



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

15 October 1982

Prime MinisterAgree to send message?

A.S.C. 15/10.

Dear John,

Yes pls.

Sri Lanka: Presidential Election

President Jayewardene has called a Presidential Election in Sri Lanka and voting is due to take place on Wednesday 20 October. There are six candidates and the campaign is in full swing. It will benefit UK interests for Jayewardene to win. If he does so we would advise that the Prime Minister sends a quick message of congratulation. I enclose a draft.

Mr Jayewardene and his United National Party Government assumed power after a landslide general election victory in 1977 over Mrs Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP). This reflected widespread disenchantment with Mrs Bandaranaike's version of state socialism in Sri Lanka. Jayewardene was subsequently elected executive President under an amended constitution. His objective has been to revitalise the economy by liberalising trade, encouraging the private sector and by large scale development. He has also made considerable progress in encouraging industrial development, tighter management of the public sector and in the reduction of excessive Government expenditure on welfare services and commodity subsidies. President Jayewardene's Government, though remaining firmly non-aligned, have conducted a foreign policy which is generally helpful to Western interests and places Sri Lanka among the more moderate members of the Commonwealth and NAM. Bilateral relations remain close and friendly and Sri Lankan Ministers are frequent visitors to London.

/Present



Present indications are that President Jayewardene will win comfortably. The only rival personality in Sri Lanka, Mrs Bandaranaike, is prevented from taking part in the election in any way under the terms of the seven years' 'civic disability' imposed on her for 'abuse of power' during her last term in office. The SLFP candidate is Mr Hector Kobbekaduwa (a former Minister of Agriculture in her government and 'left winger' responsible for nationalising the tea estates). He is, however, a compromise candidate of a divided party and may not command full support from the more moderate sections of the SLFP. Four other candidates represent the much divided extreme left of Sri Lanka. The main parliamentary opposition party, the Tamil United Liberation Front, is boycotting the election on the grounds that it is a Sinhalese affair. President Jayewardene nevertheless hopes to pick up votes from among the Tamils.

Yours ever

J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

OUT TELEGRAM

	Classification and Caveats	Precedence/Deskby
	CONFIDENTIAL	PRIORITY

ZCZC
GRS
CLASS
CAVEATS
DESKBY
FM FCO
PRE/ADD
TEL NO

1 ZCZC
2 GRS
3 CONFIDENTIAL
4
5
6 FM FCO
7 TO PRIORITY COLOMBO
8 TELEGRAM NUMBER
9 1. Provided that he wins, please deliver the following message
10 of congratulation from the Prime Minister to President
11 Jayewardene as soon as you judge it seemly.
12 BEGINS: Please accept my warmest congratulations on your
13 re-election as President of Sri Lanka for a further period.
14 I am confident that under your continued wise leadership our
15 two countries will build on the ^{firm friendship} ~~warm feelings~~ of mutual regard
16 which ^{has} ~~have~~ existed between them for so long, ~~and~~ I wish you
17 every success in the fulfilment of your high office. Margaret
18 Thatcher. ENDS
19 2. Please confirm by telegram when this message has been
20 delivered.
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22 PYM
23 NNNN
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NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword
File number	Dept	Distribution SAD PCD CCD PS/Mr Hurd Mr Giffard Mr Donald
Drafted by (Block capitals) PRIVATE SECRETARY		
Telephone number 233 4641		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	



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