

What lessons learnt from 2004 Tsunami?

National All Hazards Warning System Expert
Consultation

Colombo
26 January 2005

Harsha de Silva
on behalf of LIRNEasia

Human Impact*

- 30,957 reported dead
- 15,196 injured
- 5,644 missing
- 78,407 homes destroyed
- 396,170 displaced
- 896 orphaned
- Immeasurable psychological impacts

*as at 26.Jan.05, Center for National Operations, <http://www.cnosrilanka.org>

Economic Impact

- Estimated → 2005 growth down 1-2%
 - USD 2bn reconstruction bill
 - 800,000 jobs lost (ILO)
 - Destruction of workplace; livelihood
 - Loss of breadwinner in family
 - Fishing industry
 - 7,416 fishermen dead; more than 75% affected
 - 19,110 fishing vessels damaged/destroyed (more than 75% of fishing fleet)
 - Tourism industry
 - 5,600 hotel rooms damaged → local employment
 - How long before tourists come back?

Economic Impact, 2

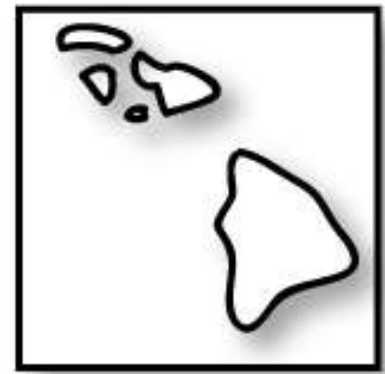
- Huge aid inflow

- Positive: **opportunity** to implement plans USD 3.5bn recovery plan
- Negative: if bad management; then exchange rate **overvaluation**, Dutch disease etc.

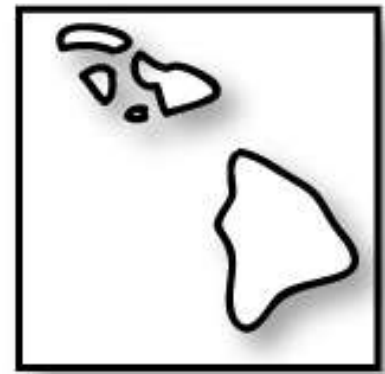


USD vs. LKR [Source: x-rates.com, 25.01.05]

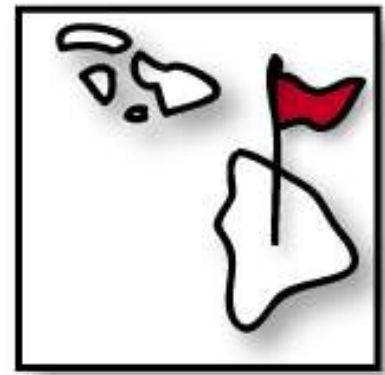
What Happened?



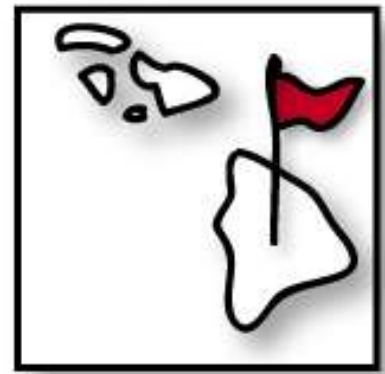
6.59 AM: Indonesia Reports Earthquake



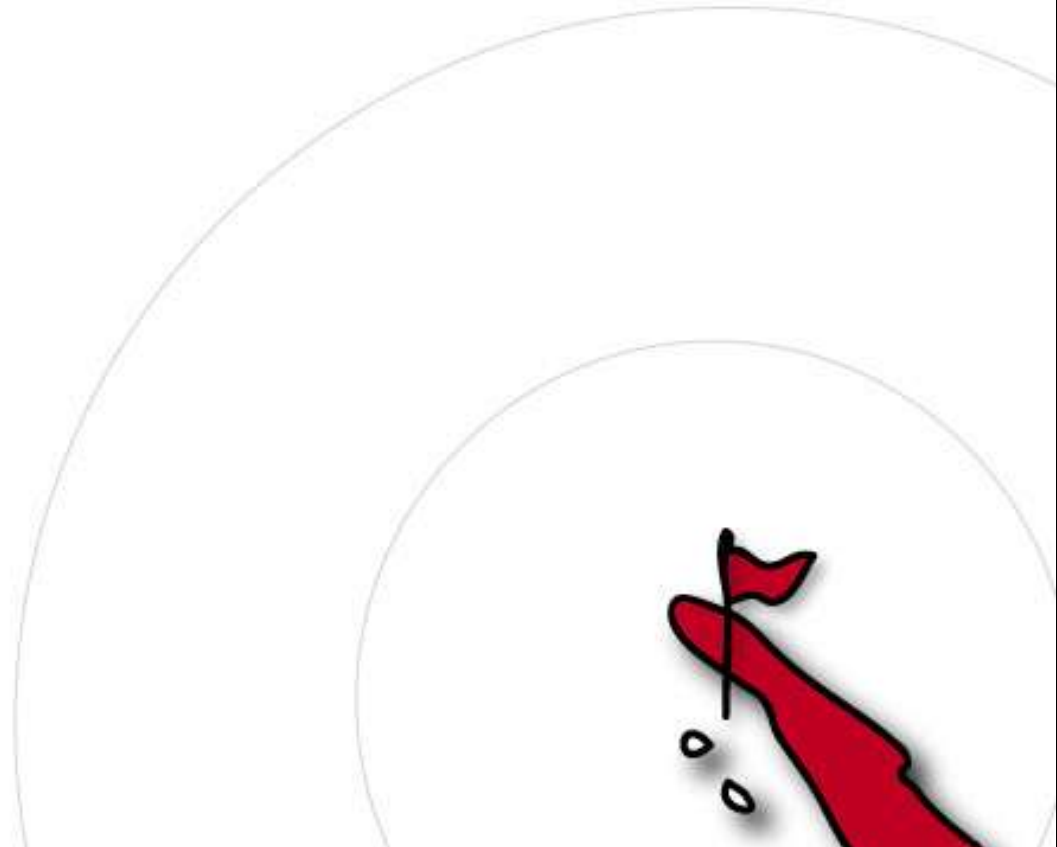
7:05 AM: Colombo learns of earthquake (USGS equipment)

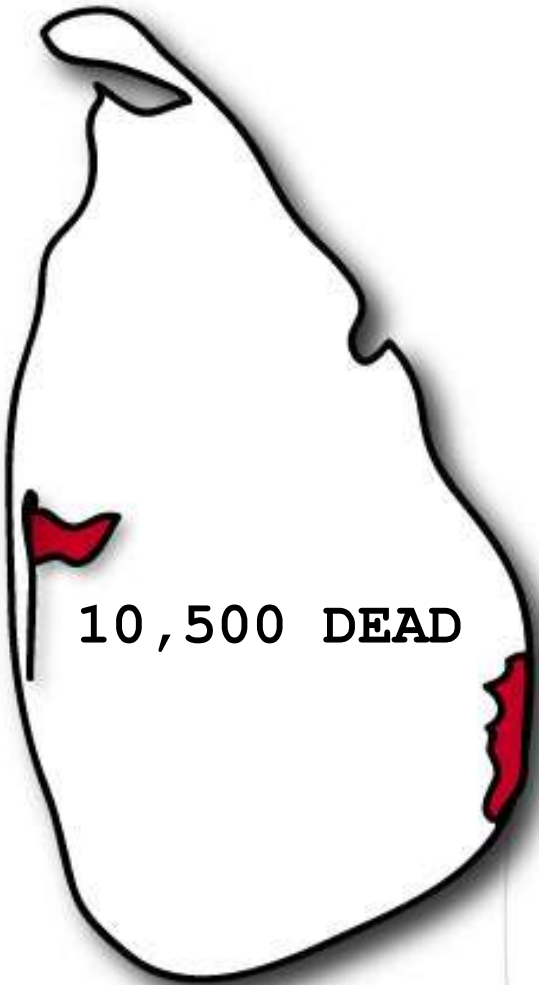


7:14 AM: Honolulu PTWC Issues Earthquake Bulletin
(no tsunami mention)

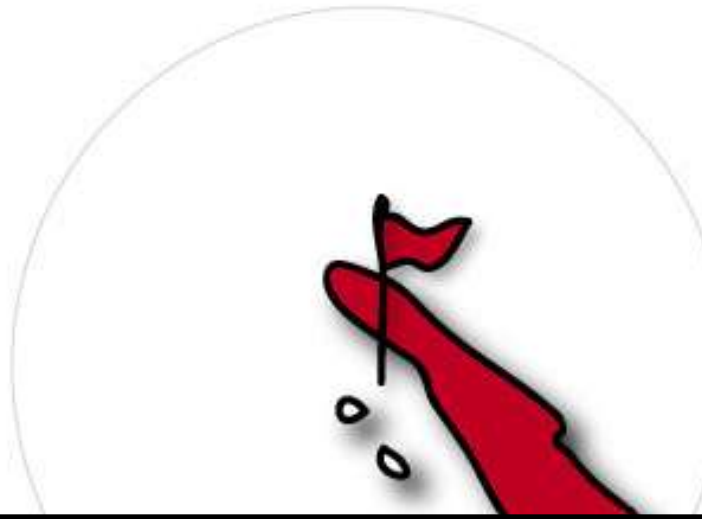
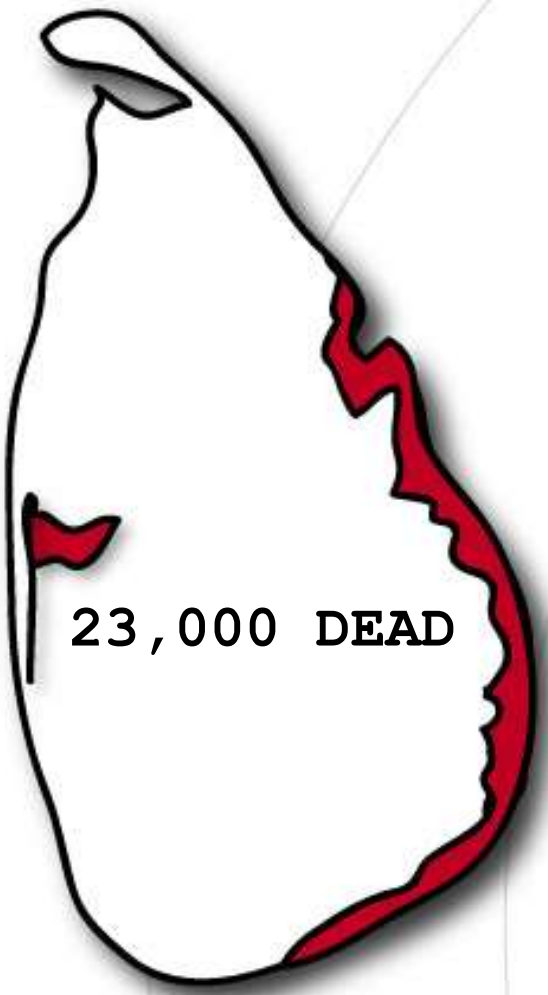


7:30 AM: Tsunami Hits Sumatra

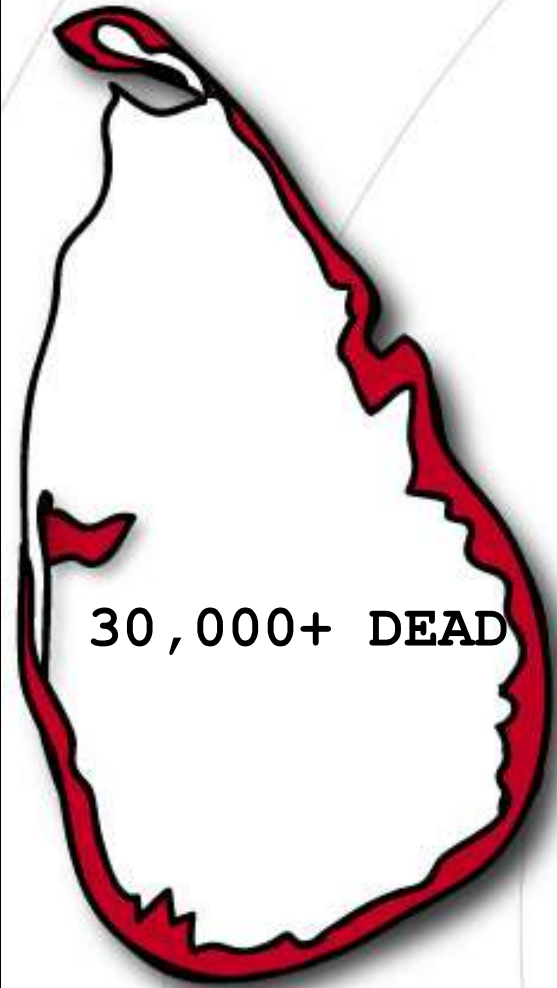




8:36 AM: Tsunami Hits Kalmunai



8:50 AM: Tsunami hits Trinco and Batticaloa



9:30AM-12:55PM: Tsunami Hits Galle, Ahungalle Kalutara and more





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What went wrong?

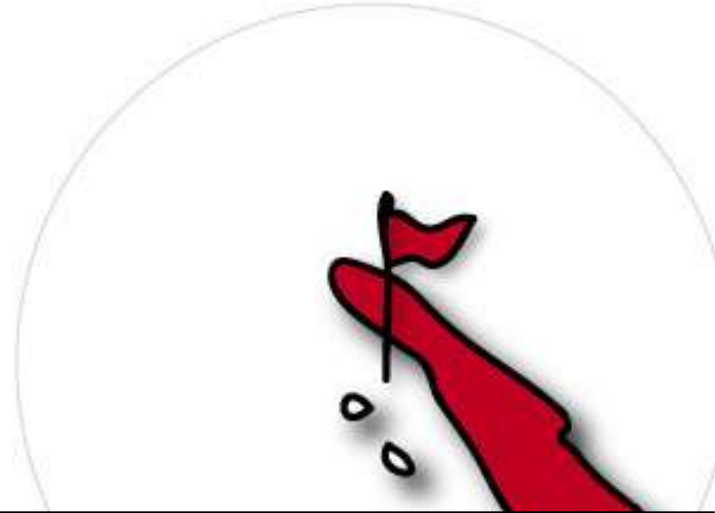
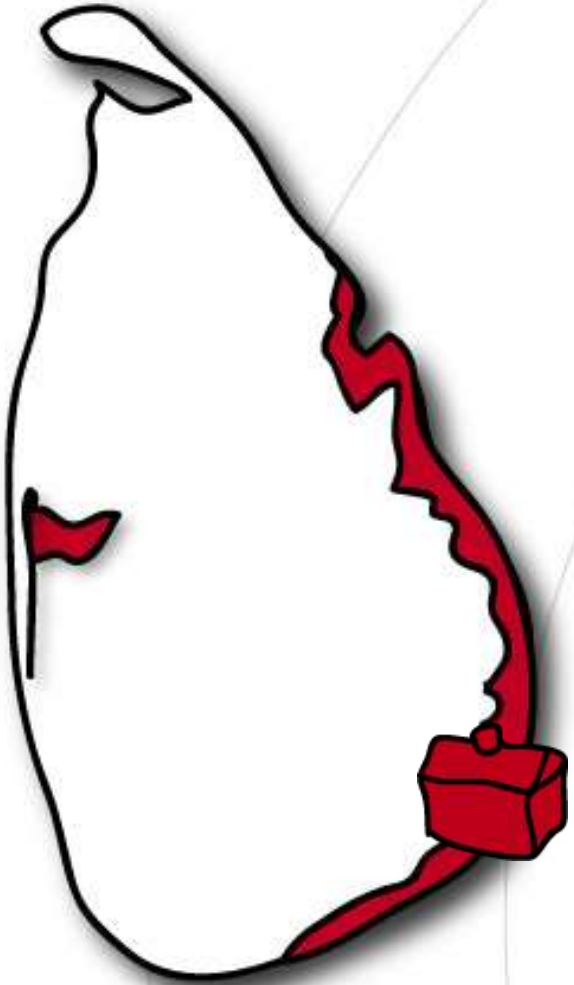
- Sri Lanka was **off guard and unaware**
 - Externally ignorant
 - Not plugged in to the PTWC
 - Internally ignorant
 - Presidential Task Force on Disaster Management
 - National Disaster Management Centre
 - ~~• Ministry of Disaster Management~~

No lessons learnt?

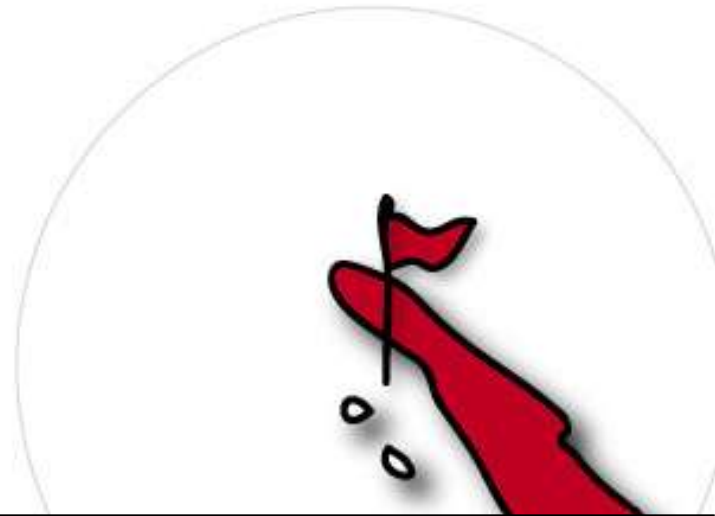
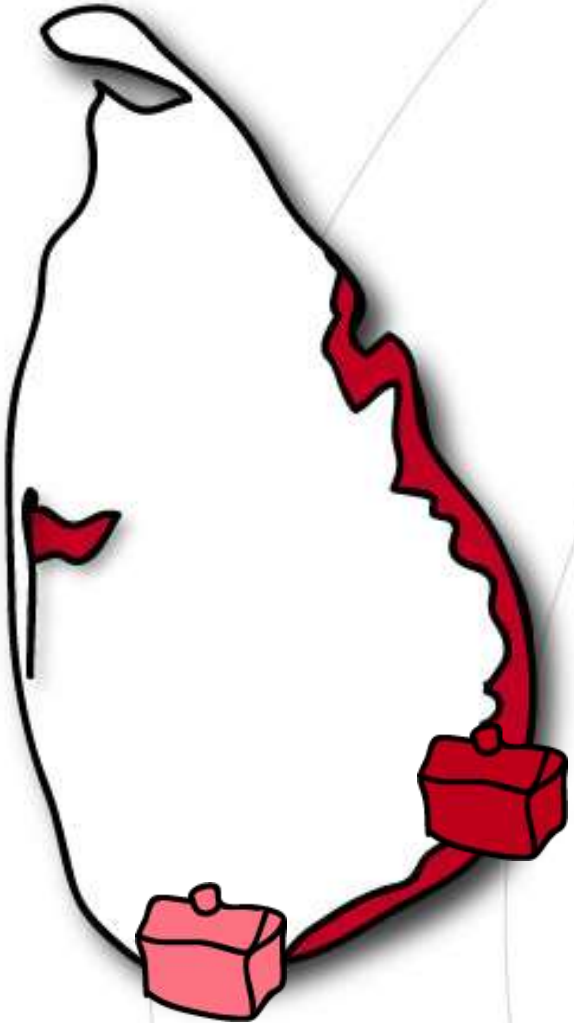


Daily Mirror, May 21st 2003 on Ratnapura Floods 200 dead

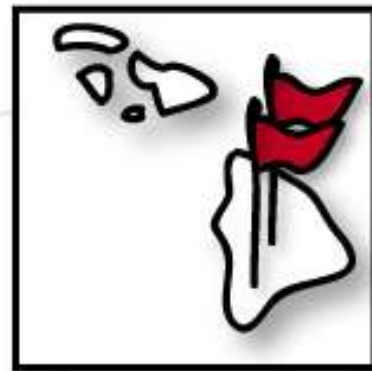
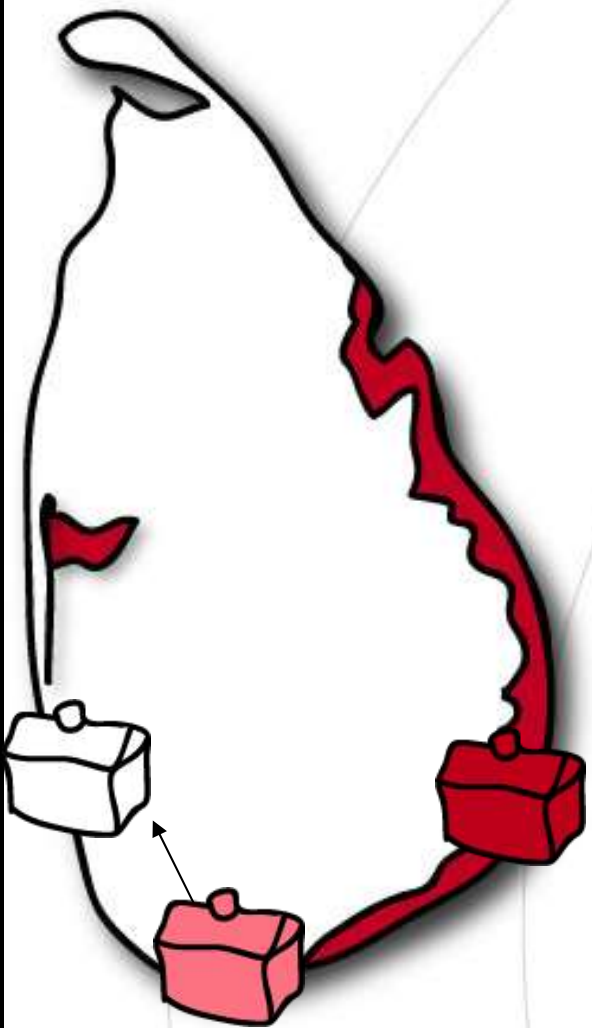
What Can **One Phone Call** Do?



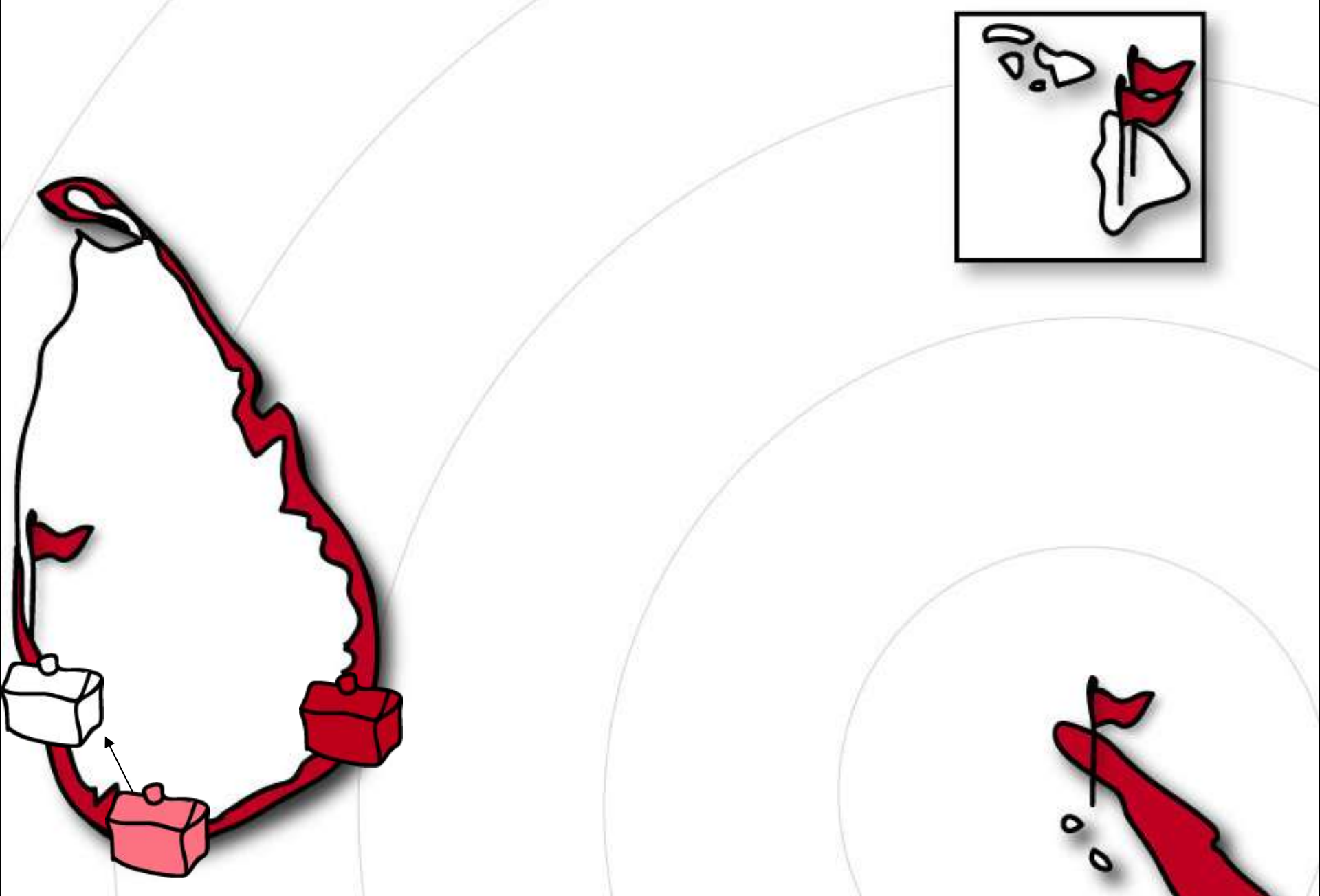
Yala Safari Lodge Hit



Lighthouse Hotel Hit



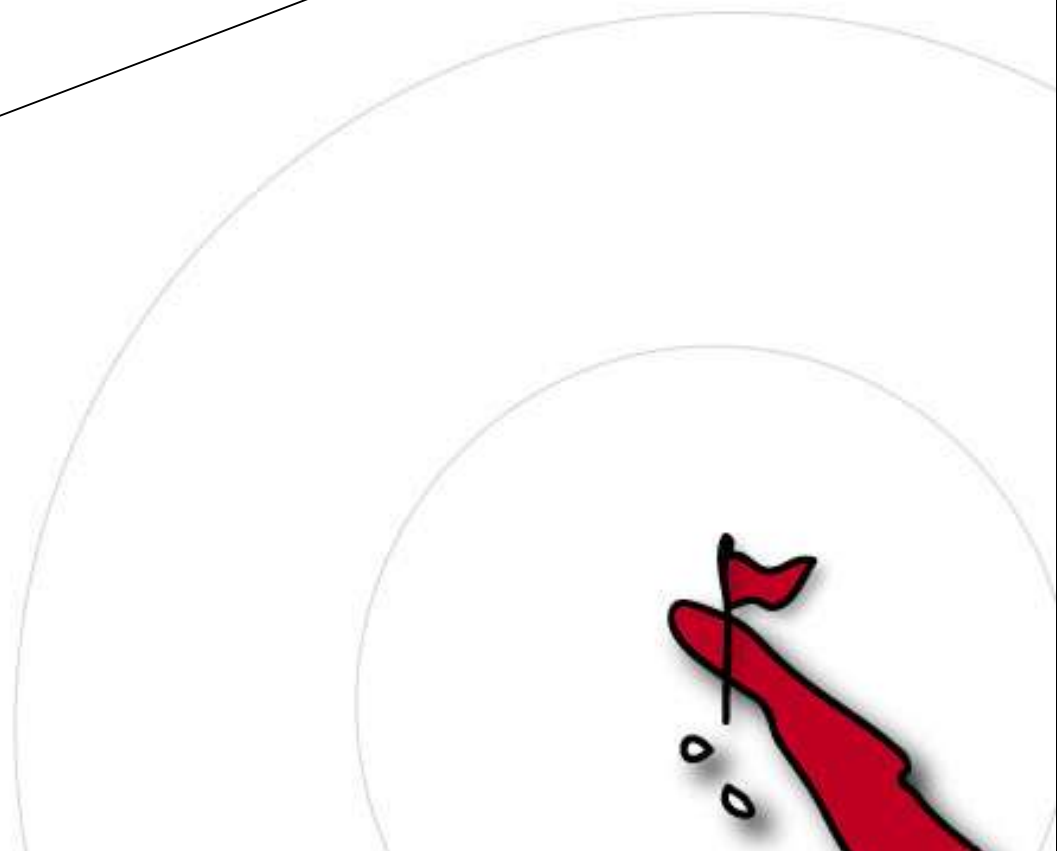
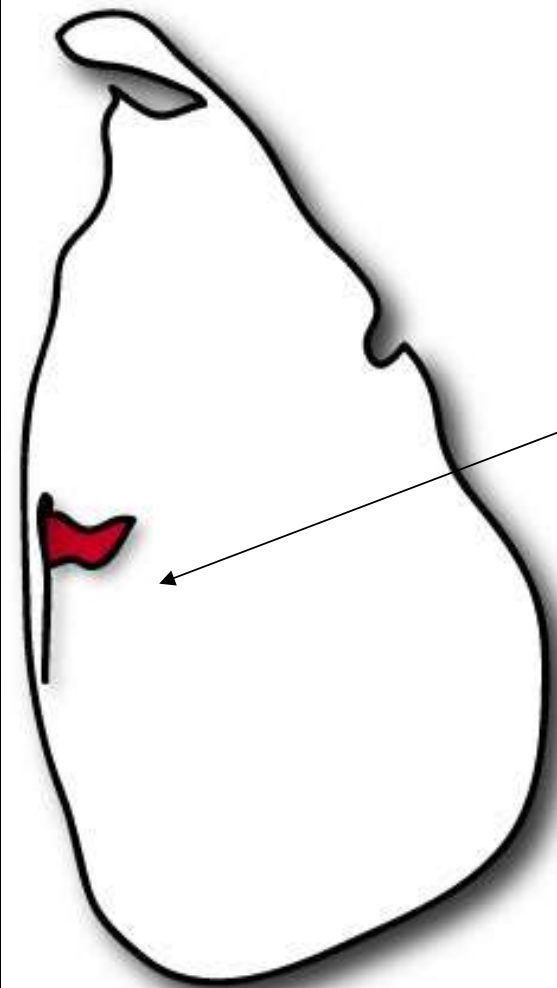
Lighthouse Calls Blue Water (same chain)



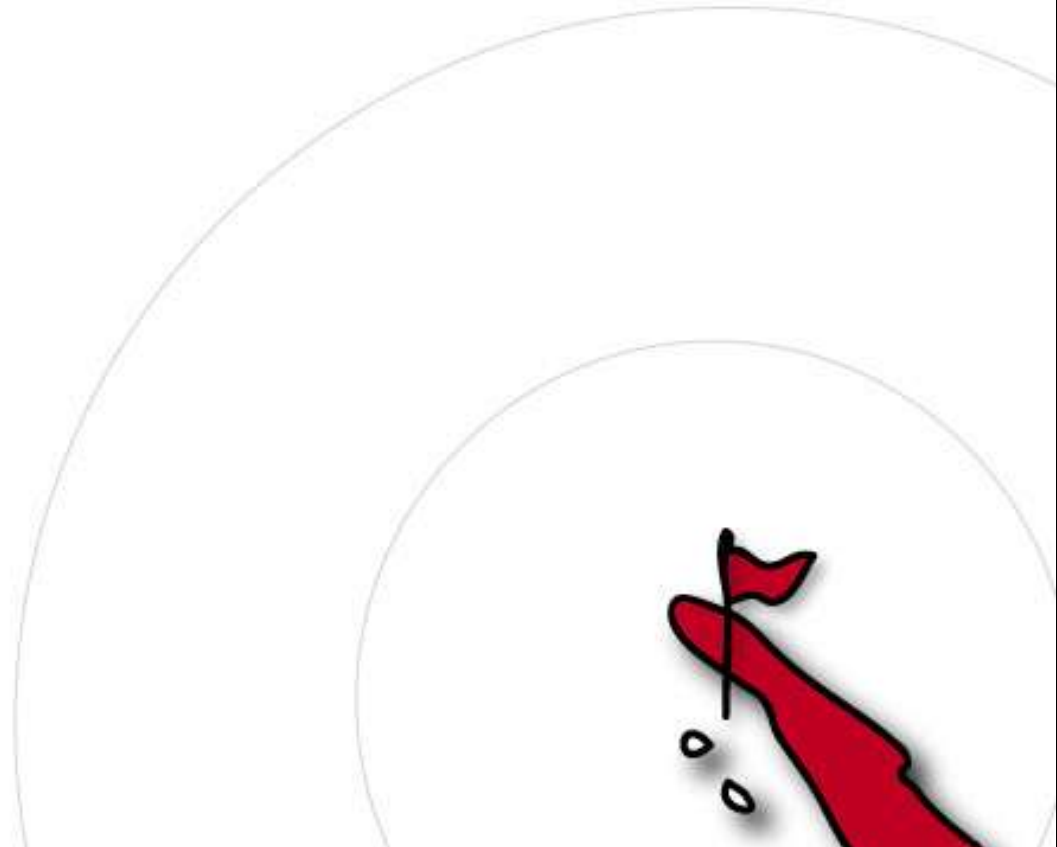
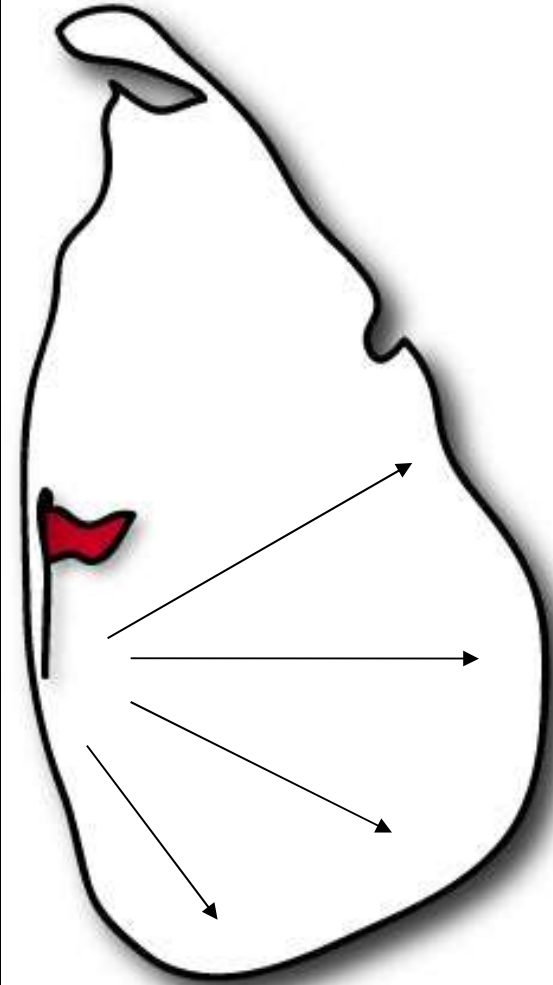
22 minutes warning: No casualties at Blue Water

What Can a **National** Hazards
Warning System Do?

Best Case



8:04 AM: Honolulu Warning Reaches Warning Center

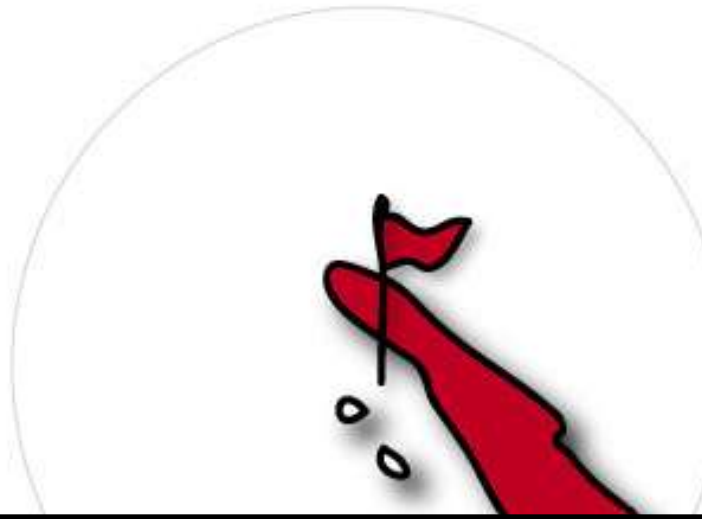
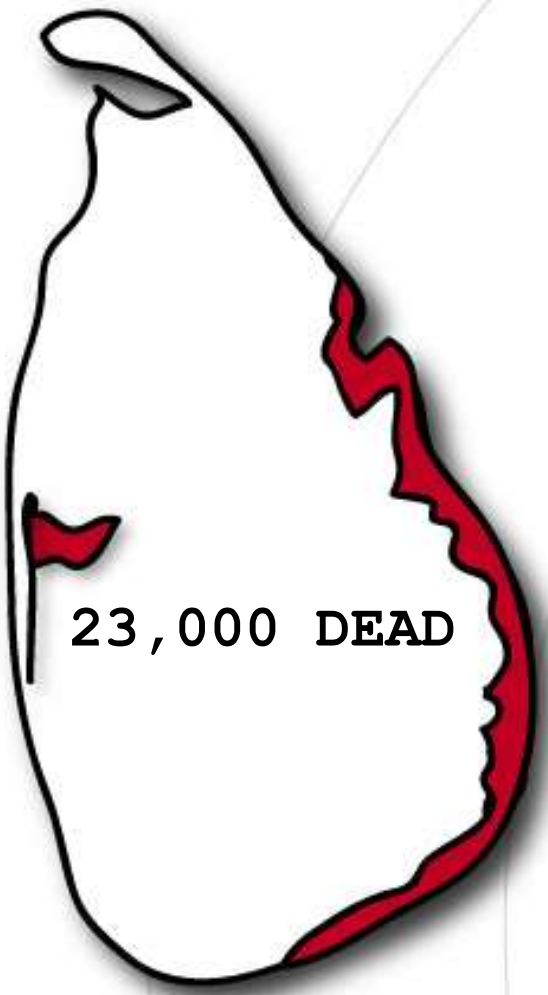


8:10 AM: Warning Issued to Sri Lanka

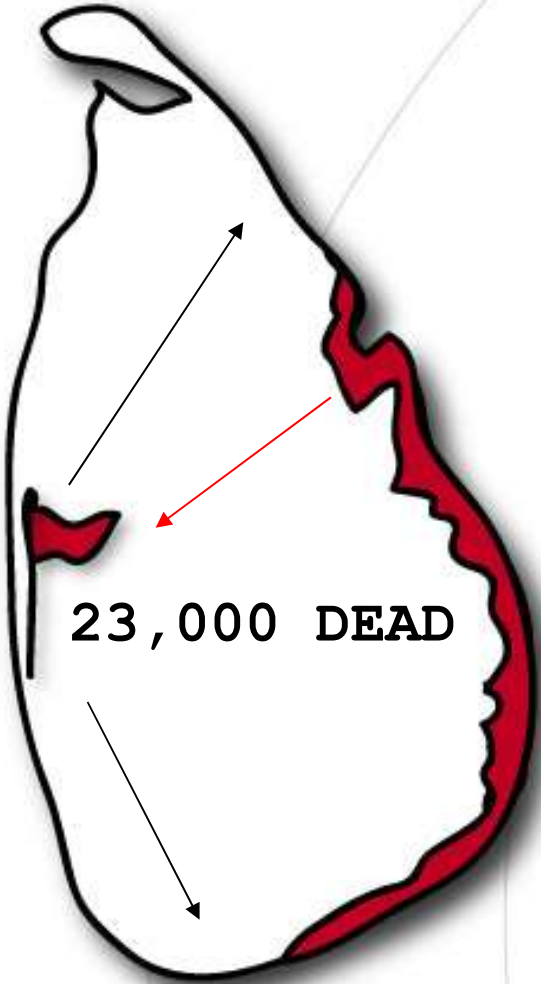


8:40 AM: Lives Saved in Kalmunai and Batticaloa

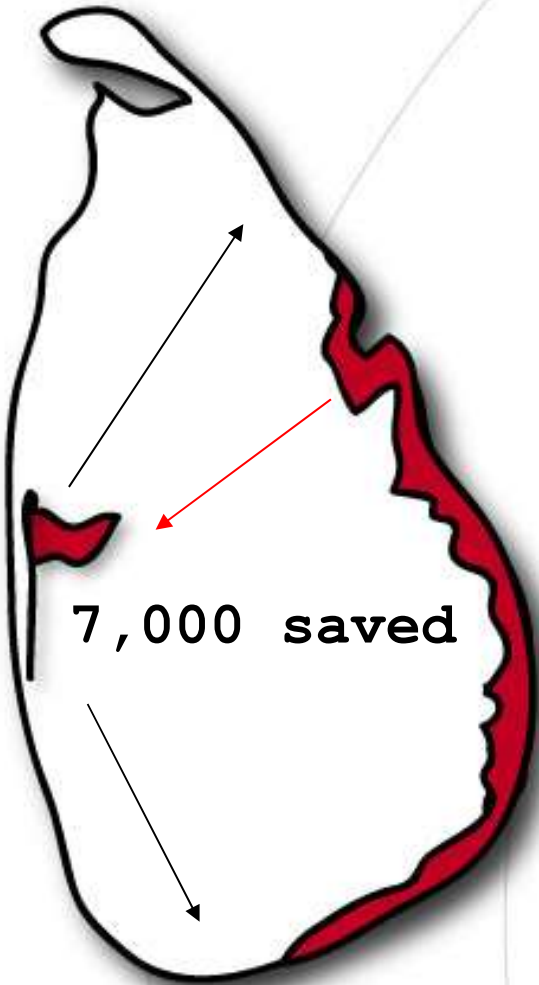
Worst Case



8:50 AM: Tsunami hits Trinco and Batticaloa



9:05 AM: Warning Issued



9:30 AM: ~ 7000 lives saved in Matara, Mullativu

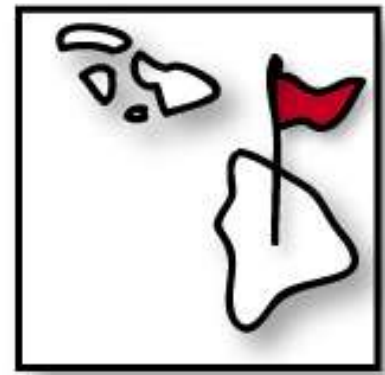
What Can a **Tsunami** Warning
System Do?

If the warning is generated quickly...

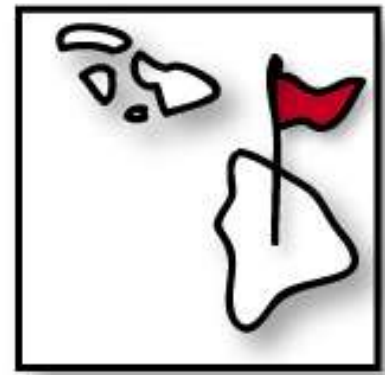
If the media acts promptly...

If the sirens etc. are in place...

If disaster awareness is high...



7:14 AM + 10 mts: COLOMBO Issues Tsunami Warning



Almost 30,000 Lives Saved



Hotels and Beaches Cleared

The Future?



**New quake zone
close to Lanka**

Tsunami sequel?

-Can't be sure

But...

Other disasters

- Sri Lanka is prone to other disasters:
 - Flooding
 - Land slides
 - cyclones
 - bombs/terrorist attacks
 - minor earthquakes → further risks
 - And more

We need to be prepared

- Need **National All Hazard Warning System** that will
 - be flexible to deal with multiple hazards
 - be a communication channel/path to responsible agencies
 - Clearly defined responsibilities to avoid blame shifting
 - have links with regional warning systems
 - Integration with currently evolving regional initiatives
 - with broad political commitment/buy-in
 - **Won't be shelved** like previous attempts
 - Won't create more layers of bureaucracy

NAHWS alone not sufficient

- Need **education** and **awareness raising**
 - More 'angels' like Tilly
 - Chris Chapman at Triton

In sum

- **Too many died**
 - But not in vain, if we succeed in building warning system and increasing disaster awareness
- **Disaster prevention is core business of government**
 - But too important to be left to government alone
- **Institutions more important than technology**
 - Though technology is valuable

End

LIRNE*asia*
www.lirneasia.net

Economic Impact, 3

- Massive increase in money supply
 - “Inflation tragedy?” IMF

Inflation; point-topoint SLCPI

