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13th September 1984

*See Briefing*

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

I have seen the memorandum which you circulated on the future of the UK-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement (OD(84)/13), and Mr Powell's letter of 29th August to your Private Secretary.

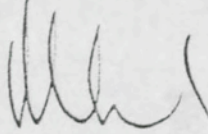
I share your view that it would be awkward if the Agreement were to be invoked in a future crisis, especially in circumstances which might involve us in a confrontation with the Indian Government. I therefore agree that we should tell President Jayewardene that we interpret the 'mutual interests' clause as making the Agreement essentially consultative, and warn him that we would have difficulty in responding to a request for help in any circumstances, including external intervention, arising from Sri Lanka's inter-communal problems.

So far as the timing of an approach is concerned, I agree with the Prime Minister that it would be indelicate to inform President Jayewardene too soon after the postponement of her visit, but that the matter should not remain in suspense for long. The precise handling of the approach is of course largely a matter for you.

The Rt Hon Sir Geoffrey Howe QC MP



I am copying this letter to other members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Yours truly  


Michael Heseltine

SM LAMMA

UK Relents

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9 SEP 1984

