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Indo-Sri Lanka Joint Communiqué

29 January, 1974

At the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Sirimavo R.D. Bandaranaike, visited India from January 22, 1974. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka expressed her pleasure in re-visiting India and participating in India's Republic Day Celebrations. The Prime Minister was deeply touched by the warm and spontaneous welcome extended to her by the Government and people of India and conveyed to them cordial greetings and good wishes on behalf of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka stopped in Madras on her way to Delhi. The Prime Minister was accorded a civic reception on January 24, 1974. The Prime Minister visited the G.B. Pant Agricultural University at Pant Nagar and the Buddhist Stupa in Sanchi where she performed the opening ceremony of a Buddhist Library. On her return journey, the Prime Minister visited Bombay.

During the stay in Delhi, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka called on the President of India. The Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka had several meetings in which they exchanged views on international developments and discussed bilateral matters. The Minister of External Affairs, the Minister of Planning and the Minister of Commerce called on the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka was assisted at the talks by Mr. W.T.

Jayasinghe, Secretary, Defence and Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Justin Siriwardene, High Commissioner for Sri Lanka in India, Dr. H.A. de S. Gunasekera, Secretary, Planning and Economic Affairs, and other officials.

The Prime Minister of India was assisted by Sardar Swaran Singh, Minister of External Affairs, Shri Surendra Pal Singh, Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Shri Kewal Singh, Foreign Secretary, Shri P.N. Dhar, Secretary to the Prime Minister, Shri V.H. Goelhe, High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka, and other officials.

The Prime Ministers reviewed recent developments in the international situation and were happy to find a close identity of views. They welcomed the trend towards peace in various parts of the world, but noted that tensions persisted in other areas of the world. They expressed the hope that the trend would develop further and cover all areas of the world.

The Prime Ministers discussed the situation in West Asia and emphasised the importance and urgency of a settlement on the basis of United Nations Resolutions. The Prime Ministers welcomed the Disengagement Agreement between Egypt and Israel signed on January 18, 1974 as a step towards peace. They hoped that a just and lasting solution would be achieved on the basis of the principle of inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by force and respect for the legitimate rights of all States and peoples in the region.

The Prime Ministers felt that the war of October 1973 in West Asia had focussed attention on need for ensuring that the Indian Ocean becomes a Zone of peace, free from Great Power rivalry. The Prime Ministers reviewed the progress that had been made so far in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of December, 1971 on the Indian Ocean as a Zone of peace. They agreed that there is greater realisation among States that the implementation of this Declaration will contribute to strengthening of international peace and security. They noted with satisfaction the progress made by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean and also the Resolution adopted at the 28th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. In this context the Prime Ministers reaffirmed their support for the concept of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, free from Great power rivalry, tension and military escalation. They expressed concern at the continuing Great Power rivalry in the Indian Ocean and agreed that the creation of a zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean will be a positive step towards the reduction of tensions and rivalries in this region. They expressed the hope that the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean would coordinate their efforts for the successful implementation of this Declaration.

The Prime Minister expressed their concern that peace had not yet been restored in Indo-China. They emphasized that effective implementation of the Agreement on Ending the War and restoring peace in Vietnam and the Agreement on the Restoration of Peace and National Reconciliation in Laos was essential for the

restoration of peace. They also expressed the hope for an early and peaceful settlement in Cambodia in conformity with the interests of the people of that country.

The Prime Minister of India explained the latest developments in the sub-continent subsequent to the Joint Indo-Bangladesh Declaration of April 17, 1973, to resolve the humanitarian problems resulting from the conflict of 1971. The Prime Minister of India also mentioned the several initiatives India had taken to advance the cause of normalisation of relations, permanent peace and cooperation in the sub-continent. In this context the Prime Minister of India referred to the Indo-Pakistan Agreement of August 28, 1973 signed at Delhi. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka expressed her satisfaction that the sub-continent was now progressing towards normalcy. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka appreciated the efforts of the Government of India for peace in the sub-continent.

The Prime Ministers re-affirmed their adherence to the principles of non-alignment and agreed that the policy of non-alignment had been vindicated by recent developments. They agreed that cooperation between non-aligned countries for giving greater viability to their economies would enable them to resist external pressure and greatly strengthen effectiveness of the forces of non-alignment. The two Prime Ministers agreed that the Algiers Summit Conference clearly brought out the validity of the concept of non-alignment in the present international situation and that the non-aligned countries should continue their efforts towards bringing about lasting peace. The Prime Minister of India stated

that India attached great importance to the next Non-Aligned Summit Conference which will be held in Colombo. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka stated that as this would be the first Summit to be held in Asia, she was deeply conscious of the great responsibility entrusted to Sri Lanka and she looked forward to receiving the closest cooperation from the Government of India. The Prime Minister of India assured the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka that her Government would be happy to cooperate in every way possible to make the summit a success.

The Prime Ministers reviewed the economic and technical cooperation between the two countries and expressed satisfaction at the progress made in strengthening mutual ties in these fields. They noted that in accordance with the directive given in the Joint Communique issued on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister of India to Sri Lanka in April 1973, the Joint Committee had met on two occasions, apart from the visits of expert delegations dealing with specific projects. The Prime Ministers noted that satisfactory progress had been made in several useful projects such as the Microwave link and Cattle and Sheep Breeding Centres and some new promising projects had been identified for further study. They also noted that technical experts had been exchanged between the two countries in the development of mica mines, sugar technology and other fields of scientific interest.

The Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka reviewed the progress in implementing the Indo-Ceylon Agreement of 1964,

and agreed that the implementation was proceeding satisfactorily.

The Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka also discussed the question of the 150,000 persons left over in the 1964 Agreement for a later decision. It was agreed that the Government of Sri Lanka would confer citizenship on 75,000 of this number and that India would accept for repatriation 75,000. They noted with satisfaction that with the full implementation of the 1964 Agreement and the present agreement relating to the 150,000 persons, the two countries would have finally settled the problem of all persons of Indian origin in Sri Lanka.

The Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka discussed Kacachativu and related matters; satisfactory progress was made during these discussions and as a result it was agreed that a decision will be taken in the very near future regarding the boundary in the historic waters between India and Sri Lanka between the Palk Straits and Adam's Bridge.

The Prime Ministers expressed their satisfaction over the results of their discussion which were conducted in a spirit of mutual understanding. They were convinced that the visit of the Sri Lanka Prime Minister was a landmark in the relations between the two countries and

had contributed to a further strengthening of their warm and friendly relations. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka expressed her appreciation of the hospitality extended to her and her party during her stay in India.

The two Prime Ministers agreed that they would maintain close contact with a view to fostering further the understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

P.I.B.