

Sri Lankan diplomat row escalates. (1986, September 24). *The Gazette*.

# Sri Lankan diplomat row escalates

OTTAWA (CP) — The controversy over past military activities of the Sri Lankan high commissioner to Canada threatened to become a full-blown diplomatic row yesterday.

Two Sri Lankan cabinet ministers issued statements, one saying Colombo wants the extradition of a Tamil refugee visiting Canada, and the other threatening reprisals against Canadian diplomats if Ottawa probes the envoy's record.

Canada's external affairs minister, Joe Clark, said although there are allegations of something dark in

the past of former Brig.-Gen. Tissa Weeratunga, there aren't enough facts to justify action yet.

Weeratunga served for six months as head of a special military force putting down Tamil insurgency in northern Sri Lanka in 1979. Later, he was chief of staff of the armed forces and after that the army commander responsible for the military response to the terrorist threat.

Tamil refugee Umapathisivan (Baby) Pararajasegaran Monday accused the high commissioner of torturing him in 1979.

Weeratunga denied it, and said Pararajasegaran was wanted on suspicion of murder.

The Sri Lankan government apparently issued a belated warrant for Pararajasegaran. An External Affairs official said there is no extradition treaty with Sri Lanka.

Neither Clark nor the official would discuss the apparent threat by acting Sri Lankan Foreign Affairs minister Tyrone Fernando to take action against Canadian diplomats in Colombo if inquiries are launched in Canada into Weeratunga.