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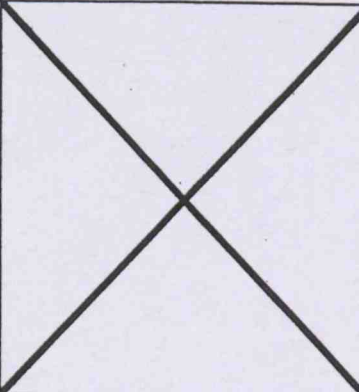
The Indian Ministers for Commerce,  
Shri Hitendra Desai, wished to call on  
the PM.

INDIA

Visits by subsequent Minister's  
to Commerce

September 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
<del>26-9-79</del>							
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<div data-bbox="468 1037 1527 1303" data-label="Text">PREM 19/2242</div> <div data-bbox="60 1276 503 1649" data-label="Text">   CLOSED </div>							

DEPARTMENT/SERIES ..... <i>PREM 19</i> .....	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM ..... <i>2242</i> ..... (one piece/item number)	
Extract details:  <i>Letter from Mawer to Power dated 1 December 1988</i>	
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Use black or blue pen to complete form.

Use the card for one piece or for each extract removed from a different place within a piece.

Enter the department and series,  
eg. HO 405, J 82.

Enter the piece and item references, .  
eg. 28, 1079, 84/1, 107/3

Enter extract details if it is an extract rather than a whole piece.  
This should be an indication of what the extract is,  
eg. Folio 28, Indictment 840079, E107, Letter dated 22/11/1995.  
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वाणिज्य मंत्री  
भारत  
नई दिल्ली-११० ०११  
MINISTER OF COMMERCE  
INDIA  
NEW DELHI-110 011

9 November, 1988

C. D. Singh

Dear Prime Minister

On my return to Delhi I take this earliest opportunity to convey to you my thanks for sparing the time to receive me on a Sunday evening, when you were so occupied with preparations for your visit to Poland.

I have conveyed to my Prime Minister the kind sentiments you expressed and your assurance to deal firmly with the Sikh terrorists in the United Kingdom.

May I add, that the statement made by Lord Young in this regard at the Indo-British Annual Dinner on 31st October, 1988 has been greatly appreciated by all of us.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely  
Dinesh Singh

Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.  
Prime Minister of U.K.  
10 Downing Street  
London



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SWDAMS

cpc

SUBJECT CC MASTER

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

30 October 1988

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH THE INDIAN MINISTER OF COMMERCE

The Prime Minister had a meeting this afternoon with the Indian Minister of Commerce. Mr. Dinesh Singh was accompanied by the Indian High Commissioner. His card of entry was a fairly tenuous message from Mr. Gandhi of which I enclose a copy.

Mr. Singh explained that his Prime Minister felt it would be useful for Mrs. Thatcher to have a political perspective on Indo/British relations since it was now over a year since the two of them had met. Within India there were reports that opposition groups getting together in advance of the elections. But this was largely an alliance of convenience and there was no common programme. The majority of voters were satisfied with what Rajiv Gandhi had achieved and would support him. Mr. Singh continued that Mr. Gandhi had been very impressed by the degree of support enjoyed by the Prime Minister which suggested she would remain in office for very many years. He would like to use the continuity of leadership in both countries to establish relations on a firmer basis. Our relations should be a model of association between a former colony and a former mother country. He himself had seen relations between Britain and India go up and down in intensity over the years. He sincerely believed there were better opportunities now than ever before to establish them on firm foundations.

Mr. Singh continued that it would help in achieving this if we could remove remaining irritants. While cooperation against Sikh terrorists was good at the technical level, there was still a problem of perception in India that Britain was not doing everything it could to deal with this problem. It sometimes seemed that all those who were opposed to the Indian government found a haven in Britain. There was the problem of money being collected in certain Sikh temples, ostensibly for charitable purposes but actually going to support terrorist organisations. The Indian government hoped that there could be some investigation of this perhaps by the

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Charity Commissioners. Moreover they understood that we were currently renewing the Prevention of Terrorism Act and putting it on a permanent footing. That, too, might be an opportunity to strengthen its effectiveness against Sikh terrorism. Other measures which seemed to the Indian authorities to be relevant to the problem were the steps being taken against terrorists' finances and the ban on direct access to the broadcast media by certain named organisations. He hoped that we could look further at all these points.

The Prime Minister said that she was grateful for Mr. Gandhi's message. We greatly admired what he had achieved in India and the remarkable standing which he enjoyed abroad. She very much welcomed the aim of improving relations. This was best done by basing them on mutual respect and mutual interests and freeing them from complexes left over from the past. As she had made clear in her recent speech at the Institute of Indian Culture, we were determined to deal firmly with terrorism. Her impression was that there had been a decline in the activities of Sikh terrorist groups in the United Kingdom.

She would shortly be giving an interview to the Times of India to explain our policies. The provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act were of course applicable to Sikh terrorists, as were measures taken to deal with terrorists' finances. She would look into the point about fund raising at Sikh temples: but it would be necessary to be able to produce evidence that such money was indeed going to support terrorist purposes. The recent measure on access to the broadcast media had been designed to deal with a specific problem: the repugnance felt in this country at seeing representatives of Irish organisations which supported terrorism appearing on television and radio to justify acts of violence. To extend such a ban to Sikh organisations would have virtually no practical effect since there were hardly any acts of Sikh terrorism in this country. But it would make the whole issue of our cooperation with India against Sikh extremists more politically contentious. That would be counter productive. The Prime Minister continued that supporters of Sikh terrorism had been put under considerable pressure in India as a result of the tactics pursued by Mr. Gandhi. Her impression was that they now enjoyed much less support. Nonetheless we would continue to keep a very careful eye on their activities in the United Kingdom and consider whether any further steps were necessary.

The Prime Minister added that we attached great importance to the celebrations of the centenary of Nehru's birth. We hoped that Mr. Gandhi would come here in the course of the year on an official visit. She would herself like to pay a visit to India at some point. There was a great deal of the country which she had not yet seen. Mr. Singh said that this would be very welcome to the Indian government.

We have subsequently told the press that the Prime Minister had a friendly discussion with Mr. Singh of ways to improve the bilateral relations between Britain and India in the course of which Mr. Singh handed over a warm message from



Prime Minister Gandhi. We have declined to confirm stories that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss Sikh terrorism but said that it was naturally one of the issues covered.

I am copying this letter to Philip Mawer (Home Office), Neil Thornton (Department of Trade and Industry) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

(C. D. POWELL)

R. N. Peirce, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

PRIME MINISTER

MEETING WITH THE INDIAN MINISTER OF COMMERCE

You have agreed to see the Indian Minister of Commerce, Mr. Dinesh Singh, on Sunday evening. He will be accompanied by the Indian High Commissioner. Mr. Singh is reportedly bearing a message for you from Mr. Gandhi. He wants to explore your attitude to India and find out how you see the possibility for re-establishing close and friendly relations. I strongly suspect this is a piece of private initiative designed to boost the standing of Mr. Singh. It is thought that he may also suggest that the recent ban on access to the broadcast media by Sinn Fein and the UDA should be extended to Sikh extremists.

You will want to speak about our willingness to cooperate in dealing with Sikh extremists. You will be giving an interview to a major Indian newspaper shortly setting out what we are doing. But the measure taken on broadcasting access is designed to deal with a specific problem: the repugnance people in this country feel at seeing representatives of Irish terrorist organisations appearing on TV and radio to justify acts of terrorism. To extend such a ban to Sikh organisations would have no practical effect since there are virtually no Sikh terrorist acts in this country. But it would make the whole issue of our cooperation with India against Sikh terrorists more politically contentious. In short it would in all likelihood be counter-productive.

CJP  
CHARLES POWELL  
28 October 1988

EL3DBV





cc PC  
BP

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

28 October 1988

Dear Charles,

Call by Indian Minister of Commerce: Sunday, 30 October

The Prime Minister has agreed to see the Indian Minister of Commerce, Dinesh Singh, on Sunday 30 October at 2045 hours. Mr Singh will be in the UK to attend the annual dinner of the Indo-British Association on 31 October at which the UK Guest of Honour will be Lord Young. He will call on the Foreign Secretary on Tuesday, 1 November and on Lord Young at 1515 hours on Monday, 31 October.

We understand from our High Commission in New Delhi that the purpose of Dinesh Singh's request to call on the Prime Minister is to deliver a message from the Indian Prime Minister and to explore, at Rajiv Gandhi's request, the Prime Minister's attitude to India and how she sees the possibilities for re-establishing close and friendly relations between India and the UK. In practice, his real aim will almost certainly be to discuss Sikh extremism, following the Prime Minister's recent exchange of letters with Rajiv Gandhi (her letter to Mr Gandhi of 7 July, and Mr Gandhi's reply of 23 September, both attached). He may in particular want to touch on the possibility of extending to Sikh organisations the restrictions on Irish extremists' access to the broadcast media announced last week - we know that these have caught Mr Gandhi's eye.

On the general subject of bilateral relations, the Prime Minister could welcome the evidence of a return to a more normal rhythm of contacts. Points she could touch on include:

- pleasure at Mr Rasgotra's appointment and arrival (she saw him on 26 September);
- her speech to the Institute of Indian Culture on 24 October, with its strong denunciation of terrorism, which attracted favourable comment in the Indian press;
- the prospect of a visit by Lord Young to India next February (Dinesh Singh is expected to agree dates for a meeting then of the Indo-British Economic Committee during his present visit);





- our willingness to cooperate to the full with the Indian Government in their plans for celebrating the Nehru Centenary year, starting next month; and
- the satisfactory state of our cooperation with the Indian Government over Sikh extremism, and the prospect of action to address terrorist funding in the new Prevention of Terrorism Act.

If Mr Singh (who, despite his name, is not a Sikh) does raise the question of denying Sikh extremists access to the broadcast media, the Foreign Secretary suggests that she take the line that exceptional action was taken in this case only with the greatest reluctance and to deal with what had become an urgent domestic problem following recent terrorist outrages. It in no way indicated any lack of concern about the major threat posed by Sikh extremism. The measures were kept to the minimum and were narrowly focused. They affect only access to broadcast media, and only Irish organisations. This is not because we regard Irish terrorists as more evil than others, but because the specific problem being addressed exists only in the case of Irish terrorism. To take measures in relation to Sikh organisations which would inevitably attract public attention and criticism here would serve no useful purpose, and would risk making our wider cooperation over Sikh extremism politically contentious - which is no more in the Indian interest than it is in ours.

Mr Singh may also refer to our bilateral trade, and possibly express concern over the imbalance; last year, British exports to India totalled £1089 million while Indian exports amounted to only £537 million. The Prime Minister could point out that, for the past three years, the gap has been closing; in the first half of this year Indian exports have been growing at around 13%, while our own this year have increased by only 4%. Moreover our exports of diamonds (to be processed for re-export) and aid funded business accounted for well over half the apparent imbalance.

I also attach a background note on Dinesh Singh.

I am sending copies of this letter to Philip Mawer at the Home Office and Neil Thornton at the DTI.

*Yours,*  
*Stephen Wall*  
(J S Wall)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
10 Downing Street



New Entry February 1988

SINGH, DINESH

Union Minister of Water Resources since February 1988.

Born 1925 in Uttar Pradesh, a Rajput and the son of Raja Avadhesh Singh of Kalakankar, an active Congress sympathiser in the years before Independence. Educated at the Doon School. Became Nehru's assistant private secretary in 1947 and, after undertaking diplomatic assignments in London and Paris, became Nehru's private secretary. Elected to the Lok Sabha 1957 and was a Deputy Minister for External Affairs from 1962 - 1966. In 1967 he achieved Cabinet rank under Mrs Gandhi with his appointment as Minister of Commerce and from 1969-70 was Minister for External Affairs. Mrs Gandhi appointed Singh Minister of Industrial Development and Internal Trade in 1970 and he was a member of her inner circle or "kitchen cabinet". However, he was sacked in 1971, and although the reasons for this remain unclear, it could have been the result of a private feud with Mrs Gandhi or of too much political ambition.

Following his dismissal Singh became increasingly critical of Mrs Gandhi and in 1973 faced disciplinary action by Congress' central leadership. He apologised and was saved, but in 1977 he was one of the first Congress leaders to cross to the Janata Party after Mrs Gandhi's electoral defeat. He was immediately rewarded with a seat in the Rajya Sabha, but despite good relations with Morarji Desai was not given ministerial responsibility. It is said he worked behind the scenes in Mrs Gandhi's attempts to topple Desai and when she was re-elected in 1980 Singh was taken back into Congress and retained his Rajya Sabha seat. In 1984 he was rewarded for his renewed loyalty with a safe Lok Sabha seat but Rajiv Gandhi consistently passed him over for ministerial appointment. However, in March 1987 Gandhi sent Singh to Colombo as his special emissary to help resolve the Tamil ethnic problem. Singh was then the first to speak out publicly against the then Defence Minister V P Singh (qv), a fellow Uttar Pradesh Rajput, for his role in the Fairfax affair.

Although Singh's contributions to Sri Lanka and Fairfax were not especially significant in themselves, they clearly contributed to his rehabilitation and appointment to Water Resources in Gandhi's February 1988 ministerial reshuffle. Despite his years away from the cabinet, Singh can still offer considerable experience and he is an astute politician. He is also the ideal candidate to counter the threat posed by his fellow UP Rajput, V P Singh (qv). Although Singh is last in the Cabinet's list of precedence and the water resources portfolio will not put him close to Gandhi, the effects of the drought will give Singh the opportunity to take decisive action in an area which will grow in importance as the effects of the prolonged drought increase.





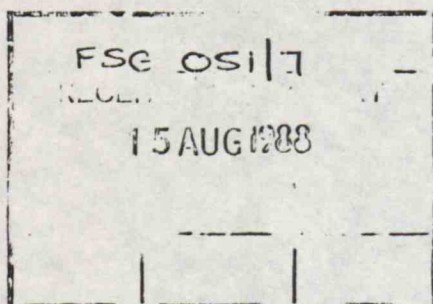
10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*hpa.*

THE PRIME MINISTER

7 July 1988



*A*

*Dear Prime Minister,*

It is now some nine months since we personally discussed our security co-operation against the threat from Sikh extremists. There have subsequently been two good and productive meetings of our security experts, and our security liaison seems to be working well. The professionalism of your operation to dislodge armed militants from the Golden Temple is much admired here.

Nonetheless there is no doubt that the dangers posed by extremists remain acute and I am determined that everything possible should be done to ensure that our joint and several efforts against them are as effective as possible. I have therefore taken the opportunity offered by Sir David Goodall's return to London to have a thorough talk about the current state of our security co-operation and, as a result, I am asking him to put to you one or two further suggestions as to how it can be made more effective. I shall also ask him to explain our proposals for new legislation. These are designed to enable us to get at terrorist funds, which are of course a major concern in the context of fundraising by Sikh extremists in this country. Sir David has a great deal of experience of security matters, on which he has worked closely with me and I think you will find it very helpful to have a personal word with him.



May I take the opportunity to send you and your wife  
warm personal good wishes.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Rajiv Gandhi

B

Shri Rajiv Gandhi



PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi  
September 23, 1988

Dear Prime Minister,

I was glad to receive your letter of the 7th July, conveying your determination to intensify efforts to counter Sikh terrorism.

Our operation to dislodge terrorists from the Golden Temple was a success. It also provided additional evidence of the sustenance Sikh terrorists receive from abroad.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

Sir David Goodall briefed me on the steps you have in mind for further enhancing our cooperation in security matters and in demonstrating our common resolve in tackling Sikh terrorism. I welcome your proposed initiatives.

I have asked High Commissioner Rasgotra to exchange some ideas with you on possible preventive actions in regard to terrorist activities

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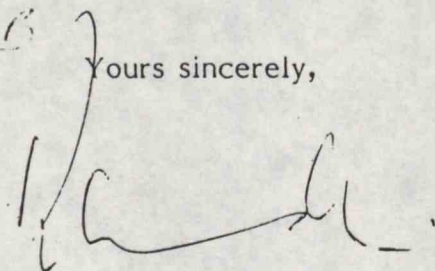


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planned from or committed on British soil. I look forward to maintaining our dialogue with a view to continuously reviewing and enhancing our cooperation in the security field.

With good wishes to you and Mr. Thatcher.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'M. Thatcher', written in a cursive style.

The Rt. Hon'ble Margaret Thatcher  
Prime Minister of Britain  
London

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065735

MDHIAN 9308

cc. Walled to Puzel Dixon

there J

CONFIDENTIAL  
FM NEW DELHI  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 1188  
OF 280715Z OCTOBER 88

FCO TELNO 929: NORTHERN IRELAND: RESTRICTIONS ON ACCESS  
TO THE MEDIA

SUMMARY

1. REASONABLY HELPFUL PRESS COMMENT WHICH MAY PROVE  
USEFUL IN THE CONTEXT OF DINESH SINGH'S VISIT.

DETAIL

2. TODAY'S HINDUSTAN TIMES CARRIES A LEADER (TEXT IN MIFT)  
WHICH EXPRESSES DOUBTS ABOUT THE MEDIA RESTRICTIONS AND ANY  
DILUTION OF THE QUOTE RIGHT OF SILENCE UNQUOTE BUT  
CONCEDES THAT THE MEASURES MAY BE NECESSARY ON A  
TEMPORARY BASIS.

3. THE HINDUSTAN TIMES IS BROADLY SYMPATHETIC TO- AND  
HAS INFLUENCE ON -THE GOI. ITS EMPHASIS ON THE  
DIFFICULTIES WHICH SURROUND IMPLEMENTATION OF HMG'S CURRENT  
AND PROPOSED MEASURES MAY BE USEFUL IN COUNTERING ANY  
SUGGESTION BY DINESH SINGH (OUR TELNO 1170) THAT THEY BE  
EXTENDED TO SIKH TERRORISM.

GOODALL

YYYY

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MAIN

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MR GILLMORE

PAGE 1  
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NEWS D  
INFO D  
RESEARCH D  
MVD  
LEGAL ADVISERS  
PS

MR BOYD  
MR SLATER  
MR MCLAREN  
MISS PESTELL  
MR MOSS

ADDITIONAL 5

MR WALTERS F4 DIV HOME OFFICE  
MR DILLING F4 DIV HOME OFFICE  
MR COBLEY C5 DIV HOME OFFICE

MRS UNDERHILL B1 DIV  
(HOME OFFICE LUNAR HOUSE)  
ASSESSMENTS STAFF CAB OFFICE

NNNN

~~Charles Powell~~

Ms 10



*With the compliments of*

THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

*See indexing a  
p 2-3.*

*Stephen Bell*

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

SW1A 2AH

107a



CONFIDENTIAL covering SECRET

CALL BY INDIAN COMMERCE MINISTER, MR DINESH SINGH ON THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE AT 1700 HOURS ON TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER

Objectives

- To emphasise the importance we attach to our existing and planned cooperation on Sikh terrorism, and discourage unrealistic new demands (notably for action on access to the media by Sikh organisations).
- To encourage Singh to focus on the positive side of Indo-British exchanges.
- To mention briefly residual evidence of a defence trade embargo.

Points to Make

General

- Pleased you were able to see Prime Minister on Sunday [further briefing to follow].
- If confirmed: [Glad you were able to agree dates with Lord Young for Indo-British economic talks in New Delhi next February.]
- Welcome evidence of a more normal rhythm of contacts in recent months (Simon Glenarthur in April, Natwar-Singh and Mr Tiwari in June, Lord Chancellor in August) Glad I was able to meet President Venkataraman at President Zia's funeral, and Narasimha Rao at UNGA.
- Pleased at appointment of Mr Rasgotra. Prime Minister has seen him. So have I (twice). Glad Mr Gandhi was able

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to see Sir D Goodall on 29 August, and that he seems to share my impression that our relations are set on a smoother course.

Sikhs

- Recognise depth of your concern about Sikh extremism. Doing everything we can to help. Our 100% record of conviction or arrest pending trial in every serious case of Sikh extremist related crime in UK has had salutary deterrent effects. Prime Minister looks forward to underlining our views publicly in Times of India interview soon.

- Will continue to keep Indian Government closely informed on progress of proposals to tackle funding of international terrorism.

Ban on Irish extremist access to broadcast media

If raised:

- Exceptional measure taken very reluctantly to address urgent problem. Measures kept to minimum, and very tightly focused - only broadcast media, only Irish organisations.

- Not because Irish terrorists more evil than Babbar Khalsa (or indeed Abu Nidhal) - but specific problem only exists in Irish case.

- 1984 Chauhan interview does not demonstrate the need for fresh action now - it proves the opposite. Unobtrusive action taken then by us and Indian High Commission has been successful in preventing any repetition in the last four years. "If it ain't broke don't fix it." To extend the



latest measures to Sikhs would attract public criticism, would serve no useful purpose and could risk making our wider cooperation politically contentious.

Trade and Embargo

- Bilateral trade in good repair: over £1.5 billion in two way trade last year.
- (If raised) Trade gap has been closing for past 3 years. Indian exports have been growing at around 13% while our own this year have increased by only 4%. And our exports of diamonds (for processing and re-export) and aid funded business accounted for well over half the apparent imbalance
- neither a burden on Indian balance of payments.
- But disturbed still to be getting complaints from UK firms about discrimination against Britain in award of contracts, mostly in defence sector - despite assurances that earlier embargo has been lifted.
- Trust these incidents represent no more than failures of communication, and hope they can be sorted out quickly, before they do real damage to our relations.
- Britain still largest single investor in India, and third in league table of new investment. Rumours of discrimination a serious deterrent to new investment.

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CALL BY INDIAN COMMERCE MINISTER, MR DINESH SINGH:  
1500 HOURS ON TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER

Relevant papers

- Prime Minister's message of 7 July and Mr Gandhi's reply of 23 September.
- New Delhi telno 949 (Sir D Goodall's meeting with Mr Gandhi on 29 August).
- New Delhi telno 1170 (Sir D Goodall's meeting with Dinesh Singh on 26 October).
- New Delhi telno 1171 ("Times of India" report, reflecting official briefing, about Dinesh Singh's visit and the question of access to the media for Sikh groups).

Background

1. The original reason for Dinesh Singh's visit to London was to attend the annual dinner of the Indo-British Association on 31 October, at which Lord Young will be the chief British guest. Minister of State Natwar-Singh, who is passing through London, is also expected to be present.
2. He has, however, also been charged with a personal message from Rajiv Gandhi to the Prime Minister, which he is to deliver on 30 October. His stated objective is "to explore her attitude to India and her intentions in regard to Sikh extremism". It is clear that in Rajiv Gandhi's eyes our relations continue to be focused on this one issue.

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3. Singh may well be tasked to explore the possibility of extending the ban on access to the broadcast media by Irish extremist organisations to Sikh extremist organisations. The news of the Home Secretary's announcement featured prominently in the Indian press, and we know that it caught Rajiv Gandhi's eye. The Indian High Commission here appear from our contacts with them to have played a helpful role in trying to moderate the expectations of the Ministry of External Affairs on this score.

Trade and the Embargo

4. The main specific result expected from Dinesh Singh's call on Lord Young is agreement on a meeting next February of the Indo-British Economic Committee, which has not met since September 1985 (it should meet every 18 months). The meeting would be in Delhi, and would be jointly chaired by Dinesh Singh and Lord Young.

5. The recent award to British Rail Engineering of a contract worth £24 million for the Punjab Coach Factory is our most important mixed credit success since Mrs Gandhi's death, and negotiations are just beginning on the second stage of the Rihand II super thermal power project (though relations between the customer, NTPC, and the British contractor, GEC, are not good, and the way ahead does not look very smooth).

6. We have had repeated high level assurances that the embargo on doing business in the defence sector with British companies imposed this spring has been lifted. But there are disturbing reports from a number of companies claiming that they continue to encounter difficulties, claimed in some cases to result from a newly imposed "buy British last" policy. In one such case, the firm involved was not in the defence sector. These cases are starting to attract

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Parliamentary attention, and it would be worth drawing Dinesh Singh's attention to the need to sort the problem out now. He is not the responsible Minister, but would be a useful ally.

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E.R.

File

Ten



Charles tried once more - and lost  
both times. 20.45 Sunday it is!

Jim

PRIME MINISTER

I understand that the Indian Commerce Minister asked you if he could come and see you when you were at the Bhavan on Monday night. We have now had a call from the Foreign Office about this. Your diary this week really is horrific and it is impossible to find a slot for him unless we cancel something else. Charles did say that you had mentioned the weekend but I think that you already have a lot on with speech writing on Saturday and Sunday and a very busy week ahead. I understand from the Foreign Office that they had already explained the difficulties to him about finding a time, before he saw you. Content for me to go back and explain that it really is very difficult to fit this in?

(TESSA GAISMAN)

26 October 1988





PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi  
October 24, 1988.

Dear Prime Minister,

I take the opportunity of the visit to London by Minister Dinesh Singh, to send you my warm regards and good wishes.

I hope that you will be able to spare some time to receive him. He will convey to you our thinking on measures for further improving our bilateral cooperation.

*With warm regards.*

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Hon'ble Margaret Thatcher,  
Prime Minister of Britain,  
London



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

*For*  
*Hand*  
25 February 1980

*Dear Michael,*

Cancellation of Visit by Indian Commerce  
Minister

/ Your letter of 18 February recorded that Mr Mukherjee had cancelled his visit to the UK. I now attach a letter of apology from Mr Mukherjee to the Prime Minister which has been forwarded through our High Commission in New Delhi.

*yours ever*  
*R M J Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON





MINISTER OF COMMERCE  
INDIA

18 February, 1980

Dear Madam Prime Minister

I was eagerly looking forward to meeting you on the afternoon of the 26th February and was indeed gratified that inspite of your busy schedule it was possible for you to receive me. However, on account of other pressing pre-occupations at home my forthcoming visit to your country has had to be cancelled. I sincerely apologise for the inconvenience caused to you and your colleagues. I do look forward to the privilege of meeting you some other time.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

*Pranab Mukherjee*

[PRANAB MUKHERJEE]

Her Excellency Mrs. Margaret Thatcher  
Prime Minister of U.K.  
Her Majesty's Government  
10, Downing Street,  
LONDON

MINISTERE COMMERCE  
MONTREAL

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India

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

18 February 1980

Call by Mr. Mukherjee

As I have already mentioned to you on the telephone, we have heard from the Indian Acting High Commissioner that Mr. Mukherjee will not be coming to this country at the end of the month. I enclose a copy of Dr. Singh's letter.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Stuart Hampson (Department of Trade).

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RK



Dr. I. P. Singh  
Acting High Commissioner

INDIA HOUSE, ALDWYCH  
LONDON, W.C.2

No.LON/COM/212/14/79

February 18, 1980

Dear Prime Minister, ?

I am writing to you in continuation of my letter dated January 30, 1980. We were informed by your office that while you were not in a position to find time to inaugurate the Indian Trade Fair at Birmingham, you had very kindly agreed to receive Shri Pranab Kumar Mukherjee, Minister of Commerce, in the afternoon of February 26, 1980.

2. I have just been informed by the Government of India that owing to certain pressing preoccupations, Shri Mukherjee's presence will be required in India at that time and, therefore, he would not be in a position to come to the United Kingdom. I would like to express our most sincere apologies for the inconvenience caused by the inability of Shri Mukherjee to call on you. I do hope that when he visits this country in the near future, he would have the honour of being received by you.

With assurances of my highest consideration,

Yours sincerely,

(I. P. Singh)

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher,  
Prime Minister,  
10, Downing Street,  
London, SW-1.





NO FEB 1960

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~~B/F 25.2.80~~

14 February 1980

Indian Minister of Commerce

The Prime Minister has seen your letter to me of 11 February about Mr. Pranab Kumar Mukherjee's visit to this country. She has agreed to see Mr. Mukherjee for 30 minutes at 1730 on Tuesday 26 February. I should be grateful for a short brief for this meeting to reach this office not later than Monday 25 February.

MICHAEL ALEXANDER

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Mr Vohra will be opening the India Trade Fair. Mr Mukherjee is, I understand, an influential figure. For good or ill, he is an intimate of the Gandhi family. Hope to see him for 30 minutes?

London SW1A 2AH

11 February 1980

Dear Mike,

Pr: 18/2

Yes

Indian Commerce Minister: Request to call on the Prime Minister

The Indian High Commission have put in a request for a courtesy call by the Indian Minister of Commerce, Mr Pranab Kumar Mukherjee, on the Prime Minister at any convenient time on Wednesday, 27 February, or at about 5.30 - 6.00 on Tuesday 26 February.

Mr Mukherjee will be in the UK to attend the Indian Trade Fair which is to be held at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham from 2 to 6 March. You will recall that your letter of 31 January to Stuart Hampson asked whether the Secretary of State for Trade would be available to inaugurate the Fair, since the Prime Minister would not be able to accept the invitation from the Indian High Commission to do so.

We would not normally recommend that the Prime Minister should receive a visiting Minister of Commerce, despite the fact that (as the Indian High Commission have pointed out to us) he is the first Cabinet Minister of the new Indian Government to visit the UK. There are, however, two reasons why the Prime Minister might wish to consider receiving Mr Mukherjee on this occasion:-

- (a) the gesture would help to demonstrate to Mrs Gandhi the importance we attach to India, at a time when we are trying to keep the Indians from straying too far towards the Russians over Afghanistan;
- (b) Mr Mukherjee also holds the Steel and Mines portfolio (pending further Cabinet appointments). Davy International are currently competing for the construction of a new steel plant in India; the project is worth over £1 billion (of which about £500 million could come to the UK), and a decision may be taken soon. As Minister for Steel as well as Commerce, Mr Mukherjee will play an important role in the final decision. A word in season from the Prime Minister could stand us in good stead.

If, however, the Prime Minister decides that she cannot receive Mr Mukherjee, Lord Carrington will be available and willing to see him.

I am copying this letter to Peter Stredder (DOI) and

/to Stuart

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to Stuart Hampson (Department of Trade).

*Yours ever*  
*Roderic Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

Mike Pattison Esq  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON

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TO IMMEDIATE ECO (SAD)

TELEGRAM NUMBER 207 OF 13 FEBRUARY

INFO IMMEDIATE TO DOT (FOR PRISTON CRE4) AND TO IMMEDIATE DOI  
(FOR MATHRANI 110)

[ADVANCED AS REQUESTED]

FROM EWANS

MY TELNO 185 OF 6 FEBRUARY.

VISIT BY INDIAN MINISTER OF COMMERCE

1. I HAVE NOW SEEN PEARCE'S LETTER OF 3 FEBRUARY TO MISS BINNS  
ENCLOSING DRAFT LETTER TO NO. 10. COUNSELLOR (ECONOMIC AND  
COMMERCIAL) WAS INVITED TO CALL ON MINISTRY OF COMMERCE TODAY TO  
DISCUSS PROGRAMME. INDIANS PUT EMPHASIS ON MR YUKHERJEE'S REQUEST  
TO CALL ON PRIME MINISTER, CHANCELLOR AND SOS(T).

2. I STRONGLY SUPPORT THIS REQUEST. IN ADDITION TO THE POINTS  
IN PARA 3 OF DRAFT LETTER, THE CASE FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S  
RECEIVING THE MINISTER IS STRENGTHENED BY THE FACT THAT THIS  
IS THE FIRST VISIT TO THE UK BY A SENIOR MINISTER IN THE NEW  
INDIAN CABINET. ONE OF HIS AIMS IS APPARENTLY TO TRY AND PROJECT  
A MORE LIBERAL IMAGE OF THE CONGRESS (I) GOVERNMENT, ESPECIALLY  
TO THE BRITISH MEDIA WHOSE REPORTING OF ASPECTS OF MRS GANDHI'S  
PREVIOUS RULE IS CLEARLY OF SOME CONCERN TO THE NEW GOVERNMENT.  
IN PARTICULAR, YUKHERJEE IS A CLOSE CONFIDANTE AND PROTEGE OF  
SANJAY GANDHI AND THEREFORE HAS A PARTICULARLY INFLUENTIAL VOICE  
IN MRS GANDHI'S CABINET. APART FROM HIS BRIEF VISIT TO BRUSSELS,  
THE UK WILL BE THE ONLY COUNTRY ON MINISTER'S PROGRAMME AND EVERY  
ADVANTAGE OUGHT TO BE TAKEN OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WIN HIS  
GOODWILL.

3. INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION SHOULD HAVE DISCUSSED PROGRAMME WITH



3. INDIAN HIGH COMMISSION SHOULD HAVE DISCUSSED PROGRAMME WITH YOU, BUT FOLLOWING IS OUTLINE SUPPLIED BY MINISTRY OF COMMERCE:-

26 FEBRUARY

11.15 ARRIVE HEATHROW BY FLIGHT AI 103

27 FEBRUARY IN LONDON. AVAILABLE FOR TALKS.

28 FEBRUARY

12.45 DEPART FOR BRUSSELS BY FLIGHT SN 606.

1 MARCH

15.45 ARRIVE HEATHROW BY FLIGHT SN 607. PROCEED TO BIRMINGHAM BY CAR.

2 MARCH

ATTEND BUYER/SELLER MEET AT BIRMINGHAM ARRANGED BY INDIAN TRADE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY.

3/4 MARCH

IN LONDON. AVAILABLE FOR TALKS.

5 MARCH

10.37 RETURN TO INDIA BY FLIGHT AI 104

4. REVISED PERSONALITY NOTE ON MINISTER FOLLOWS BY BAC.

THOMSON

NNNN

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

26 September 1979

I attach a self-explanatory exchange of correspondence between the Indian High Commission and this office. I do not know whether you have received a similar request.

N. J. SANDERS

Paul Lever Esq  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

HK





10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

26 September 1979

Thank you for your letter of 26 September addressed to Caroline Stephens, who is away from the office at present. I am afraid that the Prime Minister's other commitments make it impossible for her to see the Minister for Commerce and Civil Supplies. I am so sorry that I have to send you a disappointing reply.

N. J. SANDERS

Mr N N Khanna



सत्यमेव जयते

TELEPHONE: 01-836 8484 EXT. 59

TELEGRAMS: HICOMIND, LONDON, W.C.2.

No. LON/COM/202/3/79

भारत का हाइ कमिशन  
लन्दन

THE HIGH COMMISSION OF INDIA,

Commerce DEPARTMENT,

INDIA HOUSE,

ALDWYCH,

LONDON, W.C.2.

26th September, 1979.

To

Miss Caroline Stephens,  
Private Secretary to the Prime Minister,  
10 Downing Street,  
London S.W.1.

Dear Madam,

Shri Hitendra Desai, Minister for Commerce and Civil Supplies, Government of India, is coming to the United Kingdom for attending meeting of the Indo-British Economic Committee scheduled to be held on 17-19th October, 1979. Shri Hitendra Desai wishes to call upon the Hon'ble Prime Minister on 17th October, 1979 (forenoon) subject to Prime Minister's convenience.

Yours faithfully,

(N.N. Khanna)  
First Secretary (Commercial).





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