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Reg. Pl. put a copy on the
Visit of Mrs Thatcher file
(FSP 026/548/3) *jud 7/10*

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30 SEP 1976
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CYBER CATA

DELHI 291155Z SEP

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIORITY FCO TELNO 1086 OF 29 SEP 1976.

FOLLOWING PERSONAL FOR O'NEILL, SAD.

FSE 026/548/1

② YOUR TEL NO 613

MRS THATCHER SAW MRS GANDHI ALONE AND DID NOT GIVE US
A Y-ACCOUNT OF HER DISCUSSION. MRS GANDHI IN A SUBSEQUENT
INTERVIEW WITH THE DAILY TELEGRAPH CORRESPONDENT SAID THERE
HAD BEEN NO DISCUSSION OF IMMIGRATION. I ACCOMPANIED MRS
THATCHER DURING HER CALL ON CHAVAN AND BANSI LAL : AGAIN,
IMMIGRATION WAS NOT TOUCHED ON , WHICH MAY BE SIGNIFICANT
SINCE WE KNOW AN ASSIDUOUS JUNIOR OFFICIAL HAD PREPARED A
BRIEF ON THE SUBJECT FOR CHAVAN, AND A HOME MINISTRY
OFFICIAL WAS IN ATTENDANCE AT THE INTERVIEW.

2. MR. THORPE GRIEVED JEREMY THORPE AND THE TWO JOURNALISTS WHO HAD
INTERVIEWED MRS GANDHI. THE JOURNALISTS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN USING MRS
THATCHER'S VISIT AS AN EXCUSE FOR GETTING INTO INDIA, AND WERE
CONCENTRATING ON INDIAN POINTS. MR THORPE'S DISCUSSION
RANGLED MORE WIDELY. MRS GANDHI DID QUESTION HIM
CLOSELY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL FRONT BUT
SHOWED NO PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR THE LOT OF INDIANS RESIDENT IN
THE UK.

3. MRS THATCHER'S MEETING WITH CHAVAN TOUCHED ON THE FOLLOWING
POINTS :

(A) RELAXATION OF RESTRICTIONS ON FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS. AS
ALREADY REPORTED, MRS GANDHI'S PRIVATE SECRETARY IS BELIEVED TO HAVE
ATTRIBUTED THIS RELAXATION TO THE EMBARRASSMENT THAT WOULD
BE CAUSED IF THE BAN WERE MAINTAINED DURING MRS THATCHER'S VISIT.

(B) NON ALIGNED CONFERENCE. CHAVAN EMPHASISED ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
AND THE IMPORTANCE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DEVELOPED AND UNDER
DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

(C) THE SUBCONTINENT - PAKISTAN, BANGLADESH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA.

4. MRS THATCHER VISITED THE IMMIGRATION SECTION, AND
SAT IN UPON PART OF ONE INTERVIEW. SHE THEN MET ALL
AVAILABLE ECOS, PLUS SUPERVISING STAFF, AND ASKED
ABOUT THE DAILY RUN OF BUSINESS. SHE WAS MORE
CONCERNED ABOUT NUTS AND BOLTS THAN WITH STATISTICS,
TRENDS, ETC, AND DID NOT EXPRESS ANY VIEWS ON THE
WALE FIANCE PROBLEM. SHE DID HOWEVER WORK OUT FOR
HERSELF THAT IN PRACTICE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A
STATUTORILY ENTITLED DEPENDENT, AND THOSE ENTITLED TO
APPLY UNDER THE RULES, IS SLIGHT. HER QUESTIONS ABOUT
NUMBERS WERE INPIRED BY AN INLAND REVENUE ESTIMATE,
ITSELF BASED ON TAX CLAIMS, OF 500,000 DEPENDENTS.
SHE TOLD HER OUR DEPENDENTS QUEUE WAS SOMEWHAT OVER A HUNDRED AND
THAT BOMBAY'S QUEUE, THOUGH CONTAINING MORE
DEPENDENTS, WOULD NOT TAKE HER MORE THAN A FRACTION OF
THE WAY TOWARDS HER HALF MILLION.

THATCHER CAME ACROSS WELL IN PUBLIC. HER
SIGHTNESS EARNED HER GOOD MARKS EVEN AMONGST
THOSE OF OPPOSING VIEWS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT TWO MEMBERS OF
MRS GANDHI'S PRIVATE OFFICE, IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION,
AGREED THAT WHILE MRS THATCHER WAS EVIDENTLY SEEKING SOME
PERSONAL PRESTIGE FOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PURPOSES, THE VISIT HAD
ALSO BEEN USEFUL IN THE CONTEXT OF INDO-BRITISH RELATIONS AND
IN TERMS OF ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MRS GANDHI
AND MRS THATCHER. MRS GANDHI HAD APPARENTLY REMARKED TO HER STAFF
THAT THOUGH THERE WERE QUITE A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS ON WHICH
SHE AND MRS THATCHER DISAGREED, SHE HAD BEEN AGREEABLY
SURPRISED BY THE POSITIVE AND BUSINESS-LIKE NATURE OF MRS
THATCHER'S APPROACH AND THE DIRECT AND NO-NONSENSE WAY IN
WHICH SHE PUT ACROSS HER OWN VIEWS SO THAT THEY COULD BE
READILY UNDERSTOOD.

IT SEEMED TO THEM THAT MRS THATCHER WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF
A NEW GENERATION OF BRITISH POLITICIAN, WITH NO PARTICULAR
LINKS OR HANG-UPS ABOUT INDIA : AND, TAKEN OVER
ALL, IN THE CONTEXT OF INDO-BRITISH RELATIONS THAT
WAS AN IMPROVEMENT.

WILLER

END

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