

Classification

Department of State

TELEGRAM

INDICATE:

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9 Feb 73 1715

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ACTION: SECSTATE WASDC
INFO: Amembassy LONDON
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X SECDEF
DOD/ISA
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CINCPAC

COLOMBO: 379

CINCPAC PASS POLAD

SUBJECT: GSL DECIDES DEFER MAP TRAINING

1. SUMMARY: GSL has decided not rpt not pursue request for CONUS training for SLAF but defer for consideration later. Decision apparently based on PM's wish maintain even balance between US and USSR and avoid sending any trainees to Soviet Union. Embassy believes reported view of PM that training in Sri Lanka would be acceptable should not rpt not be accepted. Recommend opportunity for small CONUS training program be kept open. END SUMMARY.

DRAFTED BY:

DATT: Cdr Seger:jk

DRAFTING DATE

2-9-73

TEL EXT.

240

APPROVED BY:

ADCM:HGwing *[Signature]*

CLEARANCES:

CLASSIFIED BY _____
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR
INTERVALS AND DECLASSIFIED ON
DECEMBER 31, 11
DECLASSIFIED
A/ISS/IPS, Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
October 11, 2007

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2. Mission has received MDFA note dated February 1 thanking Sri Lanka Air Force personnel under MAP US for offer to train ~~SLAF/SLAF~~ but stating that on further consideration/its immediate requirements and priorities GSL had decided not rpt not to pursue courses but defer consideration until later date. Ministry expressed hope it would be possible to revert to offer again "if and when the need arises in the future."
3. Army chief General Attygalle (who had an FY 1974 US MTP request ready) told Defense Attache he was surprised at PM's decision and had taken matter up with MDFA Secretary Jayasinghe who ascribed cause to internal GSL Cabinet pressure. According to Attygalle, both Minister of Fisheries George Rajapakse and Minister of Industries T.B. Subasinghe (both left wing members SLFP) have been pressing PM to approve proposed Soviet fisheries agreement and for permission send officers of both ministries to USSR for training. PM, Attygalle said, has been adverse to training Ceylonese in Soviet Union and thus far has withstood pressure by citing Sri Lanka's non-alignment policy. She allegedly feels acceptance US offer would make difficult refusal of Soviet offers.
4. General Attygalle suggested to Jayasinghe that American Ambassador be so informed in order clarify grounds for rejection. Director General Foreign Affairs Vernon Mendis then called into meeting and said Prime Minister had considered this, as she did not rpt not want her effort to

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IMPROVE

improve GSI-US relations to be affected. According Attygalle, Mendis went on to say PM concerned that her effort to support US at UN on terrorism issue had QUOTE backfired UNQUOTE and did not want decision on military training to give more concern. She had decided, however, it would be ^{unwise} ~~advisable~~ to reveal officially to Ambassador extent of internal Cabinet difficulties. Mendis then allegedly told General that latter could informally and confidentially convey above information to DATT.

5. During Army Commander's discussion he was also told PM had no rpt no objection to US military training team coming to Sri Lanka, as USSR and PRC had had teams here to assist with equipment given after 1971 insurgency.

6. COMMENT: Adverse decision appears reflect PM's continuing suspicion of Soviet motives and activities in Sri Lanka and should not be interpreted as change in her attitude toward US. Air Commodore Paddy Mendis explained to DATT that extended discussions between MDFA and PM centered around search for acceptable alternatives that would allow US training without forcing PM to take Soviet training as well. These included paying for training— too expensive; paying for only one or two courses— unacceptable to SLAF; and asking USG to provide under non-military label— infeasible. With none of alternatives acceptable, decision made to postpone issue.

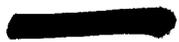
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7. Sri Lanka currently authorized CONUS training only. Mission believes it not rpt not in US interest provide in-country training team should, in fact, such request be forthcoming, as presence US military neither in consonance current policy low-visibility nor would it provide desired exposure to US concepts envisaged in CONUS program. Recommend, however, US keep open opportunity for modest CONUS program should PM feel such training could be acceptable in next year or so. Meanwhile Sri Lanka armed forces personnel will continue to receive/~~some~~^{some} training in India, Pakistan, UK, Australia and Canada.

CVH
VAN HOLLEN



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