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**REPORT OF  
INTELLIGENCE ANALYST VISIT TO  
SOUTH ASIA  
28 SEP — 14 OCT**

Published Under Authority of the  
CHIEF INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY  
NDHQ, OTTAWA

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1776-CIS (DDI)

23 November 1988

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REPORT OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYST  
VISIT TO SOUTH ASIA

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26 Oct 88

REPORT OF INTELLIGENCE ANALYST  
VISIT TO SOUTH ASIA

GENERAL

1. (C) During the period 28 September - 14 October Capt Barnes, the South Asia analyst in the Directorate of Defence Intelligence, conducted a visit to South Asia to discuss the military situation in the region. The following capitals were visited on the dates indicated:

- a. Islamabad - 28 Sep - 3 Oct;
- b. Delhi - 5 - 8 Oct; and
- c. Colombo - 10 - 14 Oct.

Discussions were held with a number of embassy political officers, allied military attaches, academics, and others with insight into the military and security situation in South Asia. A list of all sources used for the report is included at Annex A.

AIM

2. (C) The aim of this report is to summarize the discussions held during the trip as a means of presenting the major points of intelligence value.

3. (C) The report is divided into four sections dealing with the countries of major concern in South Asia: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. Information is current as of the dates of discussion, as indicated above. Each paragraph deals with a specific topic and, unless otherwise indicated, is a synthesis of comments from a number of sources.

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AFGHANISTAN

Military Situation

4. (C) Soviet Withdrawal. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan is expected to be complete by the deadline of 15 February 1988, as stipulated in the Geneva Accord, and it is likely that at least some Soviet troops will remain in Kabul until that date. There was some speculation that the Soviets could withdraw the bulk of their forces prior to the onset of winter, but this was generally considered unlikely. The early return to the Soviet Union of most of the remaining forces in Afghanistan would leave any troops staying in Kabul vulnerable for several months. The Soviets appear confident that they will be able to carry out a winter withdrawal without major difficulty, and they may believe that withdrawing at that time will be a tactical advantage, since the Mujahideen are not well equipped for cold weather warfare. In the first phase of the withdrawal, prior to 15 August, the Soviets demonstrated their ability to move large numbers of troops quickly. On this basis, the Soviets could start the move of their last troops from Afghanistan towards the end of January, and still complete their withdrawal by 15 February.

5. (C) Mujahideen. Militarily, the Mujahideen are making steady but undramatic progress. The Afghan Army has adopted a defensive strategy, and has consolidated its forces around the major cities and a few smaller towns. As long as these garrisons can be resupplied, the Mujahideen can do little except harass the defenders with long range rocket fire. The Mujahideen publicly declare that they could take several of the more important cities at almost any time, but there are a number of factors that have prevented any major attacks to date. Mujahideen forces around these towns rarely outnumber the Afghan Army garrisons, and a direct attack in the face of heavy defensive firepower would result in high Mujahideen casualties. The Mujahideen wish to avoid casualties among civilians in the cities, both during the fighting or from retaliatory attacks by Soviet and Afghan aircraft. There are also major problems associated with administering and supplying captured towns. The PDPA regime has recognized the difficulty this poses for the Mujahideen, and may have abandoned some areas (such as the provincial capitals of Bamian and Taloqan) as much to burden the Mujahideen with administrative problems as for

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military reasons. In other areas, the Mujahidden have not allowed provincial governors to surrender their capitals, as they did not want the problems of administering them. The Mujahideen want to prepare the way for the surrender of the towns, but not to actually assume responsibility for them yet.

6. (C) Kabul. The Mujahideen are exerting pressure on Kabul, but to date most attacks have been limited to long range rocket fire. The security perimeter around Kabul is being consolidated at a distance of about 15-20 kms from the city. The Mujahideen have the capability of operating in the city, and have detonated a number of car bombs there, but generally they have refrained from taking the battle to the center of the city. Heavy fighting continues to the west of Kabul, and the Afghan Army has abandoned the Paghman area, 20 kms to the north-west, which is now one of the main launch sites for rocket attacks against the city.

7. (C) Kandahar. Fighting continues around Kandahar, and pressure on the garrison has increased since the fall of Spin Buldak, which controls a major supply route from the Pakistan border. There was speculation that the fall of Spin Buldak was precipitated by heavy Pakistani shelling of the town in response to Afghan Army artillery fire against Chaman, on the Pakistan side of the border. Areas of Kandahar are depopulated, and the defenders are concentrated at the airfield and in other positions around the town. Although the situation for the Afghan Army has deteriorated since the withdrawal of the Soviet garrison in August, the Mujahideen have not been able to co-ordinate their attacks and take the city. In addition to the problems outlined above which deter the resistance from launching an all-out attack to take a city, there are unique conditions which affect Kandahar. For historical and tribal reasons, the city is a royalist stronghold which supports the national Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) led by Gailani. NIFA is not strong enough to take the city alone and requires the assistance of other groups operating in the area. But the fundamentalist leaders are wary that if the city were to fall, Gailani might attempt to install King Zahir Shah there at the head of an interim government over which they would have no influence. For this reason, at the present time it is not in the interest of most Mujahideen groups to take Kandahar. The resistance will likely continue to exert pressure against the outposts around the city in preparation for a final attack, but they will probably delay that attack until the local political situation is resolved.

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8. (C) North. The capture of Konduz by the Mujahideen in August following the withdrawal of the Soviet garrison was not planned and largely happened by accident. The Jamiat-i-Islami (Rabbani) and the Hesb-i-Islami (Hekmatyar) had forces operating in the area, and when part of the Afghan garrison defected after the Soviets left, both groups felt they had to move quickly to ensure they got their share of the booty of arms and equipment abandoned by the Afghan troops. Because the attack was not properly co-ordinated, the Mujahideen were unable to take the airfield where the remaining defenders consolidated. Afghan government forces, reinforced from Baghlan and supported by Soviet artillery (which had quickly redeployed to Kunduz) and ground attack aircraft based in the Soviet Union, used the airfield as a base of operations to recapture the town.

9. (C) A number of the smaller Afghan government posts in the north, especially in Badakshan province, also fell during August and September. These smaller posts are often taken for the booty they yield, rather than for any military reason, and this is usually done on the initiative of local commanders without orders from their superiors. Feyzabad, the capital of Badakshan, is blockaded, but is not under attack, since the Mujahideen do not feel it is in their interest to take it yet. In areas where several guerrilla groups operate, Afghan troops who wish to defect may be deterred because they are unsure which leader to defect to. In areas where one resistance group dominates, it is usually easier for Afghan garrison commanders to negotiate large-scale defections. Taloqan, the capital of Takhar province, is still held by Masood of the Jamiat-i-Islami. There was speculation over whether this was part of the deal between Masood and the Soviets in which he agreed not to attack Soviet troops as they withdrew through his area of operations, or whether the town was just not important enough for the Afghan government to attempt to retake.

10. (C) East. At the end of September, Asadabad was under increasing pressure from the Mujahideen. The airfield has been captured and the garrison could only be resupplied by helicopter. Its fall would allow complete freedom of movement for Mujahideen supply and reinforcement convoys into the north-eastern provinces from Pakistan. The fall of Asadabad would also strengthen the position of the Mujahideen in eastern Afghanistan, but it was not expected to lead to an immediate attack on Jalalabad. The city is still a major commercial center and continued trade is important to the economy of Peshawar. Some of the tribes in the Jalalabad area are supporters of the PDPA regime because

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their traditional enemies are fighting on the side of the resistance, and a major battle for Jalalabad would likely lead to significant casualties among both the Mujahideen and civilians in the city. For these reasons, Jalalabad could be one of the last cities to be lost by the regime.

11. (C) West. Fighting in the west of Afghanistan appears to be largely stalemated. Herat is isolated, but not under active attack by the Mujahideen. Movement by Soviet and Afghan government forces is generally restricted to convoys along the major roads, which are protected by a series of piquets. The Mujahideen in the west appear to be biding their time until the Soviets leave.

12. (C) Centre. There is little fighting taking place in the central mountains of Afghanistan since the Afghan government has withdrawn most of its forces from the area. The provincial capital of Bamian was effectively abandoned by the government when it was declared it a neutral zone. The resistance may be allowing some officials of the provincial and town government to carry on with their duties under the supervision of the Mujahideen.

13. (C) Mujahideen Regular Army. Masood is establishing the nucleus of a Mujahideen regular army which he feels may be required for the final attacks on the remaining regime strongholds. The intention is to use this army as a concentrated force rather than splitting it up for smaller operations. It is being organized in Takhar province, possibly around Taloqan, and has a reported strength of about 3,000 men. Most of these men are members of Massoud's mobile units, which have now been concentrated in this new force. He has requested that Rabbani, leader of the Jamiat-i-Islami, send him 10,000 more men from which he will select those suitable for his force. These additional fighters are to come both from Jamiat combat groups not under Massoud's command and also from other Mujahideen groups which have co-operated with the Jamiat in recent operations. It is planned to split up these new men so that they will not form sub-units within the force. Quantities of arms and equipment have reportedly been stockpiled, but more equipment is required if even the rudimentary structure of a regular force is to be established. Masood recognizes that he needs more time to organize, equip and train this force, and it will probably not be used on operations until the new year. It will be a major challenge for Masood to create an effective regular army of this type, especially considering the independent nature of Afghans and the

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character of the war up until now. Only a few commanders will probably be willing to subordinate themselves to a larger organization set up on regular army lines. (The information contained in the above paragraph was largely obtained from Abdul Rahim, Jamiat-i-Islami Liaison Officer in Islamabad.)

Political Situation

14. (C) Shura. The leaders of the IUAM alliance based in Peshawar are attempting to agree on the selection process for a Shura, or assembly, which will form the basis of a government to replace the PDPA regime. The Shura would also be expected to endorse the cabinet led by Ahmed Shah which was earlier agreed upon by the seven leaders. The government of Pakistan is pressing the alliance to have some form of government structure in place by the time the PDPA regime falls. A Mujahideen government would be recognized by Pakistan as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, and serve as a conduit for international reconstruction aid. A commission has been established to frame the ground rules for selection of the Shura, but no agreement has been reached. The debate is over whether representatives from each district should be appointed by the traditional leaders or councils, by the dominant Mujahideen commander in each area, selected by elections in the free areas of Afghanistan and the refugee camps, or determined on the basis of the number of fighters each Mujahideen group has in the field. Each method would benefit some of the groups at the expense of the others. Although there may be some room for compromise by using several of these methods of selection, depending on conditions in each area, the differences between the groups seem to be so great that there is probably little chance that an effective Shura will be created. Only if the Pakistan government exerts great pressure on the Mujahideen to form some sort of government structure could there be any progress in this direction. If this does happen, the Mujahideen will probably not have much interest in the government they have created.

15. (C) Outlook. It is impossible to predict how long the PDPA regime will survive, but it will probably be able to hold onto some of the major cities for at least several months after the final withdrawal of Soviet troops. It is unclear what sort of government structure will succeed the present regime, but it will likely be based on some sort of loose confederation of the various ethnic and tribal groups

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that have traditionally dominated Afghan life. Although there could be some fighting between groups over areas of control, on the whole each group has traditional areas that are generally recognized by the others, and it is unlikely that there will be large-scale conflict between Mujahideen groups. Overall, the situation in Afghanistan is likely to be unstable for some time to come.

PAKISTAN

Strategic Situation

16. (C) Strategic Outlook. The strategic situation in South Asia is based on a pentagonal relationship involving Pakistan, India, China, the Soviet Union and the United States. Since the relationship is based on the national interests of each country, and since these interests remain relatively constant, there is unlikely to be any major change in the strategic situation of the region in the foreseeable future.

17. (C) USA. Relations between Pakistan and the United States have been stable for some time, and probably will remain the same, even with new governments in both countries. The two countries do not share a natural affinity, but they do have mutual interests and a shared view of the security requirements of the South Asian region. A Democratic government in the United States may have more to say about the Pakistani nuclear program, but will probably not let this affect overall policy towards Pakistan. Any new Pakistani government will have the same fundamental security concerns as the Zia regime, and in any case it will not really have the initiative to undertake a major change in relations with the United States.

18. (C) USSR. Both Pakistan and the Soviet Union would like to establish a less antagonistic relationship. Gorbachev has stated, in response to questions concerning Soviet support for India in any future war on the subcontinent, that Pakistan is a neighbour of the Soviet Union. This can be taken to mean that India no longer enjoys the unquestioning support of the Soviet Union. However, India plays a key role in Soviet policy towards the Third World. Indo-Soviet foreign policy and defence ties will always overshadow the Soviet desire for better relations with Pakistan. Pakistan will always regard the Soviet union with mistrust, since the Soviets are the major

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supplier of modern weapons to India, which are clearly aimed at Pakistan. The best that can realistically be hoped for, and both sides probably agree on this aim, are guarded but not unfriendly relations, which do not negatively impact on other interests of either nation.

19. (C) PRC. The excellent relations between Pakistan and China are unlikely to alter as there is no incentive to change a relationship that has such clear advantages for both sides. Pakistan can rely on support from China in its dealings with India, and China gains an important ally on the subcontinent.

20. (C) India. Relations between Pakistan and India will continue to be very poor since there are so many areas of contention. New governments in either Pakistan or India are unlikely to alter this. The national interests of both countries remain unchanged and in conflict with each other. A new government in Delhi may be less belicose and attempt to play down anti-Pakistani rhetoric, but domestic political considerations may make this impossible. The Sikh problem in the Punjab was created by the insensitive policies of the central government, but Delhi puts the blame on Pakistan. India accuses Pakistan of supporting the terrorists, but when challenged Delhi will not specify where the terrorist camps are located. The confrontation over the Siachen Glacier was an artificial problem created by Indira Gandhi to gain support prior to the 1984 Indian general election. The area has no strategic or economic value, but now it has become a matter of national prestige for both sides. Pakistan will not accept the status quo in Kashmir and refuses to let the issue die. India would like Pakistan to annex the Northern Areas (the area of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan) outright, thereby accepting the present situation which has changed very little since 1948. But it costs Pakistan nothing to keep the issue open. It will not change unless India can be made to pay an appropriate price, and this is very unlikely. Underlying the continued poor relations between both countries is Pakistan's refusal to accept Indian claims and ambitions to be the dominant regional power in South Asia. This refusal to accept what appears to the Indians to be self-evident infuriates Delhi, and sets the tone for all relations between the two countries. Militarily, Pakistan has accepted the fact that it can no longer achieve rough parity in strength with Indian forces along the Indo-Pakistan border. Islamabad realizes that it cannot prevail on the battlefield, but it hopes to

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have a sufficient deterrent in place to make an Indian attack too costly to be worth attempting. (The information contained in paragraphs 16 to 20 was obtained largely from LGen (Ret'd) A.I. Akram, President of the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad.)

Pakistani Military

21. (C) Army Expansion. The recent expansion of the Pakistani Army, which centred on the creation of two new corps, has now been largely completed, and it is unlikely that any more major formations will be created in the near future. The Army is now concentrating on bringing the newly-formed formations up to strength, since many are now no more than cadre strength. Much of the expansion came from stripping other formations and consolidating independent units. The actual increase in the size of the Army was about 50,000 to 60,000 troops, bringing the total strength of the Army to approximately 500,000 men. The major problem the Army is now encountering is not the lack of manpower, but the lack of modern equipment for the units now in existence.

22. (C) Equipment Purchases. General Beg announced at the beginning of October that the Chinese T-80 will be the Pakistan Army main Battle Tank for the 1990's. They are to cost approximately one million dollars each, but the financing arrangements were not specified. The total number to be ordered was not announced. The Army had tested the US M1 MBT extensively, but were not fully satisfied with the trials. The gunnery system proved reliable and easy for Pakistani gunners to operate, but problems were encountered with fuel filters which became easily clogged by fuel impurities. The high cost was also a major cause of concern. The possibility remains that a small number of M1s may be purchased by Pakistan in order to fill the gap until the Chinese T-80 deliveries begin, but no decision has been announced.

23. (C) The Pakistan Navy and Air Force are also obtaining new equipment. The Navy has leased eight frigates from the US and purchased two Leander class frigates from the UK. The Gearing class destroyers that presently make up the bulk of the Navy's ship strength will probably not be immediately decommissioned, but the Navy will have problems manning all its ships. The Air Force will receive 11 more F-16s. They would like more than that, but the high cost is prohibitive. The purchase of F-7M aircraft from China is

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continuing, with a probable total order of about 50 aircraft. The Air Force is not totally happy with the F-7, but the price is more acceptable. The Sabre II program, the joint Pakistani/Chinese project to update F-7s with western avionics, has been cancelled due to the high cost and only marginally improved performance of the upgraded aircraft.

24. (C) Siachen Operations. After the serious setbacks in September 1987 when the Pakistani Army suffered high casualties in attacks on the Indian positions, there has been little activity on the Siachen Glacier this year. It appears that Pakistan has accepted the status quo for the time being, and will concentrate on diplomatic means to keep the issue open. The Army will maintain a presence there to prevent any further Indian encroachments. It may try further military actions in the area of the negotiating process completely breaks down, but they are unlikely to succeed, considering the superior tactical positioning of the Indian forces in the area. Operations in the Northern Areas are not particularly expensive in manpower terms, given the size of the Army, but they do require a major logistic effort.

25. (C) Nuclear Program. Pakistan will persist with its nuclear policy, despite its almost overwhelmingly negative impact. It is a serious complication in relations with the United States. The existence of a Pakistani nuclear weapon could be a trigger for a war with India, which feels very threatened by Islamabad's nuclear policy. However, the Indian nuclear capability far surpasses that of Pakistan.

[REDACTED]

There are no targets of vital strategic importance to India within striking range of the Pakistani aircraft, but most major cities in Pakistan are relatively close to the border and therefore vulnerable. This strategic situation may change

[REDACTED]

Political Situation

26. (C) Zia's Death. The death of President Zia did not lead to a major crisis or unrest in Pakistan, as it might

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have been expected to do. On the whole the situation remained very calm and stable, and the actions of General Beg, the new Chief of the Army Staff, contributed greatly to this atmosphere. Beg has moved slowly in naming replacements for the officers who were killed. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was replaced by an admiral so Beg has not had to create a new four star general who might threaten his dominant position. Being able to carefully vet any new appointees for loyalty will greatly strengthen his position as COAS. Beg declares that he has no political ambitions, and all indications are that he genuinely believes that military involvement in politics is detrimental to the military.

27. (C) Elections. Elections for the National Assembly and Provincial Councils will go ahead as scheduled without interference by the military, who appear willing to accept a return to civilian rule. The Pakistan People's Party, under Benazir Bhutto, appears to be in a strong position, and has made a point of being more conciliatory towards the military. If the PPP is defeated in the vote it may protest violently, and there is a possibility that the Army could feel it was necessary to step in to restore order.

28. (C) Policy Changes. Pakistan's internal and external policies are unlikely to change significantly no matter what party comes to power in the election. Zia's Islamization program may be halted for the time being until a greater consensus is achieved on how it should be implemented. There is apparent general support for the aims of the program, but wide disagreement on how Islamization is actually to be achieved. Most parties broadly support Zia's Afghan policy, and support will be continued to the Mujahideen, although it may be more evenly distributed than in the past. Civilian political leaders may feel it is necessary to play on public feeling against India, and relations may deteriorate to an extent.

29. (C) Punjab. Quantities of arms are smuggled from Pakistan to the Sikh terrorist groups in the Punjab, but this is carried out by private individuals. There are plenty of weapons available in Pakistan and the Sikhs have ample money to pay for them. Smuggling of weapons, as well as drugs and consumer goods, across the border into India is a long-standing activity. Given the length of the border and the nature of the terrain it crosses, it is very difficult for the Pakistani authorities to completely halt smuggling.

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There are no indications that the government of Pakistan is actively supporting Sikh terrorists by either supplying arms or providing training, although Pakistani intelligence has made contacts with Sikhs in Pakistan, and sometimes assists them with visas and accommodation. It is not in Pakistan's interest to see the Punjab problem solved as long as it is causing major difficulties for the government in Delhi.

INDIA

Strategic Situation

30. (C) Strategic Goals. There is no real strategic threat to India; Pakistan is too weak, and China has no real motivation to attack India. India has become a regional power but, except for reasons of national prestige, it has no real need to project that power. It has no significant commercial or military interests in South-East Asia, and it has no influence in the Persian Gulf. India has acquired its military capability to give it the trappings of great power status. The national aspiration for such a status in the world has unquestioning political support. The desire for great power status along with the realization that they still have not achieved it, produces an attitude towards the outside world that is at the same time arrogant and lacking in confidence. This makes it difficult to predict how Delhi will react when it is faced with a challenge to its perceived role in the world.

31. (C) Pakistan. China is regarded as the only comparable power to India in Asia, and therefore as the greatest challenge to India's great power aspirations. However, Pakistan is viewed as the most immediate military threat, although Delhi believes that it can deal with Pakistan militarily with little real difficulty unless China were to intervene to help its ally. There are many circumstances that could lead to war between India and Pakistan, and a number of areas where Indian and Pakistani armed forces currently face each other. It is to be hoped that the two countries will be able to control any escalation of these border problems if they flare up. The Brass Tacks crisis in early 1987 showed that both sides could carry out fine calculations to prevent the situation from getting out of control, but there is always a danger of a breakdown of communications or independent action by lower level commanders. If such a situation got out of control, the two countries could find themselves in a war that

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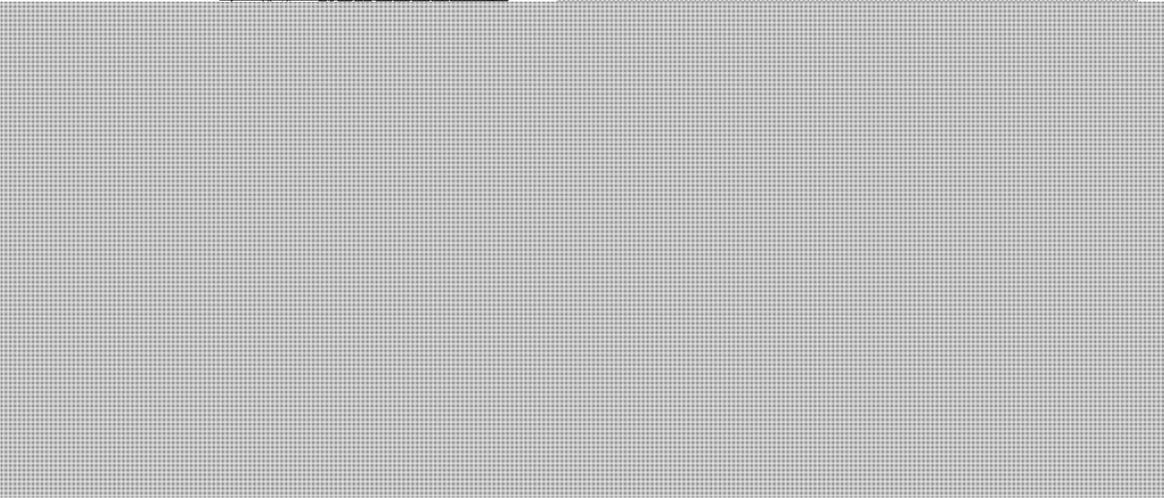
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neither side wanted. Any future war between India and Pakistan would probably remain limited in scope and duration. The logistic limitations of both armies preclude any dramatic military breakthroughs, and the superpowers would not likely tolerate a lengthy war. However, the potential presence of nuclear weapons on the subcontinent makes it difficult to predict the full scope of a future war.

32. (C) Nuclear Program. 



33. (C) Economy. The total impact of the Indian military build-up on the economy has not been fully addressed by Delhi, but it is unquestionably diverting huge amounts from development and industrial investment. The full extent of the military budget is not made public. Much of it (such as the nuclear program) is accounted for under civilian expenditure, and the barter arrangements in payment for much of equipment obtained from the Soviet Union may be excluded entirely. Politicians of all parties are very hesitant to even suggest slowing the growth of military expenditure. Almost without exception they accept the government's view of the threat to India and share the desire to make the country into an important power in the world.

Indian Military

34. (C) Operations. The Indian position on the Siachen Glacier may not be as strong as is generally believed. The extreme altitude of many of their forward positions make survival more difficult than for the Pakistani troops, which generally live at slightly lower altitudes. Casualties, which amount to perhaps as many as one fatality a day from

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altitude sickness, cold or avalanches, are a constant drain, and the logistic burden is enormous. Several thousand rounds are reportedly exchanged by Indian and Pakistani outposts on a daily basis. However, neither side is in a position to launch an effective large-scale attack to defeat the enemy. The situation is stalemated, and is unlikely to change for some time.

35. (C) In Sri Lanka, the military appears to be preparing to stay for the long haul. For example, policy is now for units to remain in place for a normal tour of two years before rotation. However, the Army has no clear idea of what it should do to solve the situation. They are hoping for a political solution, but this does not appear to be imminent. Morale among the troops had been low for some time since it was difficult to convince the average soldier why should be there. Morale may have improved somewhat towards the end of August when the troops were kept more active, but there is always the danger of sagging morale if the soldiers come to believe that they are not being allowed to win for political reasons. Initially, the Army had significant problems with obtaining proper intelligence. It is not clear that these problems have been dealt with, and there still appears to be a lack of co-ordination between the military and national intelligence organizations. The three services are gradually working out joint operations procedures, but they are making slow progress. Operations are also hampered by over-control by senior commanders and a lack of initiative at lower levels.

36. (C) Equipment. India is determined to become independent of outside suppliers by developing and producing all major types of arms and equipment indigenously. However, other than one class of frigate which was based on a modified British design, India has had no success with indigenous development. The Arjun MBT, Light Combat Aircraft, Advanced Light Helicopter and the naval nuclear propulsion project are all encountering major problems, and none has progressed beyond the prototype stage. The Indians have been forced to turn to outside suppliers, both for components for their development projects and for complete weapons systems. The alternative to indigenous development is licensed production, which India has invested in extensively. However, little progress has been made in increasing the Indian content in these weapons. Most license production is done from kits supplied from foreign sources. Indian factories have difficulty producing components of sufficient quality to mate with

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foreign produced parts. Production of parts by Indian factories is increasing, but many problems are still encountered.

37. (C) Logistics and Maintenance. The Indian armed forces have a serious problem with their logistics and maintenance systems. They are overly centralized, inflexible and overly bureaucratic. There are insufficient spare parts available, and units hoard what spares they have. The standard of maintenance is adversely affected by poor training. Indian mechanics are often good tinkerers, but while this may solve an immediate problem, it could cause more serious problems with that piece of equipment in the future. With the introduction of equipment of ever increasing complexity, the maintenance and supply problems are becoming worse. Following the Brass Tacks exercise, over 80 percent of the vehicles were reportedly unserviceable and required major maintenance work. The Navy and the Air Force take a more positive attitude towards maintenance and are generally better trained. However, they have a very critical supply problem caused by a combination of an inefficient supply system and a great variety of equipment from many different sources. When assessing Indian military capabilities these maintenance and supply problems must be taken into account. It is clear that Indian capabilities are not as great as their large equipment inventory might suggest. However, it must also be borne in mind that the Pakistani forces have very similar problems with supply and maintenance.

38. (C) Professionalism. The overall standard of professionalism among Indian officers appears to be declining. Their attitude is characterized by a reluctance to accept responsibility, and there is an increasing tendency to see things from the point of view of privileges rather than duties. There is a greater acceptance of petty corruption, for example of recruiting officers accepting bribes and standing on courses to be affected by favouritism. Certain regiments and corps still maintain high standards, but on the whole there is a decline. There is a great, and possibly widening gap between the officers and the other ranks, based on social, educational and financial standing. There is an outward adherence to the form but not the substance of the British traditions that were instilled in the Indian Army prior to partition. These traditions have been frozen in time and have not developed in a positive way with changing conditions in India. Some individual officers are very good, but they appear to be an increasing exception.

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39. (C) Military and Society. There appears to be a growing ambiguity of the military's role in Indian society. The military is regarded as one of the few truly "Indian" institutions; it transcends the narrower ethnic, linguistic and religious loyalties that can be a cause of friction, and unites men from all parts of the country into an organization with a common goal of defending the country. But the greatest security threats to India come from within its borders and the Army may be called upon to play an increasing role in maintaining internal order. The Army does not want to carry out this role, and Delhi is increasing the size of its para-military forces as a consequence, but in the end the military has the final responsibility for safeguarding the national security. This could lead to greater Army involvement in dealing with ethnic and religious unrest, especially in such areas as the Punjab, and in turn lead to a greater politicization of the military.

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deterioration in discipline, as evidenced by several excesses in Sri Lanka and more heavy-handed actions in internal security situations, could in turn lead to a loss of respect in the military by the public.

SRI LANKA

Security Situation

40. (C) Overview. The current situation in Sri Lanka, with major insurgencies in both the north-east and the south, is very serious. Because of the many actors and forces involved, it is possible to accurately predict the future course of events, even over the short term, except to say that the situation will almost inevitably deteriorate and the level of violence increase. There appears to be almost no hope for an early solution to the problems that affect the country, and as the death toll mounts, the possibility of compromise is reduced. The government of Sri Lanka has very little room for manoeuvre; it cannot give in to demands from the Tamil community without causing a violent backlash from extreme Sinhalese elements. The direct involvement of the Indian government and the presence on the island of the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) further complicates the situation without bringing it any closer to a solution.

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41. (C) Operations. In its offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) in late 1987, the IPKF struck a major blow against the military capabilities of the Tamil guerrillas. The insurgents have abandoned their attempt to hold towns such as Jaffna and reverted to more traditional guerrilla hit-and-run tactics. The IPKF has been more effective in its battle with the LTTE than the Sri Lankan military for several reasons. The Indians have much larger forces at their disposal: the present size of the IPKF is more than twice as large as the Sri Lankan military. The Sri Lankans were hampered in their operations by Indian support for the LTTE, but now the guerrillas no longer receive large scale resupply of arms and equipment from across the Palk Strait, and do not have camps in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu where they can rest and train. But the LTTE is still conducting attacks against Indian and Sri Lankan forces and attacking civilian targets in the north and east. The IPKF has a defensive mentality and although some operations are conducted against guerrilla camps, most Indian forces are employed in guarding convoys and camps, and in routine patrolling, where they are very vulnerable. The operations of the Para-Commando battalions, the most offensively minded of the Indian units, are hampered by lack of reliable intelligence on guerrilla activities and camp locations. They have therefore not been successful in capturing the top LTTE leadership. The Indian military is also frustrated by what they consider political interference in their operations. There is little coordination between Indian political and military actions, and there have been occasions when Delhi has declared a unilateral ceasefire in an attempt to win over the Tamil leadership, just when the military felt it was ready to deal a major blow to the LTTE. Reportedly, [REDACTED]

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However, the LTTE is probably still recruiting new members from among the young and unemployed. The present situation in the north-east is a stalemate. The IPKF is unlikely to gain any major successes against the LTTE unless it adopts a more offensive attitude or is massively reinforced, neither of which appears likely. It is also unlikely that the IPKF will expand its operations into other areas of the island, even if the security situation in the south deteriorates considerably. The Accord stipulates that the Indian forces are to be deployed only in the north-east, and the IPKF is fully committed in that area. Expanding operations would stretch IPKF manpower further and create even greater Sinhalese opposition to the Indian military presence on Sri Lanka.

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42. (C) LTTE. The leadership of the LTTE is still apparently able to maintain the discipline of the rank and file, and to control the various factions within the group. There is no sign that the LTTE will seriously accept negotiations, and there is a possibility that greater military pressure will only harden their fanaticism. The motivation of LTTE members is very complex, involving elements of Marxist ideology, a strong belief in a separate Tamil homeland, and the status and self-esteem that being a fighter entails. Many believe very strongly in the goal they are fighting for, some to the point of being willing to commit suicide for the cause. Most of the LTTE rank and file are from the lower castes, poorly educated and unemployed, and they have found that carrying a gun gives them a status in their society they could never hope to gain in any other way.

43. (C) JVP. Hardcore support for the National Liberation Front (Janatha Vimukti Peramuna - JVP) is limited almost entirely to unemployed youth in the south. The organization probably has no more than 100 to 300 active guerrilla fighters and has few modern weapons. The JVP is motivated primarily by Sinhalese chauvinism, but is also strongly influenced by Marxist ideology, even to the extent of talking to Tamil militant groups that share similar political views. It identifies Sri Lanka nationalism very narrowly in terms of Sinhalese Buddhist interests. There may also be a degree of caste motivation (which still exists even in Buddhist society). JVP support is concentrated in the south where there is a higher concentration of lower caste Sinhalese, including large numbers of the warrior caste. Although most Sinhalese probably do not agree with the violent actions of the JVP, many generally support their goals. The JVP appeals to the desire of the rural poor for a better life, and plays on the discontent generated by the unequal distribution of development benefits. There is also a strong feeling that the government is giving up too much to the Tamils under pressure from the Indians, and a fear for the continued existence of a Buddhist society in the predominantly Hindu South Asian region. The success of general strikes called by the JVP is due to a combination of genuine support and a fear of reprisals, which the JVP have demonstrated that they will not hesitate to take. The JVP has established links with the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), the main opposition party. The SLFP may try to gain the support of the JVP by promising it some cabinet positions if a SLFP government is elected. If this alliance of convenience does come about it will probably not last long, since there is little convergence of interest between the two groups other than opposition to the present government.

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44. (C) Elections. A critical step in the implementation of the Indo-Sri Lankan Accord of July 1987 is the holding of elections for the council of the newly-created North-Eastern Province, now scheduled for mid-November. In the north, where the LTTE is strongest, the Tamil parties that are participating in the election have divided up the seats. Since no other groups have put forward nominations, those candidates will be proclaimed elected and there will be no need to carry out balloting, which will greatly ease the security problems. The LTTE does not support the election, and would probably succeed in totally disrupting voting in the north. In the east, where the ethnic balance is more even, the election will be contested by Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim groups. The LTTE may try to disrupt the election, but this may not be an effective tactic if Tamils are dissuaded from voting, thereby giving the seats to candidates from the other communities. For this reason, and because security in the east will be massively stepped-up, it appears that the election will proceed. Even with a very small voter turnout, both the Sri Lankan and Indian governments will probably declare that the elections were a success and prove that the Accord is still on track. Indian diplomats view this process in a much more positive light than Sri Lankan officials (who still feel the elections will be disrupted by violence), and believe that an elected council, dominated by Tamils and probably sitting in Trincomalee, will be able to effectively govern the North-Eastern Province and serve as a conduit for international reconstruction aid. This, in the Indian view, will allow the Tamil moderates to undermine support for the LTTE, and possibly bring them into the political process. However, some Sri Lankan officials believe that, even if the elections are not totally disrupted by violence, the council will not be able to govern effectively. Because it is impossible to guarantee the security of the council members in the north-east, the council will probably have to sit in Colombo, where it will be irrelevant to events in the province.

45. (C) Indian Policy, The Indian government is faced with the dilemma of continuing a massive military presence on Sri Lanka, which is very costly in terms of casualties and resources, for an indefinite period, or of cutting its losses by withdrawing and suffering the political consequences of failure. There is disagreement among the different elements of the Indian policy making community over the next step to take, but there appears to be growing support for the withdrawal of the IPKF as soon as possible.

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The main difficulty is the question of how to present such a withdrawal to the Indian public and international observers. The Indians are increasingly taking the line that the Accord is progressing well and that the IPKF will soon have accomplished its mandate. Delhi may then unilaterally withdraw its troops, saying that now that the Accord is in place, it is up to the Sri Lankan government and provincial councils to make the Accord work through negotiations. Indian intelligence officers in Colombo believe that the establishment of a council for the North-Eastern Province will be sufficient evidence that the Accord is working, and that the role of the IPKF could therefore be ended. They argue that there is no obligation under the Accord, either explicit or implied, that requires the Indians to disarm all guerrilla groups and bring them into the political process. This may have been the original hope, but conditions had changed considerably. Now it would be sufficient that the structure of the Accord was in place and beginning to work; it would then be up to the government to Colombo and the Tamil council of the North-Eastern Province to negotiate the details of the Accord's implementation, without Indian involvement. The practical details of whether the Sri Lankan armed forces could deal with continuing insurgency campaigns in both the south and north-east appeared to be ignored.

46. (C) Although the Indian government may wish to end its involvement in what is turning out to be protracted counter-insurgency campaign in Sri Lanka, it will probably try to ensure that the withdrawal of its troops appears to be due to the success of Indian policy, rather than appearing to be forced out by the Sri Lankan government. Both major Sri Lankan political parties have stated that they will ask the IPKF to leave the island following the December presidential elections. The Indian government could respond to this by threatening to withdraw their troops (which they are obliged to do if requested by Colombo) very quickly and leaving behind quantities of arms and equipment which would probably be seized by the LTTE before the Sri Lankan government could establish effective control over the area. Faced with the possibility of having to fight a rearmed LTTE in the north-east as well as the JVP in the south, Colombo would probably find it impossible to force the Indians to leave. In the end, however, if the Indians can find no other suitable excuse to justify their withdrawal, they may accept Sri Lankan demands that they

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leave and blame the ensuing turmoil on Colombo. In calling for the withdrawal of the IPKF, both major Sri Lankan parties show little appreciation for the fact that the Sri Lankan military will be unable to deal with the situation on its own.

Sri Lankan Military

47. (C) Army. The overall quality of the Sri Lankan Army is probably higher than had been generally appreciated earlier. Sri Lankan operations conducted against the LTTE in the Jaffna Peninsula in May 1987 compared favourably with IPKF operations in the same area later in the year. Indian successes have largely been due to the greater resources they have, rather than any greatly superior fighting ability. The Army is presently being reorganized into a two division structure, and the process is not yet complete. Units are not up to strength and numerous staff positions have not been filled. This is part of the major expansion of the military that has taken place over the past five years, during which the Army has changed from a small, largely ceremonial force into a much more operational organization with hard-gained experience in counter-insurgency warfare. The expansion over a relatively short period of time has resulted in lower training standards in some areas, and possibly a decline in the standard of officers, although both of these problems have been recognized and are being dealt with. With the rapid expansion, proper vetting of recruits was not always carried out, and a number of JVP members and sympathizers were recruited into the military. Many of these soldiers have probably already deserted or been weeded out, and although many members of the military (which is almost entirely Sinhalese) may sympathize with the goals of the JVP, there are probably few hardcore members of the JVP remaining in the Army. However, the Air Force may still be having problems with dissident elements.

48. (C) Special Task Force. The Special Task Force (STF) is theoretically a component of the Sri Lankan Police, but it operates completely independently. It reports to President Jaywardene's son, who has special responsibility for security, rather than through the Inspector General of Police. The STF is a paramilitary force with a strength of approximately 1500, recruited from police personnel. Some of its officers come from the police, while others are recruited directly, although this second method does not always produce officers of the required standard. The STF

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has been trained by KMS, a private British company employing ex-SAS personnel as instructors. The force is now doing most of its own training, and its reliance on British instructors has declined. The STF has earned a reputation for ruthlessness. Its brutal operations against the JVP in the south caused wide public protest, which forced the government to reassign it to security duties around Colombo in September. Earlier in the year it was also used against the Tamil guerrillas in the north-east. Both the Army and the Police resent the preferred treatment of the STF and the fact that it operates outside the normal chain of command.

49. (C) Discipline. The behaviour of the Army and Police in security operations is often brutal. The beating and torture of suspects is probably common procedure, and some captured insurgents may have been executed in retaliation for JVP activities. However, this treatment of prisoners is not yet accepted as normal by the general public, and often causes protests in the press and public demonstrations. This publicity serves to control somewhat the potential extreme excesses of the security forces.

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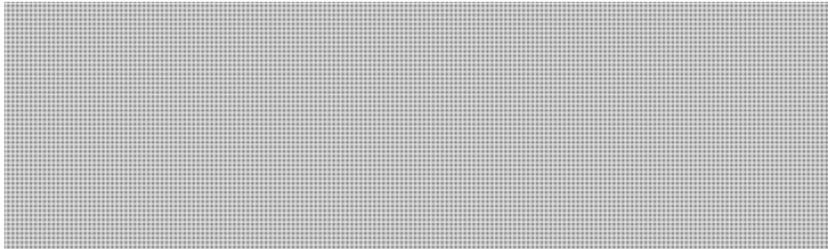
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ANNEX A  
TO 1776-CIS (DDI)  
DATED 28 OCT 88

PERSONS WITH WHOM DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD  
DURING ANALYST VISIT TO SOUTH ASIA  
27 SEP - 14 OCT 88

ISLAMABAD

Michael P. Martin  
Second Secretary, Political Officer  
Canadian Embassy



LGen (Ret'd) A.I. Akram  
President, Institute of Regional Studies



Maj Geordie Elms  
Deputy Commanding Officer, Canadian Contingent  
United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan



Institute of Strategic Studies



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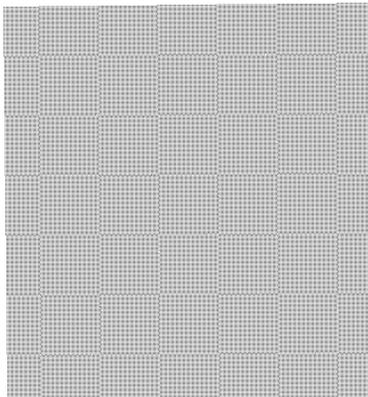
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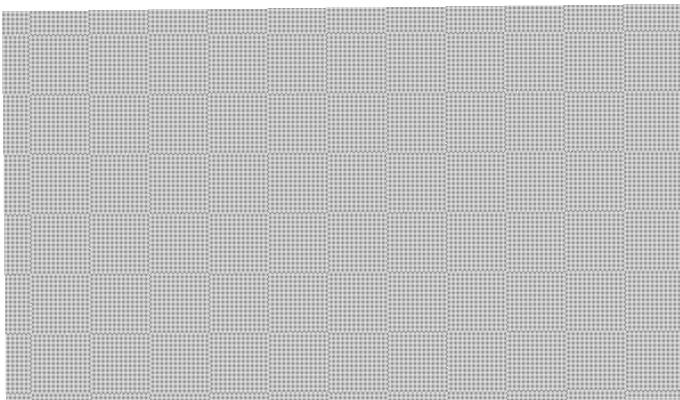
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ANNEX A  
TO 1776-CIS (DDI)  
DATED 28 OCT 88



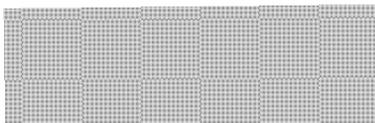
DELHI

Gary Soroka  
First Secretary, Political Officer  
Canadian High Commission



COLOMBO

Michael Temple  
Counsellor, Political Affairs  
Canadian High Commission



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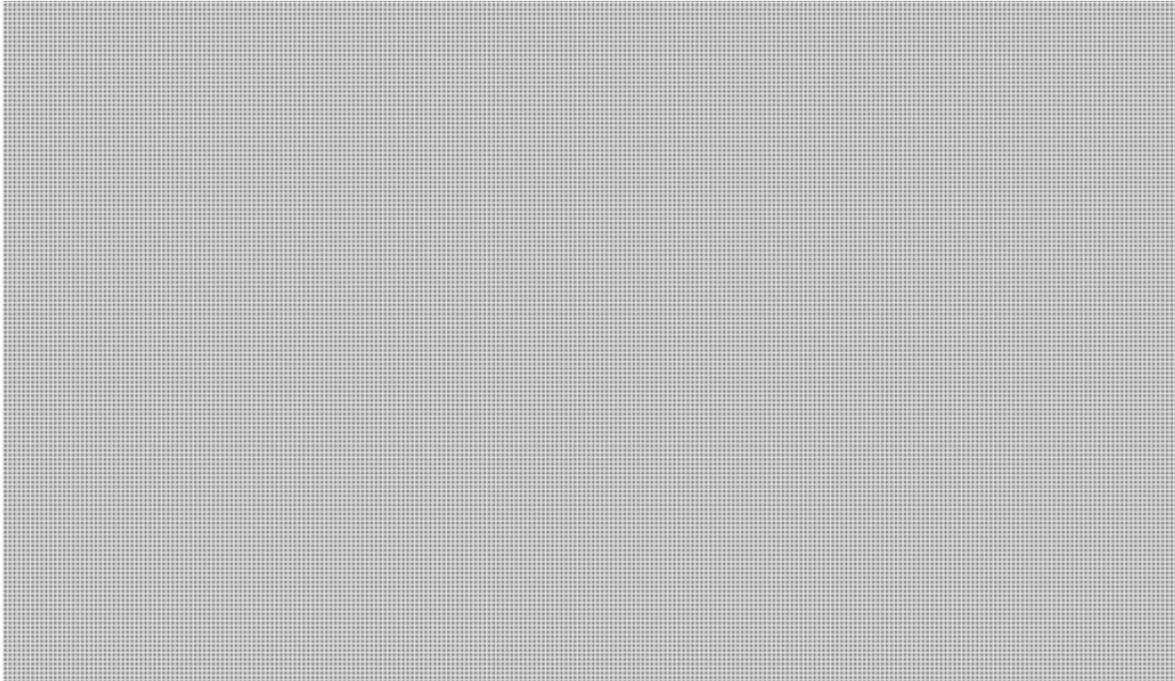
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ANNEX A  
TO 1776-CIS (DDI)  
DATED 28 OCT 88



[REDACTED]  
Sri Lankan Daily News

[REDACTED]  
Inter-Press Service

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