



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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*John Charles*

Venice Summit: India/Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankans have suggested that the Venice Summit should issue a statement on India/Sri Lanka. We have been non-committal in reply but urged them to make their case to the other Venice participants and in particular to the Italians.

The situation in the sub-continent is beginning to ease. We have no interest in fuelling further tension. The Twelve have issued a statement this afternoon which takes care to avoid pointing the finger at the Indians but which urges both sides to resume the peace process.

Our interest lies in avoiding a row with the Indians (it is just possible that Mr Gandhi may be planning to send the Prime Minister a message). While one has to recognise the political pressures on him to take some action in response to the recent offensive in Jaffna, the Indian action in making an airdrop of relief supplies despite Sri Lankan objections was a clear violation of Sri Lankan sovereignty and one which has drawn considerable condemnation.

We have not yet been able to tell the Foreign Secretary of this development. We imagine that if the Italians do decide to raise the issue in Venice, they will do so at Foreign Minister level. You will wish to be aware of the suggestion, however, and to have by you the enclosed texts of what the FCO Spokesman said on 3 June and the Twelve have said today. We have of course made no commitment to the Sri Lankans and do not plan to raise the issue ourselves.

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FCO SPOKESMAN AT 1230 HOURS, 3 JUNE 1987

INDIA/SRI LANKA

In answer to a question, spokesman said that the FCO was greatly concerned at the possibility of military confrontation between Sri Lanka and India over the provision of relief supplies to Jaffna. He noted the Government of Sri Lanka had said that they were prepared to accept the Indian offer, providing that agreement could be reached on how the supplies were to be delivered and distributed. We had been in touch with the Governments of both countries to urge them to reach early agreement on these modalities.

We had been watching the situation in Sri Lanka closely. We much regretted that it had not so far been possible to reach a peaceful settlement to the internal conflict. Together with the other members of the European Community, we had condemned the incidents of terrorism which have caused so many civilian casualties. We were shocked at the news on 2 June of a most brutal massacre of Buddhist monks. We recognised the responsibility of the Sri Lankan Government to maintain law and order throughout the country, but agreed with them that a negotiated settlement was the only way of securing a lasting solution acceptable to everyone concerned in the conflict.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY STATEMENT; 5 JUNE 1987

The Twelve members states of the European Community have followed with grave concern developments in relations between India and Sri Lanka in the course of the last few days. They consider that, whatever the motive may be for actions taken by one side or the other, the parties concerned should avoid any heightening of tension in the region.

They express the firm hope for detente in Indo/Sri Lankan relations, without which no solution to the central problem - the ethnic conflict now dividing Sri Lanka - will be possible.

Recalling their joint declarations of 25 February 1986, 14 July 1986 and 27 April 1987, the Twelve deplore the fact that it has not yet been possible to put into effect a peaceful solution to the internal conflict. They renew their condemnation of terrorist activity which has claimed many civilian victims. The Twelve have been profoundly shocked by the recent brutal massacre of Buddhist monks.

The Twelve recognise the Sri Lankan Government's responsibility to maintain law and order, and remain convinced that a negotiated settlement is the only means of finding a lasting solution acceptable to all parties concerned.

Secrétariat

Les représentants de la Présidence des Douze pays de la Communauté Européenne à New-Delhi et à Colombo ont été chargés le 5 juin 1987 de communiquer aux Gouvernements indien et sri-lankais le texte de la :

Déclaration commune au sujet de la tension  
entre l'Inde et le Sri-Lanka

5 juin 1987

"Les douze pays membres de la Communauté Européenne ont suivi avec une vive inquiétude les développements des relations entre l'Inde et le Sri-Lanka au cours de ces derniers jours. Ils considèrent que, quels que soient les motifs des actions entreprises de part et d'autre, les parties en cause doivent éviter tout accroissement de la tension dans la région.

Ils expriment le ferme espoir d'une détente des relations indo-sri-lankaises, sans laquelle aucune solution ne sera possible au problème central qu'est le conflit ethnique déchirant le Sri-Lanka.

Rappelant leurs déclarations communes des 25 février 1986, 14 juillet 1986 et 27 avril 1987, les Douze déplorent qu'il n'ait pas été possible à ce jour de mettre en oeuvre un règlement pacifique de ce conflit interne. Ils renouvellent leur condamnation des actions terroristes qui ont fait de nombreuses victimes civiles. Le récent massacre brutal de moines bouddhistes les a profondément choqués.

Les Douze reconnaissent au Gouvernement sri-lankais la responsabilité du maintien de l'ordre légal et partagent la conviction qu'un règlement négocié est le seul moyen de trouver une solution durable et acceptable pour toutes les parties en cause."