a wave of backlash and renewed attention to the area. The horrific tsunami disaster that hit Sri Lanka in 2004 could have brought together the Tamil and Sinhalese populations and unified them, unfortunately

that failed to happen. Instead fighting has continued, and recruitment of children has not decreased, rather the LTTE have recruited and sought out orphaned children from this disaster. The LTTE is an evolving organization that seeks different ways to organize its organization establishing the LTTE Bakuts, which is a "unit known as the 'Baby Brigade' made up of fighters sixteen and under. Estimates indicate that between 40 and 60 percent of its fighting forces are recruited below the age of eighteen, mostly in the ten- to sixteen-year old range" (Singer, 2006). Not exempt from the LTTE are child female soldiers who are relied upon largely to conduct suicide attacks as well as units created entirely out of orphans known as the elite Sirasu Puli (Leopard Brigade). The LTTE has utilized child soldiers very effectively to carry out numerous missions as well as in their overall strategy in the creation of their own independent state. As they continue to recruit and utilize children in carrying out attacks, particularly suicide attacks and numerous other activities, what are the underlying reasons children and young adults have become members of the LTTE? Were there socioeconomic conditions that paved the way for easy recruitment? These are two questions the article seeks to answer.

Why child soldiers in Sri Lanka?

There are many throughout the international community who are seeking to answer the question of why children join armed rebel groups and terrorist organizations. In order to prevent children from joining these organizations we must seek to understand the underlying reasons why they join, otherwise the international community will continue to face an uphill battle confronting increasingly more dangerous child soldiers. Sri Lanka is often used as an example in many debates as children have become key players in the LTTE strategy along with the numerous atrocities such as kidnapping and murder committed by the Sri Lankan government. In the beginning, children or young adults joined the LTTE "out of altruistic reasons to save their group identify from being eclipsed. In time however, the older youths matured enough to become disillusioned with the way the struggle was being directed" (Somasundaram, 2002). Tamil youths have consistently been the target of harassment from the Sinhala government who have sought for decades to demoralize the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka. The institutionalized violence such as "shelling, helicopter strafing, round ups, cordon and search operations, deaths, injury, destruction, mass arrests, detention, shootings, grenade explosions, and landmines" has only emboldened children as well as young adults to fight back (Somasundaram, 2002). The psychological effect that all of these events can have on a child is insurmountable. Children seek protection when

in danger, and the LTTE through persuasive propaganda has helped create an environment where children feel safe against the attacks by Sinhala security forces. Furthermore, the "Tamil youths have been specifically targeted by Sinhala security forces in their checking, cordon and search operations, and they are often detained for interrogation, torture, execution, or even rape. During the so called 'Operation Liberation' in 1987, youths were either summarily shot or shipped off en masse in chains to the Booza camp in the south by the army" (Somasundaram, 2002). It is no wonder, after examining the actions and attacks by the Sinhala government and security forces, that for almost the past three decades children would choose to join the ranks of groups such as the LTTE. The immaturity levels of most children between the ages of nine to sixteen is significant and helps cement the idea to join a group such as the LTTE after enduring harassment or witnessing the maiming or killing of friends and family. These examples illustrated the voluntary recruitment of child soldiers into the LTTE and essentially the unintended consequences or actions by the Sri Lankan government towards the Tamil Minority. There exist other variables many of which are socioeconomic in explaining the reasons why young children are drawn to a life as a child soldier or terrorist.

Many observations have concluded that child soldiers are "drawn from the poorest, least educated, and most marginalized sections of society who have been forced to grow up in a 'roving orphanage of blood and flame'" (Singer, 2006). Children who are living on the street, who have been orphaned or displaced as well as refugees, are all easily recruited and often times forced into organizations such as the LTTE. "Especially at risk are children living in conflict zones and garrison towns, children from particular ethnic, racial or religious groups, and former child soldiers" (Peters, 2005). All of these high risk examples are currently present within Sri Lanka with the majority existing within the parts of the country where the Tamil minority resides. The belief system that joining any organization to evade being poor, hungry and even scared has helped draw many children into the arms of the LTTE. "Research on child development indicates that they will be more likely to seek out and join armed groups that provide protection or adhere to ideologies that provide a sense of order, often regardless of the content" (Singer, 2006). The ongoing situation in Sri Lanka only exacerbates the child soldier dilemma and ensures that child soldiers will continue to be a presence within the LTTE. The economic conditions in Sri Lanka for some have left no choice but to fight. According to the Sri Lanka Labor Force Survey taken in 2002, "among young people between the age of 15 to 24, 23.8% of males and 34% for females are unemployed" (Rosen, 2005). One can only imagine the increased economic deprivation

since 2002 to now, 2008. The lack of opportunity in securing a job has driven many to the arms of terrorism and militancy. Some statistics show that as many as 5,794 children have been recruited by the LTTE since 2001, and realistically that number has tripled since the start of the conflict in 1983 (Rosen, 2005). As noted earlier, declines in adult recruitment have created the need for the LTTE to forcibly recruit as well as kidnap children in order to fill the necessary voids left open. Past conflicts with India and continued fighting against government forces in Sri Lanka have only emboldened the need for the LTTE to increase the number of child soldiers in their ranks.

To attempt to reverse the continued trend of child soldiers in Sri Lanka will require a substantive amount of governmental reforms to improve the poverty levels and economic situation for all of Sri Lanka both for the Minority Tamils and the Majority Sinhalese. Whether this can happen will be a challenge to both groups. Though there exists underlying causes for why children join terrorist groups, how have LTTE child soldiers been recruited, trained and indoctrinated? Why has the LTTE been so successful in obtaining Child Soldiers?

Recruitment, indoctrination and training

Children in general are innocently gullible to the ways of the world and society, making the recruitment of children very easy. The ability to utilize simple forms of propaganda in order to effectively recruit either forcibly or voluntarily has made the LTTE very successful in their ability to increase the number of child soldiers they have. Some have suggested that the LTTE actually has a computer program and database that helps them identify potential recruits as well as areas where their propaganda would be easily received. Similar to recruiting operations in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, "parents within LTTE controlled zones who lose a child are treated with special status as 'great hero families.' They pay no taxes, receive job preferences and are allocated special seats at all public events" (Singer, 2006). In an area already struggling with unemployment and harsh economic conditions, this form of recruitment almost encourages parents to force their children into joining the LTTE in order to move up the social ladder *per se*. Unfortunately in this part of the world, desperation can lead to decisions parents normally would never make, but are forced to in order to survive. The LTTE also promises materialistic items or goals in order to recruit children into their organization. The promise that they will learn how to drive vehicles or motorcycles is one way the LTTE has utilized the wants and desires all children dream about at young ages to their benefit. Another bountiful place for recruitment is within the education system. "LTTE recruiters would visit schools and screen films of the government's depredations and their own successful attacks (teachers risk death if they try to prevent this access). They boss

teachers around and force school bands to play at funerals for the dead of the group" (Singer, 2006). Another method is to show off well dressed child soldiers who have new uniforms, boots and medals sparking a sense of jealousy among children not participating in the group and helps solidify their decision to join. These are a few different ways the LTTE and other terrorist and rebel groups recruit children into their organizations. Creative methods and promises will always entice children in joining the LTTE, especially if the economic and social conditions fail to improve. International organizations and state governments will try to dissuade children from joining terrorist groups, however if they are unable to deliver similar enticements, children will fail to be persuaded not to join terrorist groups. Recruitment is the first step. Indoctrination of a child soldier is the second.

"Indoctrination is the act of imbuing a child with a new worldview of a soldier" (Peters, 2005). Children recruited into organizations such as the LTTE must be indoctrinated into the ways of the terrorist group in order to be an effective member. Forcing children to witness horrific videos over and over, displaying propaganda throughout training camps, and forcing children to swear allegiance to the organization repeatedly throughout the day and night are just some examples. This type of indoctrination is not just present in terrorists and rebel groups. State armies throughout the world incorporate similar methods for their soldiers. The difference for many state operated armies and militaries is that the propaganda or indoctrination methods are peaceful and positive in nature, enforcing camaraderie and allegiance to the country, not killing and discrimination. An example used by the LTTE is that "young recruits are continually taught that those outside the cause are enemies and should be killed. They are shown videos of dead women and children. This inures them to violence as well as creates a sense of righteousness in targeting outsiders, as the children are told the group's enemies did it" (Singer, 2006). Repeated visitations to videos and discussions such as this only promote violence and create an obsession for violence and killing within the child. It is this obsession of violence within the mindset of child soldiers that makes reintegration into society increasingly difficult. Branding is another method that displays allegiance to the organization and makes an almost permanent reminder of the indoctrination process and membership of a terrorist organization like the LTTE. The LTTE uses a significant trademark for their members, to include children, in which they must, "wear a cyanide capsule around their neck to bite if captured so that they will tell no tales even under torture" (De Silva, 2001). Most of the time, these capsules are given at the conclusion of their training phase during an elaborate ceremony inducting them into the LTTE. Once recruitment and indoctrination are complete, the third and most important step is started; the training of children into lethal and formidable soldiers. As one of the most lethal terrorist groups in the world, the LTTE "may have the

most developed child soldier training programs, mimicking many of the drill techniques used by professional militaries. It was designed in the early 1990's to make the LTTE's child soldiers more capable and daring than its adult fighters had been" (Singer, 2006). Child Soldiers are taken to the jungle where for four months they are broken down and trained back up to the standards and desires of the LTTE, waking at 5am to start the day with political indoctrination, followed by intense days of learning drill and ceremonies, small unit tactics, learning how to make and emplace explosives, and normal soldier weapon proficiency and qualification. Most child soldiers throughout the world utilize the AK-47 as the personal weapon of choice as it is smaller and easier to fire than an M16A2 as an example. They are also trained on the use of the Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) as it too is easy to handle and fire for child soldiers. The grueling four month time frame spent in the jungle is also designed to separate the child soldier from memories of home and instead alter their frame of mind and mental state to the needs and propaganda of the LTTE. All the training programs developed by the LTTE ultimately lead to successes against the Sri Lankan security forces and government. The deployment of child soldiers in attacks has proved shocking to the Sri Lankan government. The LTTE first deployed child soldiers in early 1990 on an attack at a Sri Lankan army camp in Mankulam. "The attack was initiated by a suicide bomber driving a truck through the gate just before dawn, followed by a barrage of mortars, RPGs, and machine guns. Waves of child LTTE soldiers then followed and captured the fort by mid-afternoon" (Singer, 2006). If there was any doubt or question that child soldiers were incapable of holding their own as formidable soldiers, this one example is proof that they are in fact a force to be reckoned with on the battlefields of Sri Lanka. It is without a doubt that child soldiers will continue to be utilized by the LTTE. Fortunately there exist numerous international organizations, protocols, and conventions that are seeking to reverse the growing trend of using child soldiers. The international community is providing increased attention to this problem and with the use of organizations and international law along with policies geared to preventing and helping ex-child soldiers, the future might be more positive for children stuck in quagmires around the world.

International law and policies

There exist numerous international laws that condemn and prohibit the use of children in combat. Intended to stop this practice and hold states accountable for their actions, international laws and protocols have one major problem: you can choose to follow them or you can choose to ignore them. Unfortunately for the practice of

child soldiers in rebel and terrorist groups around the world, these organizations are not states, are not signatories to any of the international laws concerning child soldiers, and therefore make it extremely difficult to halt the use of child soldiers from an international law perspective. The following are international laws which have been enacted to protect children as well as provide consequences for those states that engage in such activities: 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1949 Geneva Conventions, 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 1966 UN Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1969 American Convention on Human Rights, 1977 Additional protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, 1981 African Charter on Human and People's rights, 1984 Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the 1990 OAU African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Peters, 2005). This laundry list of international laws is an outstanding display of concern for the rights of Children as well as their right to grow up free from participating in armed conflicts as child soldiers. More recently the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has attempted to provide more specific definitions of the age of enlistment of children under 15, establishing war crimes for the forcible recruitment of children under 18 by non state actors and has conducted investigations into crimes where soldiers were recruited and used in combat. "The court has jurisdiction over the use of child soldiers in both international and non-international armed conflicts" (Singer, 2006). However when powerful countries such as the United States fail to sign on to statutes such as the Rome Statute of the ICC, the significance of the statute is severely weakened. The question remains, with all the international laws and protocols created to protect children from becoming child soldiers and child terrorists, why does it continue? The tools provided by these international laws are critically important, however, as mentioned earlier, non-state entities such as the LTTE are not bound by the rules set forth by such laws. The international system is set up in such a way that war crimes committed by non-state actors are rarely prosecuted or have become difficult to prosecute. "The competing political agendas of humanitarian groups, sovereign states, and the United Nations have created a global politics of age, of which the child soldier issue is only one part. In the case of child soldiers, the result is pitched battles over the legal age of recruitment and use of soldiers; the ideological and political manipulation of the concepts of childhood, youth, and adulthood; and fierce partisanship over who should be considered a child soldier" (Rosen, 2005). The good

news is that the war crimes tribunal in Sierra Leone is attempting to prosecute those former leaders who recruited and used child soldiers in order to establish the criminality of the practice and the consequences that could follow. With the political battles being waged over child soldiers, who can truly help? It appears that state governments and international institutions are limited or have acted selfishly in solving this crisis. Limited funding is set aside to combat this problem each year, and not until 2003 did the United States invest towards solving this crisis with a donation of \$13 million (Singer, 2006). Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and numerous humanitarian organizations might be the best help in providing funding and proper policy implementation towards eliminating the causes and existence of child soldiers. However throwing money at a problem never fixes it. In the case of Sri Lanka and the LTTE, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has conducted numerous meetings and received numerous pledges from the LTTE to stop the recruitment of soldiers. After pledging not to recruit child soldiers, UNICEF still received over 1,500 complaints of child soldier recruitment continuing to occur by the LTTE.

A practice more challenging and controversial in the realm of child soldiers is governments and state armies fighting child soldiers. A 17-year old child soldier killed the first US Army Soldier to die in Afghanistan. When does protection of children who are active members of terrorist groups or armed rebel groups killing governmental security forces end? Do soldiers fighting in conflicts stop shooting when it appears to be a child soldier? These questions are critical to be answered by governments, particularly the United States military. The phrase, "Kill or be killed" is a serious and practical truth for those engaged in armed conflicts. As we have discussed there are numerous international laws and conventions that protect children from the aspects of war, however when are children treated as combatants rather than non-combatants? The answer might be harsh and hard to hear. As governments such as Sri Lanka or the US, for example, find themselves in a combat with a child soldier, is the answer don't shoot because they are children, even though these children will respond with any and all means necessary to kill? Unfortunately the answer is that a combatant is a combatant and once you are fired upon you should take all means appropriate to ensure your survival. There are those that would find this harsh and others that would agree. Regardless of the answer, it is imperative that armies and government security forces train their soldiers to understand the reality that child soldiers will try to kill them and the proper procedures in responding both physically and mentally. As the problem grows worse in some areas of the world, the likelihood that governmental forces will be met with child soldiers

also increases.

So what is next? What can be done to curb the growing problem of child soldiers, particularly in Sri Lanka? There are several ideas that could possibly work. Though money is necessary for NGO's and humanitarian agencies to combat and confront areas where children are more at risk, governments, along with these agencies, need to fight fire with fire. One of the main recruiting tools used by the LTTE and other terrorist groups is propaganda. Governments need to be as resourceful and creative as terrorist organizations in keeping children from wanting to join the ranks of terrorists. Provide youth outreach programs and centers that attempt to draw children, especially young adults, from the apparent necessity to revert to terrorist and rebel activities. In a perfect world, Sri Lanka would be free from economic deprivation and social challenges; however this is not the case. It will take an extensive amount of time and investment within the government to make true change. As long as the Tamil minority is treated as second class citizens, the more intense the desire to separate and create their own state will prevail. The Sri Lankan people have grown weary of the civil war that has raged across their homeland for almost three decades, and the time has come to reconcile and compromise to bring peace. However if a tsunami disaster can not bring peace to the country by bringing people together for the common good, then I am not sure what will. For child soldiers that are rescued and provided a place for rehabilitation, more must be done. Increased financial donations are needed to ensure that the proper care is given to these child soldiers after they depart from a corrupt and dangerous livelihood. More shelters need to be built, however they need to be built in secure areas where the threat from reprisal from local citizens as well as former group members is nonexistent. A better recommendation would be for states such as the United States and Europe to open their doors so that child soldiers from Sri Lanka and Africa can be rehabilitated in a safe and proper environment with opportunities that will help them succeed upon completion of their rehabilitation. The international community can and should do more. Not by passing more international laws and protocols, not by throwing money at the problem, but by coming up with proactive and real solutions that will help those no longer wishing to fight as child soldiers and those that are teetering on the edge of joining terrorist groups such as the LTTE.

The issue of child soldiers and child terrorists is not going away. In fact the reality is that the problem is only increasing and will continue to disrupt the lives of thousands of children and their families. By developing a base of understanding of what is considered a child terrorist, examining the ongoing situation and conflict in Sri Lanka, the reasons children are being used in Sri Lanka, how Sri

Lanka child soldiers are recruited, trained and indoctrinated, and finally the policies and international laws enacted to combat the continued use of children in terrorist organizations, we have been able to formulate some ideas that might help curb the increasing problem of children being used as soldiers and terrorists. Powerful countries such as the United States need to do more, but so do the governments such as Sri Lanka where this problem is an everyday occurrence. More can and should be done to stop this. The future security of many regions of the world will depend upon the successful elimination of child soldiers and terrorists. As one prior 13-year old child soldier stated, "It's a good start to write documents and stuff, but its time to stop theorizing and start doing work to end this" (Singer, 2006).

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