

Sri Lankan head calls election for Feb.15. (1988, December 4). *The Ottawa Citizen*.

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WORLD

Sri Lankan head calls election for Feb. 15

COLOMBO (Reuter) — President Junius Jayewardene announced Saturday the dissolution of parliament and set Feb. 15 for Sri Lanka's first general election in more than a decade.

In a television and radio address, he also made it clear that after a separate presidential election on Dec. 19 he will retire after 45 years in politics, including 11 years as ruler of the Indian Ocean island.

Jayewardene, 82, said the dissolution of parliament would take effect on Dec. 20, the day after the presidential election. But in



Jayewardene
Retiring

an apparent rebuff to opposition demands, he said there was no need to hold parliamentary elections at the same time as the presidential poll.

General elections, last held in 1977, were not due until next August.

Jayewardene's move for an early election was seen by political analysts as an attempt to defuse the most widespread unrest Sri Lanka has seen since its independence from Britain in 1948.

Opposition demands for parliament's dissolution have snowballed among wide sections of society over the last two months.

The Marxist People's Liberation Front, drawn mostly from the majority Sinhalese community, wants to scrap an India-Sri Lanka pact signed by Jayewardene last year to end a revolt by minority Tamils.