

Sri Lanka threatens reprisals if envoy's credentials checked. (1986, September 24). *The Chronicle Herald*.

Sri Lanka threatens reprisals if envoy's credentials checked

OTTAWA (CP) — The controversy over the past military activities of the Sri Lankan high commissioner to Canada threatened to escalate into a full-blown diplomatic row Tuesday when the Sri Lanka government took the offensive in the dispute over its envoy's record as an anti-terrorist.

Two Sri Lankan cabinet ministers issued somewhat bizarre statements, one saying Colombo wants the extradition of a Tamil refugee visiting Canada and the other threatening reprisals against Canadian diplomats if Ottawa decides to inquire into the record of that country's high commissioner here.

Canada's external affairs minis-

ter, Joe Clark, added little to clarify the situation when he said there might be allegations of something dark in the past of former Brig.-Gen. Tissa Weeratunga, but that there aren't enough "true facts" to justify Canadian action against him at this stage.

He said cautious inquiries are being made by Canadian officials into allegations from several sources about an alleged record of torture and military excess by Weeratunga and his troops battling Tamil separatists since 1979.

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 Sri Lankan armed forces and after that the army commander, responsible for the military response to the terrorist threat.

The flap began coming to a head after Tamil refugee Umapathisivan (Baby) Pararajasegaran came to Ottawa Monday and held a news conference to accuse the high commissioner of torturing him while in detention in 1979.

Weeratunga insisted in an interview that he is innocent and denied ever harming a hair on Pararajasegaran's scarred head. He went on to say that Pararajasegaran was wanted in Sri Lanka for suspicion of murder.