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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

28 August 1984

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO SOUTH EAST ASIA AND SRI LANKA

As I told you this morning, the Prime Minister feels that, against the background of the current industrial situation, it would not be possible for her to go through with her proposed visit in the second half of September and that it must in consequence be postponed.

The Prime Minister discussed this with the Foreign Secretary this morning and it was agreed that messages should be prepared as rapidly as possible from the Prime Minister to the Heads of Government concerned, informing them of this decision. I should be grateful if you would let me have drafts by this evening if possible. These should be on the general lines that, as the President/Prime Ministers as a fellow Head of Government will naturally understand developments in the industrial situation in the UK unfortunately make it inappropriate for the the Prime Minister to be so far away from the UK for such a protracted length of time as would be involved in her proposed visit. This is a very deep disappointment to her and she greatly regrets the inconvenience to the Governments concerned. However, she very much hopes to be able to fulfil her visit in a few months time. She will get in touch as soon as possible to see what alternative dates might be convenient. Each message will no doubt need a bit of distinctive tailoring. That to President Jaywardene should refer to the Victoria Dam: you will wish to consider whether to offer another Minister. That to President Soeharto should refer to his recent message to which no reply has yet gone.

The Prime Minister will still attend the dinner offered by the four Ambassadors/High Commissioners concerned on 30 August. You will wish to consider how to break the news

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of the postponement of the Prime Minister's visits to them beforehand. I am very willing to speak to them myself if you consider that the most appropriate channel.

I should be grateful if the Prime Minister's regrets for the inconvenience caused could also be conveyed to those who have worked hard on the programmes for her visits, in particular our High Commissioners and Ambassadors and their staffs.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C D POWELL

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
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