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1. Live tweeting from the [@AtlanticCouncil](#) event on foreign intervention in [#srilanka](#) with [@SolheimDAC](#) and [@marsal61](#)

Foreign Intervention in South Asia: A Case Study from Sri Lanka

Thursday, January 14, 2016
3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Atlantic Council Headquarters

Speaker Bios



Mark Salter is a writer, researcher, and consultant. While Salter is a teacher and BBC journalist by training, over the last twenty-five years, he has worked in a wide range of professional settings including international nongovernmental organizations, research institutes, and intergovernmental organizations. Salter's work focuses on issues of democracy, conflict, reconciliation, and diversity management. For ten years he served as a senior staff member of International IDEA, an IGO supporting democratic consolidation around the world. He was centrally involved in policy and advocacy initiatives with a wide range of organizations including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Salter recently authored *To End a Civil War*, a book that tells the story of Norway's mediation effort in Sri Lanka during the country's decades' long civil war.



Erik Solheim took the lead of the main body of world donors, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), in January 2013. Since becoming Chair, he has emphasized reform of the Official Development Assistance, focusing more assistance to the least developed countries. Solheim also serves as the United Nations Environment Programme's Special Envoy for Environment, Conflict, and Disaster. Prior to his current post, Solheim served as Norway's Minister of the Environment of International Development and as Minister of International Development. He has played a pivotal role for climate and the environment. Solheim established the UN REDD, a global coalition to conserve the world's rain forests. As such, he is the recipient of many awards, including the UNEP's "Champion of Earth" Award.



Richard L. Armitage is the President of Armitage International, L.C. and a former US Deputy Secretary of State (2001–05). Prior to returning to government service in 2001, Armitage was President of Armitage Associates, L.C. from 1999 until 2001. From 1989-93, Armitage served in various high level diplomatic positions, including as a Special Emissary to Jordan's King Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War and as Director of US Assistance to the new independent states of the former Soviet Union. Prior to this, Armitage served in the Pentagon as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (1983-89) and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and Pacific Affairs (1981-83). Armitage first visited Sri Lanka in 1981 and continues to maintain his long-standing relationship with the people and country of Sri Lanka. Armitage graduated in 1967 from the US Naval Academy and served three combat tours in Vietnam. He is the recipient of numerous US and foreign military decorations as well as awards for distinguished public service.

Panel begins [@AtlanticCouncil](#) with Bharath Gopalswamy



- BP: Intl involvement in [#srilanka](#) faced challenges, from lack of local support to questions of sovereignty
- **Mark Salter** begins remarks with an excerpt from his book, reflecting on visiting LTTE leader Pirabakaran's bunker. **He** speaks of Army's decision to blow up Pirabakaran's bunker, once visited by tourists
- [@marsal61](#) gives credit to Richard Armitage for working to get U.S. to talk to "terrorists", which was absolutely needed at the time
- [@marsal61](#) [#srilanka](#) failed to secure bipartisan support among Sinhala parties for peace process. And Norway did not sufficiently appreciate how important broad Sinhala support would be for peace

- Next [@SolheimDAC](#) speaks about Norway's lessons learned in [#srilanka](#). Still the main issues in [#srilankan](#) have not been resolved, but at a hopeful moment now. And we should have done more to generate broader international support for peace in [#srilanka](#)
- ES: Main reason for political problem in [#lka](#) is UNP and SLFP's inability to work together for peace. Sinhala political elite needed to come forward with a joint proposal for peace for [#Tamils](#)
- [@SolheimDAC](#) said he is the non-Tamil who met most with LTTE leader Pirabakaran. More people should have met him. Pirabakaran came to believe violence was only, best way. For sure a brilliant military leader, but insufficient engagement politically

Richard Armitage speaks next, said he admires Norway's history of involvement around the world. Can't say Norway failed. Can say intl community failed. Can say Sri Lanka failed. You can't want peace more than the parties want peace. Not well understood why US was involved in [#srilanka](#). Based in part on '87 meeting with Rajiv Gandhi -told RG not to get involved in lka

RA: US had a feeling of regret, not being able to persuade Rajiv Gandhi not to get involved. Also an issue of terrorism -very clear who the good guys and the bag guys were. [#srilankan](#) citizens were good guys and LTTE were bad. Personalities matter. George Bush believed in Ranil, that Ranil wanted peace so he could focus on creating a functioning economy. Need to consider impact of statements on all audiences: Sinhala community, Tamils and Buddhists

BP: Says he is an ethnic [#tamil](#) from India; asks whether Norway understands conflict better

[@SolheimDAC](#), Valid question and fair criticism. Norway should have had a bigger team. But we had unique insights into LTTE leadership. But ES said he had better insight into Tigers than [#Tamils](#)

[@marsal61](#) speaks of critical importance of getting people informed on local conflict to advise intl facilitators

[@SolheimDAC](#) says he believes both parties were sincere, and conflict could have ended with a negotiated political solution. LTTE started peace process at the peak of their power; LTTE was very close to taking control of full Jaffna peninsula

Questions begin. First question from former US Ambassador to [#lka](#) Teresita Schaffer; asks to look at efforts that failed, such as India's diplomatic efforts, Thimbu talks; Chandrika's efforts. Lessons for [#srilanka](#) and other peace efforts

RA: always thought LTTE wanted a separate state. Nothing else would be good enough

ES: LTTE wanted a protracted peace process to build confidence. Majority of Tamils and Sinhalese would have accepted a federal solution with wide-ranging autonomy for Tamils.

MS: Chandrika recognized need for public opinion and education to support peace

Question from [@gowricurry](#) about intl involvement in [#srilanka](#) now with respect to accountability mechanism

ES: Urgent issue for people to know what happened to ppl given to military custody; likely dead; need actual knowledge and closure. Another urgent issue is political prisoners – need to be tried or released. Urgent issue

of accountability, needs intl component bc Tamils tired of so many domestic commissions

RA: Sri Lanka said they'll get intl help with accountability mechanism but want it to be a "Sri Lankan" mechanism. Intl comm should be trying to get Tamils equal rights and equal treatment in [#srilanka](#)

MS: New report detailing torture in Northeast in 2015, released last week – just as brutal and horrible as it ever was. Impunity of military; military had de facto autonomy during conflict and unwilling to sacrifice that now

Question from audience regarding whether intl community accepted mass atrocities against [#Tamils](#) in order to exterminate LTTE

RA: wasn't in US govt at the time, but from his perspective, they just wanted the war to end

ES: knew the military wanted a full military victory, no matter the cost. The US had been willing to provide ships. Norway was willing to negotiate a surrender. Pirabakaran rejected this throughout. Many civilians killed, more than what we could accept. Collateral damage and bombings much more than we could accept. Nadesan and others surrendered and killed the next day

[@SolheimDAC](#) Pirabakaran's 12 year old son surrendered, was given a snack, and then killed. Totally unacceptable

MS: [@Callum_Macrae](#) 's film shows UN worker leaving Vanni, like Dutch leaving Srebrenica, Blue Helmets leaving Rwanda; extreme moral failure. But Sri Lanka bullied UN and UN let them.

Richard Boucher, former State Dept official, says US was meeting [#lka](#) govt daily, showing pictures of previous

day's bombings. US was meeting Gotabaya daily; saying to stop the bombings. Threatened stopping aid programs. Couldn't convince the [#lka](#) govt

Closing comments from panelists

ES: there was very limited room for moderates on both sides. Optimistic that room for moderates will prevail now