

PRIME MINISTER

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

Lady Young will be in Sri Lanka next week and will, as agreed by OD, be telling President Jayewardene that we shall not be able to provide military assistance under the UK-Ceylon Defence Agreement in any circumstances connected with the internal situation in Sri Lanka. It is envisaged that you would then write to confirm this.

I do not find the line proposed for Lady Young or for your letter in the attached FCO draft very clear. I attach an alternative version which might, if you agree, form the basis for Lady Young's remarks and your subsequent letter.

Agree?

C.D.P.

Yes
no

Thank you - your
version is much better
and it is clear
no

20 October 1984

DRAFT LETTER FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEND TO PRESIDENT
JAYEWARDENE OF SRI LANKA

Janet Young has reported to me on her recent visit to Sri Lanka during which she had some most interesting talks with you. I am most grateful to you for receiving her.

I feel it would be right to repeat to you in a more formal but still confidential way what Janet Young said to you about the UK-Ceylon Defence Agreement of 1947.

You will recall that the Agreement provides for the Governments to give each other such military assistance as it may be in their mutual interest to provide. But the Agreement dates from a time when the military resources available to this country ~~including those overseas~~, the relationship between Britain and Ceylon (as it then was), and public and Parliamentary attitudes towards military commitments overseas unconnected with our own security or that of our dependents~~se~~ were all very different to what they are today.

I should not wish to leave you in any doubt, therefore, that in today's conditions Britain would not be able to provide any military assistance under the Agreement in any circumstances connected with the internal situation in Sri Lanka. This covers also response to an external threat arising from that situation.

What I have said does not affect our willingness to continue to provide help where we can with military and police training in the United Kingdom. I hope that you will let me know if there is any further help you would like from us in this field.

I well understand that this is a sensitive matter for you. It is not my intention to make any public comment on it or ~~to~~ otherwise^{to} draw attention to it.



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

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22 October 1984

UK-SRI LANKA DEFENCE AGREEMENT

Thank you for your letter of 19 October, suggesting what Lady Young should say to President Jaywardene about the interpretation we place on the UK-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement.

The Prime Minister did not find either the line proposed for Lady Young or the draft letter which it is suggested that she herself should subsequently send to President Jaywardene very clear. I enclose a revised version, in the form of a draft letter from the Prime Minister. The gist of it might also serve as Lady Young's speaking note.

I am sending copies of this letter and enclosure to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

CHARLES POWELL

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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FCO



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

19 October, 1984

Dear Charles,

UK-Sri Lanka Defence Agreement

I wrote to you on 14 September to say that the Foreign Secretary would ask Lady Young to make clear to President Jayewardene during her visit to Sri Lanka in October the interpretation we intend placing henceforth on the 1947 Defence Agreement. Lady Young will be in Sri Lanka from 23-26 October and will call on President Jayewardene on the afternoon of 25 October. The Foreign Secretary thinks that the Prime Minister and Mr Heseltine should be aware of the line which Lady Young will be briefed to take at the meeting.

After explaining the changes in public and parliamentary attitudes since the Agreement was signed in 1947, Lady Young would draw on the following:

"As with other Agreements or similar obligations which we have with friendly countries outside NATO, we would wish to consult you about matters arising from the Agreement. We therefore felt we should let you know that we would find it very difficult to justify to international or domestic parliamentary/public opinion any provision of military assistance, other than training, under the Agreement in any circumstances, including external threat, connected with the internal situation in Sri Lanka".

We have proposed (my letter to you of 14 September) that Lady Young's conversation with President Jayewardene should be followed up by a letter to him from the Prime Minister. This would set out the interpretation we would apply in future to the Agreement. The contents of the letter may need to be adjusted to take into account President Jayewardene's reaction. But the Prime Minister might like to be aware of the broad lines we would intend the letter to follow. I therefore enclose a draft. Subject to President Jayewardene's reaction, we envisage sending this letter as soon as possible after Lady Young's discussion with the President.

I am sending copies of this letter to Richard Mottram (MOD) and to Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

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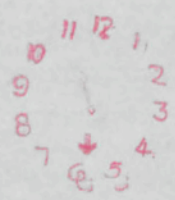
Yr ever
Pete Ricketts
(P F Ricketts)
Private Secretary

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 1AA



19 OCT 1984



DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despach/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM

PRIME MINISTER

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka

Your Reference

~~Top Secret~~

~~Secret~~

Confidential

~~Restricted~~

~~Unclassified~~

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....?

Lady Young has told me how much she enjoyed her recent visit to Sri Lanka and how much she appreciated ^{your} ~~the~~ kind hospitality that you extended to her.

~~One of the subjects that Lady Young raised with you was the UK-Ceylon Defence Agreement of 1947. As you know, parliamentary and public attitudes in Britain to military involvement in problems not directly related to our own security or that of our dependencies have changed substantially since the Agreement was concluded. I think it right therefore that I should let you know~~ In view of this change of attitudes, I have to tell you that we would find it difficult to justify any provision of military assistance, other than training, under the Agreement in any circumstances, including external threat, connected with the internal situation in Sri Lanka.

You will recall, of course, that the Agreement provides for the Governments to give each other such military assistance as it may be in their mutual interest to provide.

I fully understand the sensitivity of this issue. But I thought it right to make our position clear. Of course, we remain very willing to continue to provide help

/where

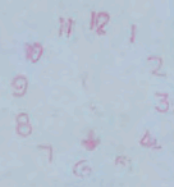
Enclosures-flag(s).....

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where we can with military and police training in the United Kingdom. Please let me know if there is any further help you would like from us in this field.

19 OCT 1984



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