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MASTER

SRI LANKA: Relations: May 79



10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

6 August, 1984

Prime Minister's Meeting with Mr. Anura Bandaranaike,  
Leader of the Sri Lankan Opposition at 10 Downing Street  
on 6 August, 1984

The Prime Minister received Mr. Bandaranaike for a brief talk at 1730 today.

The Prime Minister said that she was looking forward to her visit to Sri Lanka. She asked how Mr. Bandaranaike saw the inter-communal problem. Mr. Bandaranaike said the problem was pretty bad. But matters had reached an interesting stage. President Jayewardene had made a new proposal for an upper chamber. The President had recently told him that he would go through with implementing the proposal, even if the Tamils did not accept it. The Prime Minister said that it was very important to do everything possible to bring about reconciliation. Mr. Bandaranaike said that opinion was hardening and the number of those supporting a separate state had grown. The Prime Minister asked whether those who argued for separatism really reflected Tamil opinion. Mr. Bandaranaike replied that the separatists had indeed been only a small minority but were now growing in strength. In reply to a question from the Prime Minister about President Jayewardene's meeting with Mrs. Gandhi, Mr. Bandaranaike said the meeting had clearly not been as successful as the President had hoped. It seemed that Mrs. Gandhi had not been very co-operative, for instance over suppression of terrorist activity directed from Southern India.

Mr. Bandaranaike said that the Prime Minister would be formally welcomed on her visit in the Sri Lankan Parliament. The Prime Minister asked how long she would be expected to speak. Mr. Bandaranaike said that the Prime Minister should express whatever she wanted to say, however long it took (but subsequently agreed that 20 minutes would be about right).

The Prime Minister enquired after Felix Bandaranaike.

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Mr. Bandaranaike said that he had also been disenfranchised and had now turned to religion. The Prime Minister recalled that she had once entertained Mr. Bandaranaike's mother.

Mr. Bandaranaike said that he was visiting the United States after London and hoped to see something of the election campaign. The Prime Minister and Mr. Bandaranaike discussed some of the differences between American and British politics.

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