

CONFIDENTIAL

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Mr Ham

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to Islamabad

Mr O'Neill o.r.

Did we send anything to Mr. Bushell?

RECEIVED IN  
 REGISTRY No. 61  
 -6 SEP 1978  
 FSP 024/868/3

Mr Browne o.r.

pat.

Join 6.9

A. Chapman

MRS THATCHER'S VISIT TO THE SUB-CONTINENT

1. Mr Male had 1½ hours talk with Mrs Thatcher and Mr Adam Butler on 31 August, during which the sub-continent took up about 45 minutes. It appears that Mrs Thatcher is rather unsure about going to India but felt that Mr Whitelaw's visit had gone off well and therefore she need not worry too much. She said that she was looking for some project dealing with India's poverty, and she mentioned Rosemary Garvey's mobile crèche. Mr Male said that this would not go down well with the Indians since this scheme, which I gather is something to do with helping children of construction workers in Delhi (meals on wheels) is run by expatriate ladies of the diplomatic corps and is hardly an appropriate subject for her attention. Mr Male told Mrs Thatcher about Sanjay Gandhi, and press censorship. Mrs Thatcher asked about opposition politicians in jail, and expressed surprise (and I gather some dismay) that there would be no British press or TV coverage of her visit to India.

2. Mrs Thatcher's interest in Pakistan is rather more to do with immigration (and this applies to India too). She would not be asking questions about figures but feels that we must deal with the dependants' queue first. Her interest in immigration is rather more to do with British domestic politics. She would be interested to know what would be the Indian/Pakistan reaction to tighter controls. Mr Male said that she had better ask her hosts direct, but he thought that those governments would take the view that immigration control was a matter for us; but they would be and are interested in the treatment of "their" minorities in Britain.

3. Mrs Thatcher made the rather surprising remark that she thought that the current vogue for Indian handloom goods such as caftans were a good thing for India - they would provide employment for poor Indian women etc.

4. From all this I rather get the impression that Mrs Thatcher is a little unsure about her trip and she seems to be not very well versed in foreign affairs (anyway, South Asian affairs). While this is not surprising I think we should be aware of it and Mr Ham has given the flavour of our feeling in a teleletter to Mr White. I think posts will need to know that they need not fear to give Mrs Thatcher firm guidance if she asks for it.

Mr. O'Neill

please see (58)  
Pion 13/9

Mr Home  
1/9

C H Seaward

C H Seaward

1 September 1976