

CONFIDENTIALPRIME MINISTER

mt

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

You will recall that the FCS recommended shortly before President Jayewardene's visit here in June that you should tell him that we proposed to abrogate the UK-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement. You declined to do this until the matter had been properly considered by Ministers collectively.

The FCS has now circulated the attached note to OD. It concludes that we should tell the Sri Lankans confidentially that in interpreting the "mutual interests" clause of the agreement, we would have difficulty in responding to a request for assistance in any circumstances, including external intervention, arising from Sri Lanka's inter-communal problems.

On substance I suggest that you agree to the recommendation subject to the views of colleagues. In that case, discussion by OD is unlikely to be necessary.

There remains a problem of timing. It was suggested that you should speak to President Jayewardene. But your visit is now postponed. It seems rather hard to inflict two bits of bad news on him (i.e. postponement of your visit and abrogation of the UK-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement) in quick succession. On the other hand if the situation in Sri Lanka gets worse the risk of the agreement being invoked could increase, which argues against delaying informing the Sri Lankans of our decision until you do eventually go there. The best course might therefore be for our High Commissioner to speak to President Jayewardene in about a month's time.

Agree?

C.D.P.

Yes mt

28 August, 1984CONFIDENTIAL



FILE

RW

c LCO.
MOD
HMT
LPO
LPSO

CSL
Co.
BTI
Sir P.C.

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

29 August, 1984

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

The Prime Minister has seen the memorandum circulated by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary to OD on the future of the UK-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement (OD(84)/13).

The Prime Minister agrees with the conclusion of the paper that we should tell President Jayewardene that in interpreting the 'mutual interests' clause, we would have difficulty in responding to a request for assistance in any circumstances, including external intervention, arising from Sri Lanka's inter-communal problems. Unless colleagues have differing views, the Prime Minister does not therefore consider that discussion in OD is necessary.

There will remain, however, the question of how and when President Jayewardene should be informed now that the Prime Minister's visit to Sri Lanka is postponed. The Prime Minister's view is that it would be indelicate to inform him too soon after the news of the postponement of her visit but that equally it would not be appropriate to allow the matter to remain in suspense until her visit is eventually re-instated. Subject to the views of colleagues she thinks that our High Commissioner at Colombo should be instructed to inform President Jayewardene of HMG's conclusions, first orally and then in writing, in October.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to Members of OD and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

(C.D. Powell)

P. Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

SR



Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

with pm
I entirely agree with the recommendation in your paper of 13 August to OD. May I make two additional points.

First The sentence in the Agreement, which immediately follows the one you quote and which relates to the stationing of British Forces in Ceylon, also incorporates much the same qualifying phrase (viz "as may be mutually agreed"). The Sri Lanka Government no doubt based their request for the withdrawal of British troops on this phrase. It provides therefore a very useful precedent for our relying on the corresponding phrase in relation to the "external aggression" provision.

Second The record of the Indian Government in the field of armed intervention is not a reassuring one. Are we exerting diplomatic pressure on them not to intervene in Sri Lanka? If we are not, are there considerations making it unwise or unproductive to do so?

I am copying this minute to the Prime Minister, members of OD and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A.C.

A C

29 August 1984

Sri Lanka: Relations May 1979.

ccpc 7



PRIVY COUNCIL OFFICE
WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AT

23 August 1984

WBF/m

R

Dear Geoffrey

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

I have seen your memorandum to the Defence and Overseas Policy Committee and agree in general that we should proceed as you suggest on the basis of your second option. I do, however, have some little doubt about the timing which you propose. Are we sure that the situation will remain stable for sufficiently long to permit the Prime Minister to raise this matter on her visit at the end of September? Would it perhaps not be preferable to have a contingency plan whereby the High Commissioner could make suitable warning noises if the situation seemed to be deteriorating to an extent where the Sri Lankans might be thinking about invoking the Agreement? Only you can provide the answers to these questions, but I think that they do require to be asked.

The second point I should like to make is that if we come through this crisis without having to speak to the Sri Lankans (because the situation has improved) or even if we do need to take the action which you suggest, very serious thought should be given to the termination of the Agreement as soon as the situation in Sri Lanka has returned to something like normal. I am sure that communal strife in that country will continue to plague it for some time to come and we might well find ourselves in the same situation in a few years time.

I am copying this to the Prime Minister, other members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

JOHN BIFFEN

Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

Sri Lanka, May 79

Relatives.



23 AUG 1984

CONFIDENTIAL



WRM
CDP
079.

cc/K

Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

4 September 1984

P Ricketts Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
LONDON
SW1.

Dear Peter

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

The Chief Secretary has seen the Foreign Secretary's memorandum of 13 August (OD(84)/13) and the comments of the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Prime Minister. He agrees with the Foreign Secretary's recommendation and with the arrangements for handling suggested by the Prime Minister.

2 I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries to Members of OD and to Richard Hatfield in the Cabinet Office.

Yours sincerely

John Gieve

JOHN GIEVE

CONFIDENTIAL

Silahkan: Relations May 78

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY



CONFIDENTIAL | HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

3 September 1984

Dear Sir,

UNITED KINGDOM/SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

The Home Secretary has now been able to consider your Secretary of State's memorandum OD(84)/13.

Although the arguments of substance in the paper tend to point to the termination of the Agreement, the Home Secretary is ready to support the preferred alternative if it is sufficient to leave no doubt about the clear practical and political objections to any United Kingdom military involvement being considered.

Copies of this letter go to the members of OD.

Yours own,
H H Taylor

H H TAYLOR

L V Appleyard, Esq.

CONFIDENTIAL

Sri Lanka relations



cepc



CABINET OFFICE

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 5838

NO3604

22 August 1984

C D Powell Esq
No 10 Downing Street
SW1

CP 0/W

As to Choke

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

You will have seen the memorandum on this subject by the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, circulated on 13 August as OD(84)13.

2. Because it seemed sensible to clear this paper out of Committee, we suggested to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office at the drafting stage that a specific request for such clearance should be included in the text. This they were reluctant to do because of a desire not to pre-empt the Prime Minister's decision. As a result, Departments have sought our advice on whether their Ministers should assume that clearance out of Committee is required; and we have told them that we will advise them on the point as soon as the Prime Minister has had the chance to decide.

3. I would be grateful if you would let me know how she wishes to handle the matter. I suppose that she may wish to discuss the matter at an OD meeting in the week before her departure on 14 September although no provision has been made for this.

4. A final point. Although not mentioned in paragraph 5 of the paper, there is of course a third option - do nothing.

*Cab. off.
Have made
tentative
arrangements
10/9/84.
Duty clerk.*

John Colvin
D H COLVIN

UK. Red. SRI LANKA. May 29

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