



PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi  
July 14, 1984

*Dear Prime Minister,*

Thank you for your message on your talks with President Jayewardene.

As you know, President Jayewardene stopped over in Delhi on his way back and we had detailed discussions with him and Minister Athulathmudali. In Washington and London the President is reported to have said that he was carrying some fresh proposals for a political solution of Sri Lanka's ethnic problem. He explained to us what he had in mind.

In essence the new scheme still focusses on the District Development Councils. Contiguous District Councils, within a Province, which want to have a common executive could decide on a merger on the basis of a Referendum in each district. After such a decision, the individual executive committees of these District Councils would cease to exist and would be replaced by a common executive at the Provincial level. The President made it clear that while there could be a common Executive, the District Councils themselves would not merge but would continue as separate entities.

A Second Chamber of 50 members, consisting of two members elected by each District Council, would be constituted. The President could nominate Provincial Ministers from this Chamber to form a common executive for those District Councils which decide to merge.

There are many loopholes in this scheme. For instance, the District Councils which decide to merge but continue to have their separate identities would have no executive powers. On the other hand the Provincial Ministers would not be responsible to any legislature at the Provincial level. When we sought clarification from the Sri Lankans regarding the role of these Provincial Ministers, we were told that they would be responsible to the President. Moreover, if the unit of devolution continues to be the District Council, the powers transferred cannot be substantial. At best the Provincial Ministers can act only as coordinators.

Therefore, we stressed the need for a Provincial legislature. President Jayewardene eventually agreed that some form of Committee or Council at the Provincial level could be considered, but again he indicated that such a Committee would consist only of members elected to the proposed Second Chamber by District Councils within a Province. Under this arrangement the largest Provincial Committee would only have ten members of whom three would be Ministers. The President's view was that even such an idea would have to emerge from discussions at the All

Parties Conference and that the Sri Lankan Government itself would not take the initiative.

President Jayewardene suggested that we should discuss these ideas with the TULF leaders. This we have done. On our urging they have agreed to attend the deliberations of the Conference later this month. However, they are still very pessimistic about the outcome since this scheme is much less in concept as well as in content than the proposals which President Jayewardene had agreed to in November 1983. The essence of the matter is that the Sri Lankan Government does not seem to be willing to concede any meaningful autonomy to the Tamils.

It is our assessment that some form of institutional mechanism at the Provincial level, with substantial devolution of powers, could be a basis for discussion. This would form a via media between the TULF position that the Tamil majority Northern and Eastern Provinces should be amalgamated into one Region, and the Government position that it cannot go beyond the District as a unit of devolution. Actually, Councils at the Provincial level have been proposed by the Christian and Moslem minority groups at the All Parties Conference. This idea would also have the support of the Lanka Sama Samaj Party and the Communist Party of Sri Lanka. All these are parties and groups which were invited to participate in the All Parties Conference called by the President.

As regards the Sri Lankan complaint about the activities of Sri Lankan refugees in our State of Tamil Nadu, we reaffirmed our support to Sri Lanka's unity and our firm opposition to all forms of violence. We assured them that within our constraints we are taking all steps to curb these activities.

The Sri Lankan Government seems to be concentrating on security measures. In the absence of any meaningful political initiative, this is not likely to help in resolving the problem.

Your High Commission has informed us that Mr. Athulathmudali is visiting the U.K. at his own request. Hence I thought I should keep you posted with the trend of discussions in New Delhi.

With warm regards

Sincerely

Indira Gandhi

The Rt.Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher,  
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,  
London.

cc Master  
Ops

SECRET

6

SUBJECT

Text of letter dated July 14, 1984 from the Prime Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher.

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T1238187

Dear Prime Minister,

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In essence the new scheme still focusses on the District Development Councils. Contiguous District Councils, within a province, which want to have a common executive could decide on a merger on the basis of a referendum in each district. After such a decision, the individual Executive Committees of these District Councils, would cease to exist and would be replaced by a common executive at the provincial level. The President made it clear that while there could be a common executive, the District Councils themselves would not merge but would continue as separate entities.

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- 2 -

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Your High Commission has informed us that Mr Athulathmudali is visiting the U.K. at his own request. Hence I thought I should keep you posted with the trend of discussions in New Delhi.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

INDIRA GANGHI

Sri Lanka Telecom 5775

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177 JUL 1984

SECRET

भारत का हाई कमीशन  
लन्दन

Pushkar Johari  
Deputy High Commissioner.

THE HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA,

DEPARTMENT,

INDIA HOUSE,

ALDWYCH,

LONDON WC2B 4NA

TELEPHONE: 01-836 8484 EXT.....

TELEGRAMS: HICOMIND, LONDON, W.C.2.

Prime Minister

No. 476/DHC/84

July 17, 1984

I have  
asked FCO for  
advice and a draft  
reply. C.D.P. 17/7

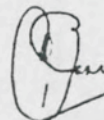
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Dear Mr Powell,

I am enclosing the text of a letter dated  
July 14, 1984 from the Prime Minister of India,  
Shrimati Indira Gandhi to the Prime Minister of  
the United Kingdom, The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher,  
with the request that it may kindly be placed before the  
Prime Minister urgently.

with kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



( Pushkar Johari )

Mr Charles Powell  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON SW1

Encl: As above.





Pushkar Johari  
Deputy High Commissioner

SECRET

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**INDIA HOUSE,  
ALDWYCH,  
LONDON, W.C.2.**

No. 480/DHC/84

July 19, 1984

*Prime Minister has  
already seen a copy.  
FCO not replying*

Dear Mr Powell,

In continuation of my letter  
No. 476/DHC/84 dated July 17, 1984 I am  
enclosing the sealed cover containing the  
signed letter from Prime Minister of India  
to The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister  
of the United Kingdom.

*reply*

*PA.  
EOD 19/7*

Yours sincerely,

( Pushkar Johari )

Mr Charles Powell,  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London SW1

Encl: as above



bc PC SL

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

17 July 1984

MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER FROM MRS. GANDHI

I enclose a copy of a message to the Prime Minister from Mrs. Gandhi, delivered today. I should be grateful for advice and a draft reply if appropriate.

BFI

(C.D. POWELL)

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



SL

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

17 July 1984

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 17 July, enclosing a message from Mrs. Gandhi to the Prime Minister.

(C.D. POWELL)

Shri Pushkar Johari

SECRET 7

भारत का हाई कमीशन  
लन्दन

THE HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA,

DEPARTMENT,

INDIA HOUSE,

ALDWYCH,

LONDON WC2B 4NA



सत्यमेव जयते

Pushkar Johari  
Deputy High Commissioner.

TELEPHONE: 01-836 8484 EXT.....

TELEGRAMS: HICOMIND, LONDON, W.C.2.

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