



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 September 1984

CPK
11
NBPM
CDD
14/9

Dear Charles,

UK-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement

The Foreign Secretary is grateful for the agreement of the Prime Minister and other OD colleagues to the proposal in his memorandum (OD(84)/13) of 13 August that we should make clear to President Jayewardene our inability to provide military assistance in circumstances arising from Sri Lanka's inter-communal problems.

The Prime Minister has suggested that, in the light of the postponement of her visit to Sri Lanka, our High Commissioner at Colombo should be instructed to approach President Jayewardene about this in October. Lady Young will, however, be visiting the Pacific region in October and will stop over in Sri Lanka on her return journey. This would provide an opportunity to explain HMG's views on the lines proposed in the Foreign Secretary's memorandum in a way which is likely to make more of an impact on the President. Sir Geoffrey proposes to ask Lady Young to act accordingly. Her discussions could be followed up shortly thereafter with a letter from the Prime Minister to President Jayewardene formally stating HMG's position.

The Lord Privy Seal has raised the possibility that the situation in Sri Lanka might deteriorate with such rapidity that there would be a risk of the Sri Lankan Government's invoking the Agreement before we could take action with President Jayewardene. This is indeed a risk. The Foreign Secretary agrees therefore that if a major explosion of inter-communal violence on the scale of the riots in July 1983 appeared imminent, we should consider instructing our High Commissioner to convey to President Jayewardene the view which would otherwise be conveyed by Lady Young. While the current situation in Sri Lanka is uncertain, Sir Geoffrey Howe does not think that it warrants instructing our High Commissioner to make an initial approach to President Jayewardene now. Apart from the risk that this might be ill-received coming so soon after the postponement of the Prime Minister's visit, it would also reduce the impact of Lady Young's approach in October.

/I am

CONFIDENTIAL



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

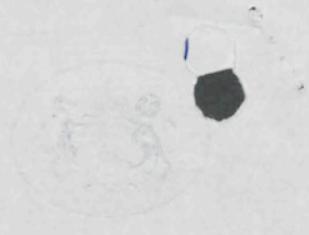
Y^e ever,
Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

SM LANKA
MIC RELATS.
5/79



1 SEP 1984

12 1 2 3
4 5
6
3 3 1