



Sarkis

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 December 1981

Dear Madam,

Sri Lanka: Visit of Foreign Minister

Mr. Hameed called on the Prime Minister for 15 minutes this morning. He explained that the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee in London intended to make a unilateral declaration of independence on 14 January and were expected to set up the headquarters of a provisional Government. Sri Lanka found it very difficult to understand their motives. The Tamil Party in the Sri Lankan Parliament, which had originally stood for separatism, had condemned the moves planned by the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee. In Sri Lanka, there were regular monthly meetings between the Government and the TULF. The climate surrounding the Tamil issue, compared with that which obtained five years ago, was positive. There was much understanding on both sides. The Tamil group in London clearly did not want to promote the dialogue. The Sri Lankan Government was worried about the likely repercussions of the moves which were planned.

The Prime Minister agreed that it was difficult to understand the motives for these steps, especially when the President of Sri Lanka was making tremendous efforts to reconcile the two communities. But there were always people for whom reconciliation has no attractions. She doubted whether the Tamil Co-ordinating Committee's plans would have any repercussions. Within the United Kingdom they were not a significant group. Their action would be unlikely to cause HMG any difficulties. We were perfectly prepared to state publicly that the President of Sri Lanka was making valiant efforts to reconcile the two communities. But, of course, as long as the Tamil group's activities fell within the law, there was no action we could take against them.

Mr. Hameed said that the Sri Lankan Government well understood the legal position. They were simply anxious that the excellent relations between our two countries would in no way suffer.

Mr. Hameed said that he might go on to Paris and Bonn. But it was the British reaction which was important.

The Prime Minister sent her greetings to President Jayewardene. She commented that The Queen had had a most wonderful visit to Sri Lanka and had frequently commented on the enthusiastic crowds.

Roderic Lyne, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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