

of Indian behaviour means that it must be considered doubtful that India would wait for an invitation to intervene in its neighbours problems in all situations.

The Sri Lanka Accord was a watershed in South Asian history because it was a clear signal to India's neighbours not to play external powers against it. However, it would be premature for Indian policymakers to assume that the support of, or lack of protest from, the major powers for India's actions in Sri Lanka and the Maldives establishes recognition of India's dominant role in the region. Although President Reagan commended Rajiv Gandhi's willingness to restore order and Margaret Thatcher praised "the speed and professionalism of India's response" to the Maldivian crisis, it is unlikely that similar Indian activity, particularly in areas of strategic interest to the superpowers, would be treated so magnanimously.¹⁶ The Rajiv Doctrine is, therefore, an inadequate tool for legitimizing India's broader regional aspirations because it is not a credible policy stance. The United States can enforce its Monroe Doctrine, to which Rajiv's is often compared, because no other state can challenge it militarily; India is not in a similar position. Not only would the superpowers oppose the Rajiv Doctrine if it did not suit their interests, Pakistan will never accept it. Moreover, comparison with the Monroe Doctrine is misleading. India may wish to restrict extra-regional influences, but there is no Indian equivalent to the economic domination the United States enjoys in the Western Hemisphere. Nevertheless, there is an unquestionable determination in New Delhi to exclude other powers from the region. The "Exchange of Letters" between the Indian Prime Minister and President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka, annexed to the Indo-Sri Lankan agreement, makes this perfectly clear and also says something about how India envisages its relationship with the neighbourhood.

The dominant focus in Gandhi's letter to Jayewardene is on what are unquestionably Sri Lanka's sovereign affairs. Sri Lanka "agreed to meet some of India's concerns" in areas where foreign powers might have had some impact on the regional security picture. There was to be an "early understanding about the relevance and employment of foreign military and intelligence

¹⁶ *Statesman*, New Delhi, November 13, 1988.